

A template for Statement of Academic Purpose (SOAP)

This is simply a guide to help you formulate your ideas and thoughts. You have to pay attention to what the prompt is asking of you – which could be only a two-page statement, to breaking your writing response into discrete sections with specific questions. Usually, however, prompts ask generally the same thing. So, spend time writing a solid SOAP that you can parse and adjust accordingly.

1. Introduction paragraph
 - a. Your unique relationship to the research
 - b. This should have some background history of why you've chosen this area/major
2. Your current research paragraph
 - a. Definitely include your mentor's name!
 - b. This can include research you've done in the past
3. Your steps that you have taken to prepare for graduate school paragraph
 - a. Research conferences
 - b. McNair program
 - c. Internships
 - d. Research assistantships or volunteer work
4. A tie in with the university/professor
 - a. Drop their name(s)
 - b. How you have communicated – phone call, skype session
 - c. Why this program/scholarship/internship is a good fit for you
5. Conclusion paragraph
 - a. Future research you intend to do
 - b. The impact this will have on the community
 - c. Essentially, what you see yourself doing in five years



EWU Ronald E. McNair Scholar Program Statement of Academic Purpose Rubric

Statement of Academic Purpose Rubric				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Description of background, why the student is interested in pursuing this degree/field of study/research internship	<p>2.0 pts</p> <p>The document begins with a paragraph that "hooks" the readers' attention; background information describes the student's journey and why he or she is pursuing doctoral study/research.</p>	<p>1.0 pts</p> <p>The opening paragraph describes the student's background, but does not "hook" the reader's attention. Minimal information of relevant background is provided; clichés are used to describe the pursuit of doctoral study/research.</p>	<p>0.0 pts</p> <p>The opening paragraph does not describe the student's background or "hook" the reader's attention; clichés are used to describe the pursuit of doctoral study/research.</p>	2.0 pts
Research Experience and other Relevant Experiences	<p>2.0 pts</p> <p>Research interests are clearly stated, as well as what has led the student to those interests; brief description of the student's research experience has been included, as well as a description of the student's role in the research process.</p>	<p>1.0 pts</p> <p>Research interests are stated; little description of research experience or the student's role in the research process.</p>	<p>0.0 pts</p> <p>Research interests are not included.</p>	2.0 pts
Future research plans/ interests	<p>2.0 pts</p> <p>Future research plans are clearly stated; research interests draw a relevant connection to past research experience; research plans align with the mission or purpose of the graduate program/research internship.</p>	<p>1.0 pts</p> <p>Future research plans are stated, but not in enough detail; research draws a distant connection to past research experience; research plans are not clearly aligned with the mission or purpose of the graduate program/research internship.</p>	<p>0.0 pts</p> <p>Future research plans do not appear to be fully formulated; research does not draw a connection to past research experience.</p>	2.0 pts
Faculty	<p>2.0 pts</p> <p>At least one faculty person is named as a possible advisor/mentor; research connections are clear; it is evident that the student has researched and had contact with this faculty person.</p>	<p>1.0 pts</p> <p>A faculty person is named as a possible advisor/mentor; weak research connections are made; it is not clear whether the student has researched or had contact with the faculty person.</p>	<p>0.0 pts</p> <p>No faculty person is named.</p>	2.0 pts
Long-term goals/plans	<p>2.0 pts</p> <p>Long-term goals and plans are stated; it is clear how a PhD/research is a crucial part of the long-term goals and plans; it is clear how acceptance to this program/research internship will enable the pursuit of these goals and plans.</p>	<p>1.0 pts</p> <p>Long-term goals and plans are stated; it is somewhat unclear how a PhD/research internship is a crucial part of the long-term goals and plans; it is not sufficiently stated how acceptance to this program/research internship will enable the pursuit of these goals and plans.</p>	<p>0.0 pts</p> <p>Long-term goals and plans are not addressed.</p>	2.0 pts

Concluding statement or paragraph	2.0 pts The statement or paragraph reiterates the important parts of the Statement of Academic Purpose without being repetitive; the statement or paragraph does not include new topics that have not been addressed throughout the Statement of Academic Purpose; does not sound too confident or not confident enough.	1.0 pts The statement or paragraph reiterates the important parts of the Statement of Academic Purpose, but sounds somewhat repetitive or artificial.	0.0 pts There is no concluding statement or paragraph, or the statement addresses a new topic.	2.0 pts
Overall impression	2.0 pts 3. Statement is clear, succinct, and understandable; expression demonstrates superior command of the written word; statement encompasses the mission of the program to which it is written; demonstrates candidate's ability to thoroughly express ideas and thoughts; demonstrates superior potential for doctoral study.	1.0 pts Statement is fairly well-written and understandable; expression demonstrates average use of (or good potential in) the written word; demonstrates candidate's ability to reasonably express ideas and thoughts; demonstrates moderate potential for doctoral study.	0.0 pts Statement is poorly-written and/or organized; expression demonstrates minimal use of the written word; candidate's ability to express ideas and thoughts is minimal; demonstrates minimal potential for doctoral study.	2.0 pts
Responds to Direct Questions	2.0 pts All aspects of specific questions asked in the prompt are addressed; all directions are followed.	1.0 pts Loosely addresses specific questions asked in the prompt.	0.0 pts Does not address specific questions asked in the prompt.	2.0 pts
Total Points: 16.0				