



Statement of Purpose Prompts

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP (Ed.L.D.) APPLICANTS

To help us better understand your decision to become a system-level leader, please discuss the following:

Your background:

- What lived experiences have contributed to your commitment to education?
- What do you view as your most significant professional accomplishment(s) and your most significant professional failure(s) to date? How did they inform your development?

Your plans:

- What issues would you like to tackle in your career as a system-level leader in education?
- How do you envision yourself effecting significant change in the American preK-12 education sector?

(1500-word limit)

MASTER OF EDUCATION (Ed.M.) APPLICANTS

In your statement, please discuss:

- Your background: What lived experiences have contributed to your commitment to work in the field of education or with education-related issues?
- Your objectives for graduate study: What are your academic and professional goals and what knowledge, skills, and tools are you hoping to develop through enrollment in a graduate program?
- Your fit: Why is enrollment at HGSE and in your selected Program and Concentration (if applicable) critical in helping you achieve your goals?

As a reminder, competitive Ed.M. candidates need not have prior direct experience in an education setting though you should have a clear conception of why you're pursuing a master's degree in education. In addition, "education" and "education-related" are broadly defined at HGSE and encompass all fields, roles, and contexts covered by the Ed.M. Programs and Concentrations we offer.

(1500-word limit)

Additional Required Questions

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP (Ed.L.D.) APPLICANTS ONLY

Describe a strategy from outside your organization – or even the education sector – that could radically improve the American (U.S.) PreK-12 education system and explain why you think this strategy would have a strong impact.

(750-word limit)

MASTER OF EDUCATION (Ed.M.) APPLICANTS ONLY

Please respond to the following prompt:

The mission of the Harvard Graduate School of Education is to prepare education leaders and innovators who will change the world by expanding opportunities and outcomes for learners everywhere. Please tell us how you will contribute to the vibrant HGSE community and help advance the mission.

(250-word limit)

Statement of Purpose Tips and FAQ

WHAT MAKES A STRONG STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?

The Statement of Purpose is your opportunity to show the admissions committee your commitment to education and to pursuing graduate study at HGSE. You are encouraged to share parts of your personal story, especially those that relate to your decision to work in education or your experiences in the field. A strong Statement of Purpose will clearly outline how your experiences have prepared you for graduate study at HGSE, how HGSE and your chosen program directly align with your personal and professional goals, and what you plan to do with the education and tools you acquire during your time here.

DO I NEED TO CITE SOURCES IN MY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?

If you are using quotes or referring to work done by another individual, you should cite your sources. We do not have a preferred citation format, nor will a citation count towards the word limit.

Please remember that your Statement of Purpose should focus on your experience and goals for graduate study. Applicants are not advised to rely too heavily on the ideas or work of other individuals.

DO I NEED TO REFER TO SPECIFIC FACULTY MEMBERS OR COURSES IN MY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?

You are not required to refer to specific faculty members or courses in your Statement of Purpose, but you are welcome to if you feel there is a faculty member whose work aligns with your goals for graduate study or courses you can connect to your stated interests.

IF I AM APPLYING TO MULTIPLE GRADUATE PROGRAMS, CAN I USE THE SAME STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS?

You may decide how to approach your Statement of Purpose, but the strongest statements are those that are specific to HGSE. The Admissions Committee uses the Statement of Purpose not only to evaluate writing skills but also to understand your fit with HGSE and your chosen program. You are encouraged to review the available information about our [degree programs](#) and make clear connections between your interests and goals and the resources available at HGSE.