

# Statement of Purpose Submission Guide

While all of the application materials you submit help us construct a clearer picture of your qualifications as a candidate, the statement of purpose (SOP) offers our admissions committee a unique chance to hear from you more directly. Hence, your SOP will be the key component of your admission package. As such, we strongly recommend that you apply proper care and attention to crafting a statement that clearly communicates the qualifications, experiences, and skills that make you a perfect fit for the Family, Youth, and Community Sciences program.

In order to help you do this, we've compiled a list of simple guidelines to consider as you write your statement of purpose.

## General Requirements

Statements of purpose should be about 400-500 words in length, and should focus equally on the following topics:

- What previous experience or educational background do you have that will contribute to your ability to achieve an advanced degree in Family, Youth, and Community Sciences?
- What contributions do you feel that you can make to this department and to the University of Florida as a member of our graduate student body?
- Considering the department's specific coursework and/or individual faculty members' research areas, what makes you a good fit for the master's program?

## Guidelines

To meet these criteria, try to keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **Be concise.** With only 500 words at your disposal, making your point efficiently and clearly is essential.
- **Demonstrate the skills necessary to succeed in the program.** Cite experiences and relevant work that establishes your ability to complete all necessary coursework and commit to your education.
- **Discuss specific focuses and areas of interest.** If you have a thesis topic already in mind, present it briefly. If not, describe in short the work or subjects that interest you most.
- **Explore the depth of your relevant experience, not breadth.** Pick one or two main experiences or themes and develop them throughout the statement.
- **Emphasize facets of the program that uniquely match your interest.** Describe the elements of the curriculum that intrigue you.
- **Employ correct spelling and grammar.** This is of critical importance.

- **Quickly address difficult circumstances or inadequate grades.** If extenuating problems or issues have influenced your academic performance in the past, this is a good time to address them, briefly. They should not, however, be the focus of your statement.
- **Allow your personal voice to come through—avoid the generic.** The more truly personal an applicant’s statement feels, the more they’ll stand out to the admissions committee.

## Things to Avoid

Additionally, try to avoid making the following common mistakes.

### **DON’T:**

- **Focus on why you want to be admitted over why you’re qualified.** We’re interested in hearing about what makes you a perfect candidate for the program.
- **Overemphasize your, “Passion for helping others”.** While we appreciate your investment in the work you do, your experience is a more valuable guide for our admissions committee.
- **Restate your résumé in written form.** The Statement of Purpose is not meant to be a CV or résumé.
- **Emphasize school spirit.** “Gator Pride” is wonderful, but qualifications say much more about a candidate.
- **Recount stories in a melodramatic, theatrical manner.** Expository accounts of your relevant experiences will help us judge applicants as fairly as possible.
- **Use overly prosaic, “flowery” language.** Clear, concise writing is strongly recommended.
- **Express your personal opinion on a social issue.** While we are looking to get to know a bit more about you in your statement, it isn’t the medium for political argument or social commentary.
- **Try to educate the reader.** Assume that your audience is highly knowledgeable on the topics you’re presenting.
- **Blame others or bad luck for difficult circumstances.** Ideal candidates will demonstrate work ethic, drive, and accountability for their actions.

Please feel free to reach out an Academic Coordinator at (877) 778-7386 if you have any questions or the instructions above are unclear. They are happy to review your draft prior to the submission of your full application package. While this will not guarantee acceptance, they can provide high-level feedback and will let you know if your draft meets the standard the Admissions Committee typically finds acceptable.