



Statement of Purpose Instructions

In addition to being an exciting educational experience, doctoral study is extremely demanding. USC, like many other social work PhD programs, receives applications from many more people than can be accommodated. To help the Doctoral Committee make its decisions about who is most likely to meet the demands and profit from the program, and therefore, to make the greatest contribution to knowledge-building in the profession, applicants are asked to describe their reasons for wanting to enroll in our PhD program.

Use the following seven (7) topics as guides to conceptualize your statement:

- 1) Your immediate and long-term career goals and how doctoral studies will help you reach these goals. The reasons you have decided to apply to a doctoral program at this point in time and why you think USC's program is the right one for you.
- 2) The areas of academic interest you intend to pursue in the doctoral program, including the major questions or issues of primary interest to you. Describe how these interests developed and why they are critical for knowledge development in social work or social welfare.
- 3) Your academic strengths and weaknesses.
- 4) Your scholarly contributions to date and your activities of a scholarly nature (e.g., workshop leadership, papers delivered at conferences, publications, etc.)
- 5) Any community or professional leadership roles or responsibilities that you have held in recent years.
- 6) Any physical, social, or emotional limitations that might restrict your ability to pursue doctoral studies and how you anticipate handling these limitations.
- 7) Graduate education can be costly. It often means a change in current lifestyle. Do you anticipate any changes and how do you plan to prepare for them? If you have personal responsibilities, how do you plan to meet them?

This material is considered confidential for the use of those persons directly concerned with the admission decision and with planning and directing your educational experience.