



Western Washington University Graduate School Statement of Purpose Guidelines

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| Adult and Higher Education | 300 - 500 word Statement of Purpose describing: a) your past experience working with adults as a volunteer or an employee, particularly in an education capacity; b) your understanding of and commitment to the field of adult and higher education; c) why you are interested in pursuing this particular degree; and d) how you see this degree program fitting with your career goals. |
| Anthropology | No more than 500 word essay stating reasons for doing graduate work in Anthropology and indicating major interests within Anthropology |
| Biology | Describe your research interest(s) and identify potential adviser(s) within the department. |
| Chemistry | Submit a written statement of 1-2 pages in length describing your motivation for graduate study and research interests. Make sure the statement addresses the following: Why are you pursuing a M.S. (as opposed to a Ph.D.)? What are your professional plans after completing your M.S.? Why do you think the WWU M.S. program in chemistry suits you in particular? Finally, identify three potential faculty research advisors and justify your choices |
| Clinical Doctorate in Audiology | The Department of CSD at Western has a responsibility to the public to produce fully competent and caring audiologists, capable of doing benefit and not harm. Thus, it is important that persons admitted possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice audiology. We particularly value applicants who can demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, curiosity, maturity, self-motivation, dedication to the profession, and established strategies for managing stress. Within this context, submit a one page statement describing your academic experiences, professional experiences, research experience (if applicable) and personal qualities that make you a strong candidate for graduate training in audiology. In addition, discuss your future plans for your professional career. Please be aware that your statement will be read by a review committee who will not only evaluate you based on the content of your answer, but also on your writing ability (e.g., clarity, organization, writing mechanics). |
| Clinical Mental Health Counseling | Please write a brief essay answering the following questions and requests for information: 1. What do you consider to be the primary role of a mental health counselor? 2. What experiences in life, work, and/or schooling have you had that are relevant to the counseling profession? 3. Why have you selected WWU's counseling program? What are your long-range professional plans in the field of mental health? 4. Research expertise is an integral part of your training. Please indicate at least two areas of clinical research and/or practice in which you are interested. |
| Computer Science | Statement of Purpose is optional. |
| Creative Writing | This 1-2 page statement should explain your intellectual and/or creative interests, and your professional goals. Reviewers value statements that are intellectually mature, coherent, and well-organized. If you are interested in being considered for a funded Teaching Assistantship, please include relevant experience and information that will aid us in making funding decisions. |
| Data Science for Environmental Applications Cert | Please provide a one-page statement that addresses the following: 1. Your academic background and how it has prepared you for a certificate in Data Science 2. Motivations for pursuing the certificate, and area of specialization that you interested in 3. Research interests, or applicability of data science in the professional sector |



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| Educational Administration | Letter of intent stating: 1) Why you want to become a school administrator; 2) How your understanding of diversity relates to improving learning for all students. Include your understanding of diversity and your leadership experiences related to student diversity in your response, recognizing that your school/district has students with diverse backgrounds. For the purpose of this letter of intent, diversity may include but not be limited to: highly capable, special needs, 504 plans, ELL/ESL, ethnicity and culture, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other; 3) Your goals and objectives as an education leader. |
| English | This 1-2 page statement should explain your intellectual and/or creative interests, and your professional goals. Reviewers value statements that are intellectually mature, coherent, and well-organized. If you are interested in being considered for a funded Teaching Assistantship, please include relevant experience and information that will aid us in making funding decisions. |
| Environmental Science | All applicants must indicate in the statement of purpose how the prerequisites have been or will be completed before starting the program. 2-3 page statement of purpose indicating which specialization the applicant is most interested in, explaining why the applicant wishes to pursue graduate studies in environmental science, and what future expectations s/he has for the M.S. degree. The statement may indicate a preferred faculty adviser. Students are encouraged to review faculty research interests as described on the Huxley College website prior to contacting potential faculty advisers. Students are admitted into the program only upon agreement of a faculty adviser. |
| Environmental Studies | 1-2 pages addressing: 1) Which specialization (Geography, Environmental Policy, Urban Planning and Sustainable Development, or General Environmental Studies) are you interested in pursuing and why? 2) How has your prior experience prepared you to work in that area? 3) Why do you wish to pursue graduate studies in Environmental Studies at Huxley College? 4) A plan for coursework you are interested in taking at WWU (see university catalog) for your specialization and a tentative proposed research topic. |
| Environmental Studies (Urban Planning Track) | A two to three page statement of purpose addressing the following: 1) Why do you wish to pursue graduate studies in Environmental Studies at Huxley College? 2) Why are you interested in pursuing a specialization in Urban Planning? 3) How has your prior experience prepared you to work in that area? 4) What are your future expectations for the M.A. degree with a specialization in urban planning. |
| Geology | 1-2 page statement of purpose explaining why the applicant wishes to pursue graduate studies in geology, indicating which specialization the applicant is most interested in, and how the applicant sees this M.S. degree as fitting into career goals. Any research or teaching experience should be described. The statement should indicate preferred faculty adviser(s) within the department. Students are encouraged to review faculty research interests as described on the department website prior to contacting potential faculty advisers. Students are admitted into the program only upon agreement of a faculty adviser. |
| History | Please submit a brief essay (300-600 words) addressing your qualifications for graduate study, by answering these questions: 1. What purposes does the study of history serve, and why do you wish to pursue graduate study in this field? 2. Which topic(s), time period(s), and/or field(s) of history would you hope to investigate (and have you contacted the appropriate faculty in the program at WWU regarding your proposed area(s))? 3. What specific strengths do you possess that will be applicable to that endeavor? 3. What do you hope to achieve while in the program and how does a graduate degree in history relate to your future goals?" |



