



Michigan Tech
Social Sciences

PREPARING YOUR GRADUATE PROGRAM APPLICATION

This document will help you prepare your application for the Department of Social Sciences graduate programs. These programs include Environmental and Energy Policy (MS and PhD), Industrial Heritage and Archaeology (MS and PhD), and Sustainable Communities (MS).

The most important components of your application are your statement of purpose, personal statement, resume, writing sample and letters of recommendation.

The **Statement of Purpose** is a statement of your research goals and is the primary way that the review committee determines if your interests and experience make you a good candidate for the program you are applying to. Your goal is to provide a brief history of your past research experience and the future research you intend to complete. Your statement should address these key components:

- Tell us why this particular graduate program is ideal for your chosen research. Be specific! Tell us what courses you want to take and why, and which faculty members you are interested in working with. Ph.D. programs require that you have identified a potential faculty advisor. If that advisor has agreed to work with you, indicate that in your statement.
- Articulate the broader field that you are working within and the broad research questions that you are interested in answering.
- Articulate your specific research interests. Give us a potential example of a research project you might pursue during your residency in the program. The more specific the better but we understand and expect that your interests will change and/or sharpen over time.
- Discuss what potential methods you would like to apply.

The Personal Statement is where you should explain your professional career goals and experiences:

- Describe your specific career goals.
- Tell us how this specific graduate degree will help you achieve these career goals.
- Describe the work, education, research, or personal experiences that have prepared you for graduate study. Give specific examples.
- Explain any discrepancies in your record, such as low grades.

Resumes should reflect your academic achievements, work experience, and accomplishments that would be important to the specific degree and graduate program. What you list on your resume should be tailored to highlight your experience relevant to the program. Include your GPA and undergraduate major on your resume. If you completed an Undergraduate Senior thesis or MS thesis, Include information about that and other relevant class projects.

If you are applying to the Industrial Heritage & Archaeology or the Environmental and Energy Policy program, there are other specific application requirements you need to address in your materials:

The **Writing Sample** you submit should be carefully chosen to reflect your best example of clear, analytical, and organized writing for a social science audience. Ideally (but not required) you will have a sample that is related to the program to which you are applying. The length should be between 5 to 10 pages.

Letters of recommendation should be from people who know your academic work and can speak to your strengths and weaknesses. Letters from employers are only relevant when your work is related to the specific program to which you are applying.

Environmental and Energy Policy Prerequisites: This program has a prerequisite of an undergraduate course in microeconomics.