



Portland State University MSW Statement of Purpose

Maximum length is 4 pages, your statement should be typed, double spaced and in 12 point font, handwritten statements or statements longer than 4 pages will not be accepted. Your statement must address both sections A and B. Neither section should exceed two pages. Essays are scored based on content and quality of writing. A well-written essay is clear, concise, and coherent. Use examples and descriptions to “show, not tell.” Finally, be sure to proofread for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

In writing your statement, please think about the following:

The mission of the Portland State University MSW program is to educate students for advanced leadership and practice that recognizes and dismantles systems of oppression; builds racial equity and social, political, and economic justice; and advances the well-being of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and tribal nations. We endeavor to deliver a social work education that is critically informed, theoretically driven, empirically supported, reflexive, ethical, vigilant and resistive to colonial, heteropatriarchal, classist, and white supremacist agendas.

Section A (2 pages double spaced):

1. Why do you want to be a Social Worker? Consider including:
 - Significant factors influencing your decision to pursue a Master of Social Work degree at Portland State University.
 - Information regarding personal, academic, and past human service experiences that will contribute to your success as a graduate student and Social Worker.
2. How do your identities inform your understanding of social justice and its role in social work? Include the following:
 - How have you demonstrated an ability to engage in social justice practice that works toward the liberation of all oppressed peoples?
 - What are your areas for growth?

Section B (1-2 pages double spaced):

1. Describe a specific social issue that interests you, include key contributing factors and explain why this issue is important.
2. Discuss ways the social work profession could respond to this issue. This may include:
 - plausible solution(s)
 - challenges likely to surface in seeking a solution
 - possible steps for implementation
 - any roles you might play in addressing the issue.