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| History – Archives and Records Management | Please submit a brief essay (300-600 words) addressing your qualifications for graduate study, by answering these questions: 1. What purposes does the study of archives and records management serve, and why do you wish to pursue graduate study in this field? 2. What specific strengths and/or experience do you possess that will be applicable to that endeavor? 3. How does a graduate degree in history, with a concentration in archives and records management, relate to your future goals? |
| Kinesiology – Exercise Science | Please outline areas of interest, goals for graduate study and future career plans related to the degree. |
| Kinesiology – Sport Psychology | Please outline areas of interest, goals for graduate study and future career plans related to the degree. |
| Language and Literacy | Brief (not to exceed 1 page) 300-500 word statement of personal career goals and reasons for seeking the M.Ed. |
| Marine and Estuarine Science – Biology | The “statement of purpose” is a chance to show who you are beyond what is contained in your transcripts and your GRE report. Reviewers will use it to evaluate your experience, goals, motivation, enthusiasm, and research interests. Your statement gives you an opportunity to explain anything in your “data” that may be unclear to the reader. You can highlight your strong points, particularly if they are not adequately expressed in your other materials. You can also discuss weaknesses in your record. This isn’t a chance to make excuses; instead, candidly discuss any extenuating circumstances that may help the reviewer to understand your background. Your statement will be read by a review committee and by potential faculty advisers. Be sure to give some indication of the topic(s) you wish to pursue in graduate school and what adviser(s) you would like to work with. Your application will be stronger if you have actually communicated with those individuals beforehand and know that they are accepting students. You do not have to know your precise thesis topic; it is good to be flexible. However, it is inadequate to simply state that you like the oceans. Advisers like applicants who have thought about their future, know something about the field, and have developed their own interests. There is no set length for the statement of purpose. Half a page is too short; 4 pages is probably too long. Make sure the statement is well written, as reviewers will use it to assess your writing ability. Use good structure and vigorously edit out grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and typos. It generally helps to have someone else (a friend, colleague, or professor) read and critique the statement. |



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| Mathematics | Statement of Purpose is optional. |
| MBA | We would like to learn as much relevant information about who you are as a person and as a professional to assess your fit with the Western MBA Program. The SOP is also designed to encourage you to think about how the pursuit of an MBA fits into your long-term career plan. 1. Describe your professional, academic and relevant personal background – where you have been and what you have done; 2. Provide an assessment of the skills and knowledge you currently have; 3. Provide a statement of your long-term career goals – where you want to be; 4. Describe the skills and knowledge you hope to acquire with an MBA that will bridge the gap between where you are and where you would like to be. Concise and professional writing is very important. Please organize your SOP so that each section (paragraph or group of paragraphs) is outlined according to the steps above. While there are no length requirements, a well written essay is typically three to five pages in length (single spaced) and free of grammatical and typographical errors. |
| Media and Digital Literacy Cert | Please write a brief (250 words or less) statement describing your current position in teaching/education and your goals or interest in completing the certificate. |
| Music | Statement of Purpose is optional. |
| Professional Accounting | 500-750 words application letter that includes information on 1) How the WWU MPAcc will enable you to advance your career goals; 2) Your choice of the Western MPAcc over other academic options; 3) The attributes you will bring to the program to contribute to an effective graduate school experience for both you and your classmates. |



