

Letter Of Intent

What is a letter (statement) of intent?

A letter of intent is a sort of intellectual autobiography.

- It tells the readers where you have been and where you are going in terms of study and research.
- It is your opportunity to show the readers that you can:
 - Determine the purpose of the essay
 - Stick to the topic at hand
 - Write concisely and get to the point
- It also shows:
 - What you have done that backs up your claims
 - How you will fit into their department

It is important that you do not use one generic model for all your applications.

Each one should be tailored to the specific university that you are applying to.

If the university does not have a word requirement, you should keep it to 500 – 600 words.

Before you start: Do your homework

- Research the program you are applying to.
- Be familiar with the courses offered and the professors giving them.
- Go one step farther and find out what the professors have worked on and are working on.
- It is a big plus if, in your essay, you can say you are familiar with Professor so and so's work, and this is an area you would like to explore.
- However, you must be sincere.
- Sometimes it is helpful to ask current professors if they know faculty members in this department.

How to start

- The first sentence is often the hardest to write, and it is the most important.
- This is your chance to really grab the reader's attention.
- A thought-provoking sentence would be great.
- An event that influenced your desire to continue studying can be effective.
- It might be amusing, life changing or a moment of epiphany.
- If this sentence is causing writer's block, leave it for now and come back to it later.

Organization of the letter

First sentence:

This is the attention grabber – the hook.

It may describe your desire to study – your influences and motivation.

Introduction:

Begin in a direct manner.

State the program to which you are making the application and whether you are seeking a master's or doctorate.

In a general sense, explain why you are applying to the program.

Your qualifications and background

The body:

First paragraph:

A summary of your education.

Second paragraph:

Extracurricular activities or work experience.

Third paragraph:

Specific courses or events that have made you want to continue.

Plans for the future.

Conclusion:

Reasons for wanting to attend this school.

Evidence that you have researched this program.

Briefly restate key points mentioned in the body.

End on a positive note. State that you will be successful in graduate study and research.

