



**Graduate Admission Committees: The Application Process
and How to Write a Good Statement of Purpose (SOP)**

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University Application Orientation (UAO)

- Ho Chi Minh City -

Friday, October 4, 2013

statement of purpose



The Statement of Purpose is the single most important part of your application that will tell the admissions committee who you are, what has influenced your career path so far, your professional interests and where you plan to go from here.

<http://www.statementofpurpose.com/>

statement of purpose



Statementofpurpose.com

...what's your story?

Home | Writing Tips | Sample Essays | FAQs | Resources | Blog | About Us | Contact

Monday, September 9, 2013

What the site contains:

- What is a Statement of Purpose?
- What do colleges look for in an SoP?
- How do I start writing mine?
- How do I polish my SoP?
- Can I see some sample SoPs? *Updated*
- What about recommendation letters?
- Can you help me with Scholarship SoPs? *New*
- What other resources can I tap?

My decision to pursue graduate study in the United States is und...
...What's your story?
ADMISSIONS STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE
STATEMENTOFPURPOSE.COM
Statementofpurpose.Com
ESSAYS UNIVERSITIES
HAVE PURPOSE? MAKE STATEMENT
...for the past four months I have been working as a project trainee...

The Statement of Purpose

Your Corner:

- [SOP Talk Blog](#)
- [Fill up our form](#)
- [Recommend a useful site](#)
- [Guestbook - \[Sign \] \[View \]](#)



Recommended Resources:

- Links:
- [The Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)

a statement of purpose
should include:



- **who you are;**
- **what has influenced you;**
- **your professional interests;**
- **where you plan to go.**

statement of purpose according
to the princeton review



- **what you want to study?**
- **why you want to study it?**
- **what experience you have?**
- **what you plan to do with your degree?**

<http://www.princetonreview.com/grad/statement-of-purpose.aspx>

In other words - a statement of purpose should include:



- **A reflection of your personality and critical thinking**
- **A clear and outstanding image of yourself**
- **Demonstration of your maturity in thought**
- **Plans - what you want to do in school**
- **Plans - what you want to do after school**

u.s. higher education



In the U.S. there are about 174,700 Ph.D. degrees to be awarded 2012-2013;

84,700 to males and 90,100 to females.

In 2011-2012 there were 860 Ph.D. Degree Granting Institutions; 308 public, 510 private nonprofit, and 42 private for profit.

Research Universities are those with Very High Research (108), High level of Research (99) and Basic Doctoral/Research Universities (90)

doctoral granting universities in the u.s. - 2012



| Number of Doctorate Granting Institutions | |
|--|------------|
| Public | 308 |
| Private Non-Profit | 510 |
| Private For-Profit | 42 |
| Total | 860 |
| | |
| Research University/Very High Research | 108 |
| Research University/High Research | 99 |
| Doctoral/Research University | 90 |

the point?



Each of the 860 institutions has its own application forms, its own application process, its own grumpy old faculty, its own application review process and its own admission recommendation policies.

A State of Purpose (SoP) is required by almost all institutions in some form.

ask yourself the following questions:



- **What kind of self-image do you want to present?**
- **What are your goals and what do you want to achieve?**
- **How do you plan to achieve them?**
- **What are your skills and characteristics?**
- **What are your major accomplishments?**
- **How can this particular program/school help you achieve it?**
- **Why do you want to study in the US?**
- **What is your plan after graduation?**

princeton review advice to International students



**Write, rewrite and then rewrite
your statement of purpose.**

Have a native English speaker read it to correct mistakes and make suggestions.

DO NOT, however, get someone else to write your statement for you. Grounds for immediate rejection when caught.

dennis' personal list for you



i was coordinator of graduate programs in sociology and environmental studies for years; i was dean of graduate studies for seven years; i sent this list to friends who were dean's or department chairs for their advice; here it is:

know what is being asked for



Know what is being asked for
from the university – respond to
what is asked for – no matter how
well written, if you are not
responding to what was requested
it will not be good.

not an english test....



The SoP is not a test of your English; your English is measured by the TOEFL test or the IELTS.

You should have your SoP reviewed for English mistakes, but it is not a test of English.

it is not cheating



It is not cheating to ask for help in reviewing your work; It is cheating to ask someone else to write your SoP for you; most professionals ask colleagues to review their work.

not an intelligence test



The SoP is not an assessment of your intelligence; nothing you do in the SoP is going to compensate for your academic record as contained in your official transcript.

who are you?



