

Suggestions in writing your Statement of Purpose¹

What should be included in your Statement of Purpose? Generally, the Statement of Purpose includes three parts with each part being one to two pages in length.

Part 1: Goals

Describe your general academic and career goals, the research areas you would like to invest in, and why the Department of Architectural Studies at the University of Missouri is a suitable place for you to learn. You may want to refer to specific classes, faculty, or research projects of interest. Ideally, your ideas will be clear, specific, and persuasive.

Part 3. Personal History and Motivation

Describe your life background in terms of how it has prepared you for this next stage of your studies. Include relevant aspects of your life story and achievements, as well as educational and cultural opportunities or circumstances that supported or deprived you of such achievements; family background; economic circumstances; special interests and abilities; and community or social service involvement. Be selective in describing things that specifically relate to your academic goals and intellectual pursuits. Be sure to focus on details of your research experience, and how your background has prepared you for the next stage of your studies. You could describe the current research or methodological courses you have already taken, your design practice accomplishments and how it might benefit your research direction, and possibly the resources and access you might already have for a research study. You could also mention how your past work ethic, motivation and personal discipline might sustain you through your future doctoral education.

Part 2: Research Proposal

Provide a possible example of a specific research study that you may wish to undertake while at University of Missouri, Columbia. You may have a single project in mind, or perhaps two alternates, for a dissertation. Although you are not committed to do this particular project (and, if fact, it is expected that your ideas will evolve during your studies), the graduate committee will use these proposed ideas to assess your ability to conceptualize a research plan. Ideally, your research proposal(s) frames a research question, articulates why it is important, demonstrates an understanding of the relevant literature and gaps in current knowledge, and identifies what types of research methods one might apply to address the problem. If possible, identify faculty in the Department of Architectural Studies or faculty in other departments with whom you would like to work.

¹ Modified from Stanford University Statement of Purpose