

Writing the Statement of Purpose

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Things to Keep in Mind

- What they read between the lines: motivation, competence, potential as a graduate student.
- Emphasize everything from a positive perspective and write in an active, not passive, voice.
- Demonstrate everything by example; don't say directly, for example, that you're a persistent person—you must demonstrate it.
- You don't want to make excuses, but you have talk about the mistakes you've made as a learning experience.
- If there is something important that happened (poverty, illness, excessive work, etc.) which affected your grades, go ahead and state it, but write affirmatively, that is, in a way that shows your perseverance.
- Make sure everything is linked with continuity and focus.
- 500-600 words, 1 to 1.5 pages single spaced, typed.

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Part 1: Introduction

- This is where you tell them what you want to study. For example, I wish to pursue a MS degree in Mechanical Engineering with an emphasis in controls.

Part 2: Summarize what you did as an undergraduate

- Research what did during your undergrad career. Describe your best project(s), indicating with whom, the title of the project, what your responsibilities were and the outcome. Write technically, professors are the people who read these statements.
- Important class or classes you took which stimulated your desire for graduate study, or a specific project for a class.
- Work experience, especially if you had any kind of responsibility for testing, designing, or researching a product or apparatus.

Part 2: If you graduated and worked for a while and are returning to grad school, indicate what you've been doing while working.

- You can discuss your company, work/design team, responsibilities, what you learned, etc. You can also indicate here how this helped you focus on your graduate studies.

Part 4: Here you indicate what you want to study in graduate school in greater detail.

- This is a greater elaboration of your opening paragraph.
- Indicate area of interest, then state questions you might have which are associated with the topic, i.e., what you might be interested in studying. You should have an area of emphasis selected before you write the statement.
- Call the department or look on the web for information about the professors and their research. Are there professors whose interests match yours? If so, indicate this, as it shows a sign that you have done your homework and are highly motivated. (Be sincere, however, don't make up something bogus just to impress people.)

Part 5: Conclusion

- End your statement in a positive and confident manner with a readiness for the challenges of graduate study.

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