



**Program: Master of Public Administration – All Emphases**

**Document: Document Guidelines and Additional Instructions [v2.0]**

## How to Compose and Format Your Application Documents

During the application process, you will be asked to submit a statement of purpose and resume. To help you prepare your application documents for submission, please use the following instructions. Guidance regarding the Letters of Recommendation are also included in this document.

### **1. Instructions for Uploading Your Statement of Purpose (SOP):**

**SOP Content:** Each candidate’s statement of purpose is unique and, as such, there is no fixed content. However, in general terms, the statement of purpose is designed to confirm that you are a good fit for the program (i.e. that you understand the program and that its curriculum is a good match for your goals). As such, use your statement of purpose as an opportunity not only to demonstrate your ability to create a well-written, viable, and cohesive narrative, but also to “connect the dots” between the program and your goals by explaining in detail HOW you believe that the program can help you to reach those goals.

To that end, please be sure that your statement of purpose helps the academic college to understand your motivation in applying to the program, i.e. what you hope to achieve therefrom. Examples might include some depth related to: academic growth, personal growth, professional development, skill enhancement, community service, knowledge of public administration’s role in providing services, expanding knowledge about policymaking, decision making, how organizations are structured, knowledge about human resource management, the importance of public administration research, etc.

Additionally — *and perhaps most importantly* — the statement of purpose should clearly, and in some detail, explain HOW you believe that the program’s content will aid in your goal. Examples might include: expanding on existing skills/knowledge, developing new skills/knowledge, contextualizing existing experience with new modes of thinking, broadening scope, etc. This type of statement can only be crafted in relation to the program’s current content, and so please take time to review the “Course Description” section of the program’s “Curriculum” page on the website and ensure that your answers directly relate to the courses and their content.

One of the ways to test that your statement of purpose contains the minimum requisite elements is to ask yourself: Does it answer all of the following questions (directly below)? And, does it do so with a solid level of articulation, depth, and quality?

- How will the program help you to achieve your educational goals?
- How will the program help you to achieve your career goals?
- How will the program’s curriculum help to achieve these goals?
- What do you hope to gain from the MPA program?

**SOP Formatting:** Please use the following guidelines to properly format your Statement of Purpose:

- File naming convention: first name\_last name\_SOP (ex. John\_Smith\_SOP)
- 300-400 words, double-spaced, 12-point type, Times New Roman font
- PDF or Word file formats only

## **2. Instructions for Uploading Your Resume:**

**Resume Content:** The contents of your resume should be an accurate snapshot of your education and relevant work history, as it relates to your application to this program

**Resume Formatting:** Please use the following guidelines to properly format your resume:

- File naming convention: first name\_last name \_resume (ex. John\_Smith\_Resume).
- PDF or Word file formats only.

## **3. Recommendation Instructions for Applicants with a <3.0 GPA**

Applicants are required to have recommendation letters submitted to the department by three (3) references. The recommendation letters should be from supervisors, describing work performance, professional growth, and potential as a graduate student. **Please note that personal recommendations from friends or family are not acceptable.**

After you have submitted your online application, and all your official transcripts have been received and evaluated, you will be contacted by email with additional instructions on submitting the required letters of recommendation, if applicable.

**What is FERPA and How Does It Affect Application Recommendations:** All students who are admitted and matriculated to the program will have access to the information provided on any recommendations submitted on their behalf, under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), unless such access is waived.

**You Choice to Waive or Not Waive:** Your choice will be disclosed to your chosen recommenders within the request email. This waiver is voluntary and cannot be a condition of admission, award, or employment, and is specific only to these recommendations.

As an applicant, you have the right to view your recommender's submission; however, please be aware that many recommenders may expect you to waive this right. As such, they may be less likely to submit a recommendation if they know that you will be able to read it. **Please carefully consider this when making your waiver choice.**

'I **waive** my right...' means that **you will NOT be able to see** what your recommenders write.

'I **do not waive** my right...' means that **you WILL be able to see** what they write, after the admission process is over.



Please advise your recommenders that these requests will be sent by the CSUN Tseng College for Graduate, International and Midcareer Education's "CSUN Adobe Sign" from the [echosign@echosign.com](mailto:echosign@echosign.com) email address, and to check their spam and/or junk mail filters before contacting our office about missing requests.

**Changing your Recommenders/Waiver Choice:** If you need to change either your recommender, or your waiver choice, please email us at [exlappsupport@csun.edu](mailto:exlappsupport@csun.edu) or call 818-677-3332 for next steps.

### **What If I Have Content Questions or Technical Issues?**

For help with content: Please contact The Tseng College Office of Graduate and Professional Education (GPE) at (866) 873-6439 / [programs@csun.edu](mailto:programs@csun.edu) (Mon-Fri, 8AM-5PM).

If you need technical assistance, please review our "[Helpful Tips](#)" page if you encounter any problems while completing the online application. If you are still having technical problems, you may email [collexl@csun.edu](mailto:collexl@csun.edu) and a staff member will assist you (Mon-Fri, 8AM-5PM).