

## PREPARE A STRONG WRITTEN STATEMENT

---

Your statement of interest (written statement) is a crucial part of your graduate or professional school application. It's a chance for you to build the case that you are focused, skilled, enthusiastic and a great match for the program you're applying to. Your statement should reflect your relevant skills, qualifications and traits requested by the program admission criteria. A strong statement won't make up for a weak application, but it can be the deciding factor if the program's selection committee is considering several applicants of equal strength.

---

### Steps for writing your statement

- + **Research your program of interest:** read the instructions carefully for each school. Tailor each application to reflect that department's culture, vision, research strengths and faculty areas of expertise.
- + **Know your strengths:** you'll need to describe your strengths and how they will help you in your potential program. Explore the competency section of our website ([uvic.ca/coopandcareer/buildskills](http://uvic.ca/coopandcareer/buildskills)) for help with assessing and describing your competencies.
- + **Brainstorm:** spend some time reflecting on your life and experiences. Some questions for you to consider are:
  - What experiences or education made you want to pursue further studies?
  - What appeals to you about this specific program?
  - What unique perspective can you bring to this area of study?
  - What do you plan to do once you finish your studies?
- + **Write your first draft:** when composing your first draft, strive to write an engaging and thoughtful piece. Some tips:
  - Speak from the heart—don't just say what you think the committee wants to hear.
  - Be concise—get to the point early, catch the reader's attention and focus on specific experiences. Be sure to follow the word count guidelines. If none are provided, limit the length to two pages or less.
  - Show enthusiasm for this program and institution in particular and why you want to attend.
  - Write with a confident and positive tone.
  - Always keep your audience in mind. Professional schools have a different focus than master's or doctoral programs.
- + **Edit:** after taking a break, revisit your draft. This is also a great time to ask for help from a career educator ([uvic.ca/coopandcareer/advice](http://uvic.ca/coopandcareer/advice)). Consider these questions in your revisions:
  - Did you follow all of the specified guidelines?
  - Does your statement accurately reflect you and your goals and passions?
  - Does it highlight your competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes) and experience as they relate to the program?
  - Does it highlight your key research experiences?
  - Does it reflect a sincere expression of your interest in the program and institution?
  - Have you used any cliché phrases or long quotes that you may want to reconsider?
  - Is it concise and grammatically correct?