Walla Walla University
Department of Biological Sciences

Guidelines for Statement of Goals and Objectives/Admission Essay

As stated in the Graduate Bulletin, applicants for the graduate program in the Department of Biological Sciences need to submit a written statement of goals and objectives. The following information provides you with “helpful hints” for writing this statement.

Format of Statement
While we have no required length for this statement, we suggest that you limit it to 2-4 pages double-spaced.

You do not need to subdivide your statement into separate sections, but you may do so if you wish.

Purpose of Statement
What are your goals for graduate school and beyond?
Why do you wish to enter a graduate program in biology? What do you hope to accomplish during your time in graduate school? What are your goals for the future, and how will a graduate degree assist you in reaching these goals?

Will our department assist you in achieving your goals?
Why do you wish to come to WWU? What does our department offer that will help you achieve your goals/objectives?

We need to know your goals for graduate school and beyond in order to provide an educational package that will assist you in reaching these goals. Do you wish to teach? Conduct research? Continue your education?

What are your research interests?
What area(s) of research interest you? You will be spending many hours on your research project, so it is important that you choose a project that really appeals to you.

We also need to make sure that there is a potential match in interests between you and one of our faculty. For example, if you really want to study sperm whale biology, our department may not be your best choice. You may view our faculty and/or peruse the faculty research areas on this page by clicking on each faculty’s name: https://wallawalla.edu/academics/areas-of-study/biological-sciences/faculty/

Are your writing skills sufficient for a career as a professional biologist?
Scientists, starting as graduate students, are measured primarily by their publications. A scientific experiment, no matter how spectacular the results, is not completed until the results are published. Thus, the ability to write is crucial for a career in biology.

Your statement will enable us to examine your writing skills, and will allow us to assist your progress as a scientific writer. If your training as a scientific writer has been minimal, we may suggest ways of helping you improve your writing skills.