

# Letter of Intent

## History Department Guide to Preparation

The letter of intent is an important factor in the admission process. Its main goal is to provide the graduate admission committee with information on your intended MA or Ph.D project and to ensure that we can provide adequate supervision.

### Public History MA (16-month stream)

The public history research outcome is either a paper of 40-50 pages on a public history topic OR an exhibit, website or public history project accompanied by a 20-page paper documenting the research component of the project. The statement of intent should:

1. be 1-2 pages long;
2. explain your intended area of study at a general level (representations of Tudor monarchs in museum exhibits, colonialism in public statues in Victoria, historical sites run by BC parks)
3. explain your interest and/or background in public history and the kinds of internship opportunities that might interest you;
4. indicate what media you might be interested in using in your final project (essay form, film, website, blogs, photo exhibit, etc.)
5. If you have identified a supervisor you would like to work with, please indicate this here. If you have been in touch with that person previously please let us know.

### Major Research Project (MRP) MA (12-month option)

The MRP research outcome is a paper of 40-45 pages that usually grows out of course work and is based on primary sources. The statement of intent should:

1. be 1-2 pages long;
2. explain your intended area of study at a general level (examples: American gender history in the 20th century; Genoese elites in 15th Century; Canadian prairie aboriginal people in the 19th century; Ukrainian environmental policy after Chernobyl);
3. refer to the primary sources you plan to use, if known;
4. indicate the particular academic approach, theory or scholar(s) that inspire your work, if any;
5. explain your background in this area and how you have become interested in it;
6. If you have identified a supervisor you would like to work with, please indicate this here. If you have been in touch with that person previously please let us know.

### Thesis MA (24-month option)

Students will create a 70-120 page thesis that requires access to appropriate resources and supervision. The statement of intent should:

1. be 1-2 pages long;
2. explain your intended general area of study and then more particularly the specific topic you are contemplating for your thesis. Be as specific as you can. If you would like some guidance on

refining a topic feel free to contact the graduate advisor who will refer you to an area specialist who may end up as your supervisor.

Examples of thesis topics might be:

- a) American women members of Congress between 1960-1980, with an emphasis on understanding what was necessary in that period to transcend gender stereotypes; or
  - b) the extent to which "pass laws" were effective at keeping First Nations confined to reserves in southern Alberta between WWI and WWII, with the intent of determining how the Indian Act could have had coercive effects outside its stated policy."
3. refer to the primary sources you plan to use, if known;
  4. indicate the particular academic approach, theory or scholar(s) that inspire your work, if any;
  5. explain your background in this area and how you have become interested in it;
  6. If you have identified a supervisor you would like to work with, please indicate this here. If you have been in touch with that person previously please let us know.

It is possible to change your topic once you are in the program but when we accept your application it is because we can guarantee supervision. A change in topic is only possible if there is a supervisor available for the new topic.

## **Ph.D.**

Students will create a 200-300 page dissertation which requires access to appropriate resources and supervision. The statement of intent should:

1. be about 2 pages long;
2. explain your intended general area of study and then more particularly the specific topic you are contemplating for your dissertation. Be as specific as you can. If you would like some guidance on refining a topic feel free to contact the graduate advisor who will refer you to an area specialist who may end up as your supervisor;
3. refer to the primary sources you plan to use, if known;
4. describe the academic approach, theory or scholar(s) that have influenced your approach;
5. explain your background in this area and how you have become interested in it;
6. If you have identified a supervisor you would like to work with, please indicate this here. If you have been in touch with that person previously please let us know.

It is possible to change your topic once you are in the program but when we accept your application it is because we can guarantee supervision. A change in topic is only possible if there is a supervisor available for the new topic.