**Guidance on Statement of Purpose**

Applicants for the Psychology PhD program are required to submit a written Statement of Purpose. This document provides applicants with guidance to help them develop an effective Statement of Purpose.

**Why is a Statement of Purpose required?**

The Statement of Purpose provides applicants with an opportunity to explain their background, goals, interests, and potential fit in the PhD program. This document helps faculty members learn about applicants in important ways beyond what is included in other application materials, such as GPA and letters of recommendation.

**What should be included in a Statement of Purpose?**

We recommend that students address the following questions in their Statement of Purpose document:

1. Why do you want to pursue a Ph.D. in Experimental or Clinical Psychology? What are your specific goals or interests?
2. Please describe your preparation for graduate study, writing and quantitative skills, and if relevant, how you have handled past challenges.
3. What prior experiences or education have prepared you to pursue a PhD in Psychology?
4. What are your research interests? What questions or topics do you hope to pursue in research?
5. How do your interests and goals align with the research and expertise of one or more faculty members in the Psychology Department? Please indicate 1-3 faculty members from the Psychology Department who would you most want to work with and why. For a list of faculty research interests, see: <https://psychology.ua.edu/research-overview/>
6. Please describe how your cultural, ethnic, or personal background will bring a unique and diverse perspective to the graduate program.

Students may choose to construct a narrative in which each question is addressed, or they may choose to prepare answers to each question in separate paragraphs.

**How long should the Statement of Purpose be?**

Effective Statements of Purpose are typically two to four pages long (double spaced). The document should be long enough to allow faculty members to understand applicants’ background, goals, and fit with the program, but not so short that important information may be missed.