

How to Write a Master's Statement or Doctoral Plan of Study. (maximum 1 page)

The research statement must be clear, concise, and immediately clear to the reader. In many instances students fail to declare their actual research question until the third paragraph, which is far too late for this purpose. The Plan of Study Research must address the following in an active voice:

1. **Research Topic and Specific Question:** Avoid vague/unfocused questions. Be specific, and be clear about your objective(s).
2. **Development and Justification:** Why is this question within this topic important to study? What sort of gap in current knowledge does it aim to address?
3. **Literature/Research Context:** Reference the most important scholarly literature on the topic in order to set your topic, question, and justification in its proper context. The trick, however, is to be brief and succinct. The context demonstrates that one knows the background, but also, therefore, establishes the setting for adjudicators from diverse fields and within which your study takes shape.
4. **Research Method:** It is critical that the research method demonstrate the student's superior research ability, potential and vision. It must be appropriate, realistic and achievable.
5. **Contributions/Goals:** Indicate the significance and/or implications of the research. In relation to "why" one seeks to research a particular topic and question is the "so what?" of what one will find. Why do or should the answers matter, to what and to whom?
6. **Overall Coherence of the Program of Study:** Ensure that all components (research question, justification, literature review, method, etc. fit well together in a coherent manner.

Describe your proposed plan of study in non-technical terms. Avoid jargon and acronyms and ensure that your proposal is written in clear, plain language easily understandable to a multidisciplinary committee.