

**Graduate Applicants to the MA/PhD program in Political Science must submit two statements in addition to an academic writing sample.**

### **Statement of Purpose and Personal History Statement Instructions**

**The Academic Statement of Purpose** is an opportunity for you to share information that will help reviewers understand your academic interests and objectives, assess your academic background, preparation, and training, and determine if you are a good match for the program to which you are applying.

The following topics should be addressed in your Academic Statement of Purpose.

1. What are your professional plans and career goals? How will attending graduate school assist you in reaching those goals?
2. Describe your research, scholarly, or creative interests. What topics are of particular interest to you? Reviewers know that interests change over time but try to be as specific as possible.
3. Discuss how your experiences, skills, and abilities have prepared you for graduate study. Relevant topics may include coursework, work and research experiences, internships, presentations, exhibits, publications, and community service. If you describe a research or scholarly experience, include information on the topic, research mentor, your role, and outcomes.
4. Describe how your skills, preparation, and interests are a match for the program to which you are applying. Identify faculty who share your research and scholarly interests. Reviewers will want to know that you have researched the program, faculty, and key focus areas.

**The Personal History Statement** helps reviewers learn more about you as a whole person and as a potential graduate student. This may include relevant details on community service, leadership roles, participation in diverse teams, and significant barriers that you overcame to attend graduate school.

Required of all applicants:

1. Describe how your background and life experiences contribute to your ability to be both persistent and resourceful in graduate school.
2. Describe how your life experiences have prepared you to contribute to an academic community where scholars with diverse research interests, abilities, backgrounds, and experiences are supported, respected, and valued.

Optional:

3. Please address concerns that you may have that your academic record does not reflect your true capabilities and discuss mitigating factors that have affected your academic record. Reviewers will be interested in understanding your accomplishments relative to your opportunities.

The Academic Statement of Purpose and the Personal History Statement are two of the most important documents in your graduate school application. The documents should be concise, clear, and free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. You should have others review your document for content, organization, and to ensure that there are no errors. Information in the Personal History Statement should complement but not duplicate information in the Academic Statement of Purpose.