

# **THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE** **Autonomous**

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

A Statement of Purpose, also referred to as an SOP, is a reflection of your personality that you portray in front of the admission committee for getting enrolled in universities abroad. It is your chance of impressing the committee by presenting your profile strongly through an essay that describes your personality traits, which are not covered in your academic documents.

#### **WHAT IS SOP?**

An SOP is a long essay required by universities abroad and nowadays some of the Indian universities during the application process. As the full form of SOP reveals, a Statement of Purpose is an essay stating the purpose of applying to a particular course in a particular university. This essay consists of a gist of who you are, who you want to become, and how ready you are to pursue a certain course in an institution.

The essay seeks to understand the candidate's life, the motivations for the chosen career path and his/her goals. Hence, you should discuss the past incidents that have influenced your career path in a specific domain wherein you aspire to grow by joining a course/college.

#### **WHY IS SOP IMPORTANT?**

A well-written SOP is extremely critical to your admission. Needless to say, there are many aspects of a candidate's application that are inspected before finalizing a decision. While the academic record and other exam scorecards/academic transcripts and backlog certificate are essentially objective in nature, an SOP is the only truly subjective aspect of your application. It is the only document in your application that gives you the opportunity to prove that you have something unique that makes you stand out from the crowd. As such, it is the document of your application docket that can hugely determine your admission.

#### **SHOULD YOU PUT YOUR NAME ON YOUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?**

In a traditional SOP, you do not need to write your name or course details

anywhere in the document. The SOP is a part of your application/student profile, thus, it will have your name and course details by default. However, there might be some universities or schools that specify whether they require your name and course details in the SOP. These universities will provide you with specific instructions on how and where to write your personal details in a document. Thus, you need to follow their instructions thoroughly.

### **WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN AN SOP?**

While drafting your SOP, you need to keep in mind that the Admission Committee will be reviewing thousands of applications for the same course. Thus, not only your SOP needs to be crisp and precise, but it should also highlight the uniqueness in your profile. Here are few things that the College Review Committee generally look for in a student's SOP:

Your writing capability is reflected in your SOP. Your SOP should be free from grammatical errors. The language should be lucid enough for them to comprehend yet should have a good vocabulary. Make sure not to use too many heavy words as sometimes too much of rich vocabulary makes the sentence redundant and it fails to communicate the meaning.

What makes you stand out from the rest of the crowd? Highlight your unique side/unique personality. The Admission Committee should be able to recognize you as an individual through your SOP. Your interests and goals will help them know you on a personal basis.

With your talent, previous experiences and interest, how and what can you contribute to the department and college/university, as a whole? Think of it as a two-way process. If you get admitted, your career will get a kick-start and through your efforts and participation, the department/college can receive benefits. You need to mention how you will be able to contribute towards their community, be it through sports, community services, societies or clubs, and so on.

Being familiar with the university facilities and curriculum will help you a great deal. You need to be aware of the student programmes, faculty, internship opportunities, student facilities and societies, traditions etc. that sets the university apart from others. The Admission Committee should be convinced that you know about the department and college/university thoroughly and thus, you are applying in it and not applying randomly.

Your motivation or inspiration to study a selected course should be clear, evident and justified. Admission Committee does not approve of bragging

sentences in the SOP. So keep it original, real, and free from any overbearing or arrogant statements.

### **HOW LONG SHOULD A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE BE?**

Statement of Purpose should be 1-2 pages long, ideally wrapped in 800-1000 words. However, the length of this document may vary as per university-specific requirements. Some universities have a fixed length and pattern of SOPs required, which is fixed to 500 words only, even 200 words in some cases. Most of the universities accept generic length, which is 800-1000 words, which may go beyond 1000, but not exceeding 1200 words, in some cases.

It is generally easy to write a story of your life explaining the importance of each incident in shaping or molding your character. However, when it comes to defining your SOP within the communicated word limit by some university, the challenge is to portray your best within limited words. In such cases, it is better to mention the major achievements from every place you been to such as school, college, office, etc.

Some overseas Universities do not require SOP, they rather give you Essay Prompts along with a word limit. In order to learn the importance of word limit in an SOP, you may refer to this Importance of Word Limit in Essay.

### **WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN SOP?**

There are many elements to an SOP. Universities could ask question-based essays or simply a general statement of purpose. Until and unless categorically asked, an SOP must include your goals and the career path you have taken up so far as well as your academic progress. Other elements that are further important to the SOP are also the personal motivations that lead you to choose the university/course you have applied to as well as how you intend to use that experience to achieve that goal.

While understanding how to write an SOP, we come across various questions. To sum up your entire life and career in 100 words can be a tiresome exercise. With the word constraints rather important, what is important to understand at the onset is what to include in your SOP?

### **SOP PARAGRAPH 1: INTRODUCTION & STATEMENT OF GOALS**

Use this space to talk about your goal in life. You can be creative here and use analogy or quotes to make it more interesting. But, don't waste a lot of space in introducing your goal. The sooner you lay it out, the better it is. Remember, it is an essay about your goals in life...so starting with it is always a good idea. It is not very unlike a goals essay asked from MBA aspirants.

### **SOP PARAGRAPH 2 & 3: CAREER PROGRESSION**

This is the para that you usually use to talk about yourself. You can start with a brief history about yourself and career progression starting from your school to your college. This is the paragraph that is usually dedicated to your academic pursuits. If you have work experience, you can limit your school life and talk more about your college in para 2 and move to work experience in para 3. If not and you are applying directly after your graduation or school, then you can divide para 2 for academic and para 3 for co-curricular. You can take a hint on how to write about your career progression.

### **SOP PARAGRAPH 4: WHY?**

This is the most important part of your Statement of Purpose for this is the place where you provide the reason as to why you wish to do what you wish to do. You can make it more interesting by narrating an incident that leads you to the decision or a turning point in your life. The more emphatic and passionate you are in this paragraph, the better your essay.

### **SOP PARAGRAPH 5: HOW YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL?**

You are finally ending your essay. So far you have talked about what you want to do, what lead you to that decision and why you are moving towards this course. Now, lay down how you plan to achieve your goals. If you wish to get into research, write it. If you plan to work for a certain organization, write it. This goes on to show how well you have thought your life over. Also, give it time periods...for instance, I intend to work in the industry for 2 years before I start my research program.