

## Faculty of Social Work PhD Program Statement of Intent Guidelines

The Statement of Intent is the heart of your application to the Faculty of Social Work's PhD Program. The following guidelines are intended to build on the information provided in the Statement of Intent document and are specific to this program only.

Below, information is provided for each of the four sections of the Statement of Intent. While completing the document, keep in mind that while it is important to speak to each section, **most of your attention should go to your research interests and proposed research plan.**

Please note: While the Statement of Intent provides you with the opportunity to list a preferred advisor, this is not a requirement for the Faculty of Social Work. In our program, a student's advisor is not established until they are well into their first year of studies. This provides our students with time and opportunity to meet and engage with our faculty members as part of the process of establishing an advisor and committee.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [FSWPhD@wlu.ca](mailto:FSWPhD@wlu.ca).

### **1) Describe your proposed area(s) of study, including the theoretical and practical issues you want to explore.**

- Present a preliminary-defined research area
- Demonstrate clear engagement with current scholarly literature, including citation of academic sources
  - A bibliography should be included at the end of your Statement of Intent (this does not count towards the 2,000-word limit)
- Demonstrate awareness of key debates in social work and relevant interdisciplinary fields
- Identify gaps in the literature and articulate potential contribution to knowledge, theory, policy, or practice through your proposed research

### **2) Explain the significance of your proposed area of study, outline potential research questions and discuss possible ways of studying them**

- Present coherent and feasible research question(s)
- Identify relevant theoretical framework(s)
- Demonstrate a preliminary understanding of research design and methodology
- Given the space limitations, note that you do not need to address minor details (such as how confidentiality will be maintained)

**3) Why are you applying to this particular program? What connections are there between your research interests and specific faculty?**

- Provide a clear rationale for pursuing a PhD in Social Work at Laurier
- Convey how your proposed research reflects the social work profession's missions and values
- Demonstrate your alignment with the strengths and focus of the program
- Articulate your long-term goals (academic, research, leadership, policy, or practice)
- Demonstrate your awareness of the demands of doctoral study (independent work, sustained writing, theoretical depth of work)

**4) Identify any relevant training (academic or non-academic) or experiences (field or work experience) that you have and describe how it is applicable to your proposed study. Note your publications and/or conference presentations**

- Reflect on your interest in research (e.g., thesis, research assistant work, program evaluation, applied research)
- Reflect on your relevant practice experience in the field of social work
- Reflect on your positionality (identity, lived experience, professional location, etc) in the context of how it strengthens and shapes your scholarly inquiry
  - Self-awareness and reflexivity are particularly important if you are proposing research with a community you are not a member of
- Identify your experience with academic writing (e.g., thesis-based publications or manuscripts in progress; conference papers or abstracts; reports or evaluations written for scholarly or policy audiences)