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| Psychology (Experimental) | <p>2-5 page personal statement discussing the applicant's interest in an area related to Experimental Psychology. Address the following: 1) What motivates you to pursue training in experimental psychology? 2) What theoretical issues, research problems, or application areas are your central interests? Why are these issues especially interesting and important? 3) Your current and prior research experience (including the research goals/findings, and your level of involvement, responsibilities, and accomplishments) 4) Reason for applying to our graduate program 5) Name(s) of faculty members with whom you wish to work. Discuss in detail how your interests, goals, and experiences align with their research program. Note: We strongly encourage applicants to contact potential faculty members prior to writing their statement and become familiar with their current research in order to facilitate appropriate mentorship.</p> |
| Rehabilitation Counseling | <p>The Statement of Purpose should be a succinct statement (two to three pages) that provides an accurate indication of writing and grammatical skills. The Statement of Purpose must include information on the following: 1. Your reason(s) for applying, including your rationale for seeking the Master's degree and choosing the Rehabilitation Counseling program at WWU; 2. Professional and personal strengths as they apply to the field of rehabilitation counseling; 3. Relevant experiences in life, work, and/or schooling; 4. Your goals and interests that demonstrate and illustrate your personal value system; 5. Your career objectives. You can also include any additional information or insights that you consider relevant to your application.</p> |
| School Counseling | <p>Please write a brief essay answering the following questions and requests for information: 1. What stimulated your interest in school counseling as a career? 2. What do you consider to be the current role of the school counselor to promote equity and access for all students? 3. What academic and professional experiences and personal qualities make you a strong candidate for graduate training in counseling? 4. Why are you interested in the school counseling program at WWU?</p> |
| Speech-Language Pathology | <p>The Department of CSD at Western has a responsibility to the public that its graduates can become fully competent and caring speech-language pathologists, capable of doing benefit and not harm. Thus, it is important that persons admitted possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice speech-language pathology. All of our applicants can demonstrate intelligence. We particularly value applicants who can demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, curiosity, maturity, self-motivation, dedication to the profession, and established strategies for managing stress. Within this context, submit a one page statement describing your academic experiences, professional experiences, and personal qualities that make you a strong candidate for graduate training in speech-language pathology. In addition, discuss your future plans for your professional career. Please be aware that your statement will be read by a review committee who will not only evaluate you based on the content of your answer, but also on your writing ability (e.g., clarity, organization, writing mechanics).</p> |
| Post-Master's Archives and Records Management Certificate | <p>Please submit a brief essay (300-600 words) addressing your qualifications for graduate study, by answering these questions: 1. What is the purpose does the study of history, archives and records management serve, and why do you wish to pursue graduate study in this field? 2. What strengths do you bring to a prospective cohort of graduate students? 3. What do you hope to achieve in this graduate program? 4. How does a degree in history, archives and records management relate to your future goals?</p> |



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| Post-Master's Principal's Residency Certificate | Letter of intent stating: 1) Why you want to become a school administrator; 2) How your understanding of diversity relates to improving learning for all students. Include your understanding of diversity and your leadership experiences related to student diversity in your response, recognizing that your school/district has students with diverse backgrounds. For the purpose of this letter of intent, diversity may include but not be limited to: highly capable, special needs, 504 plans, ELL/ESL, ethnicity and culture, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other; 3) Your goals and objectives as an education leader. |
| Post-Master's Superintendent Certificate | Letter of intent stating: a) Your goals and objectives as a district-level leader; b) How your understanding of diversity relates to improving learning for all students. Include your understanding of diversity and your leadership experiences related to student diversity in your response, recognizing that your school/district has students with diverse backgrounds. For the purpose of this letter of intent, diversity may include but not be limited to: highly capable, special needs, 504 plans, ELL/ESL, ethnicity and culture, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other. |