The “who are you?” should NOT be what they can already read - your application, transcript, or resume. The SoP should be who you really are. If you were going to tell me - and I am not going to make any judgment about your scholarship or your admission - what would you want me to know?

how did you get to here?



How did you get to where you are today? What are the big things in your life that account for the fact that you have a VEF scholarship and are applying for admission to a U.S. University?

professional you?



What are your professional interests? How have those interests impacted your life; not only your academic life but in other aspects of your life. Why did you choose your field of study?



what they can't read



What are your academic experiences outside the classroom? Is there research that you have been involved with, possible job or internship that involved you with the problems you wish to study? Don't just tell stories about how you always wanted to do this – they want to know what you have done that is related to your goals, your ability to do graduate work and your ability to have a successful professional life.

know the university



You really need to know the institution you are applying to; you need to be able to weave into you SoP the junction between your professional interests and your selection of this particular university. Each application should be unique and demonstrate that the student has done the homework on determining why the program is a good fit.

what are your plans?



What are you going to do in the future?

Don't say return to Vietnam and save your country; everybody says that. Talk about how you will use your degree and training to benefit you and your homeland. Draw on your dreams and your ambitions. Make this section real and personal and believable.

writing the SoP



- **gather your materials**
 - **have your entire application package in front of you – CV, transcripts, letters of recommendation, test scores, application forms**

writing the SoP



- go to the university websites you are interested in applying to
 - ensure you know the word count and include everything they are looking for.
 - That you know details about the department, faculty and program to which you are applying.

one possible organization



- **An example of organizational structure:**
 - **Hook/introduction that will make you stand out**
 - **Transition into your background**
 - **Related extracurricular activities**
 - **Publications or professional experiences and accomplishments**
 - **Explanations about challenges in the past**
 - **Why did you choose this graduate school?**
 - **Realistic future plans**

writing the SoP



- **Start with an outline...of the major sections.**
- **Write an Intro – Who am I? Not too much and not what they already know or can read from application.**
- **History - How did you get to this point in your life? The really – big things or people; we all have them.**
- **Professional interests – What are your interests, how did they develop?**

writing the SoP



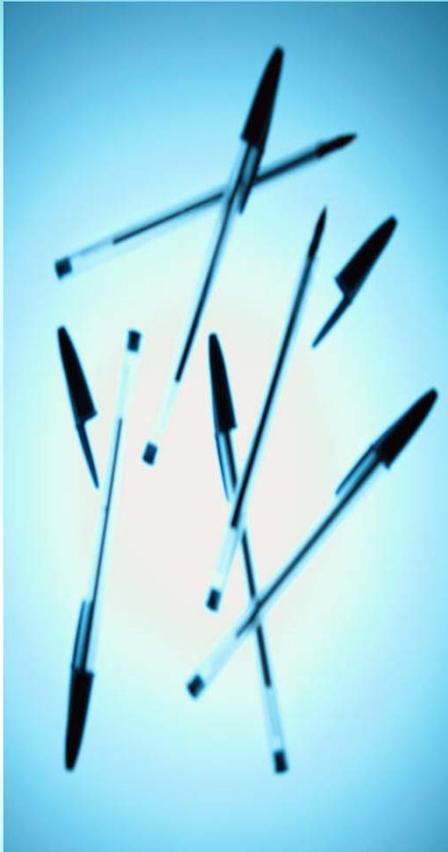
- **Research – your grounding in research; real experience and knowledge of the scientific process.**
- **The University –How does that university fit with your professional interests and research experience? Specific things about the university; department, program, faculty, research projects, etc.**
- **Plans – What is it you really want to do in life?**

writing the SoP



Once you have a good outline with perhaps a sentence or two in each section, then you begin to expand each section sentence by sentence, until you have paragraph(s). Be careful of the required limits – number of words; number of pages; etc. Know those before you begin.

writing the SoP



Draft your SoP; share it with friends; re-draft it; share it again; final draft; have it polished by a native speaker - someone good in English; read it again; make it perfect; format and layout and spelling and grammar - all perfect. Is your name on it? Other needed information? Submit It!

finally



So many things play a role in the admissions of a student into a university. All you can do is do your best on each and every part of the application process. The more errors or snags in your application, the lower your probability of admission – its that simple. But even if you do everything perfect you might not be admitted but DO NOT take it personally.

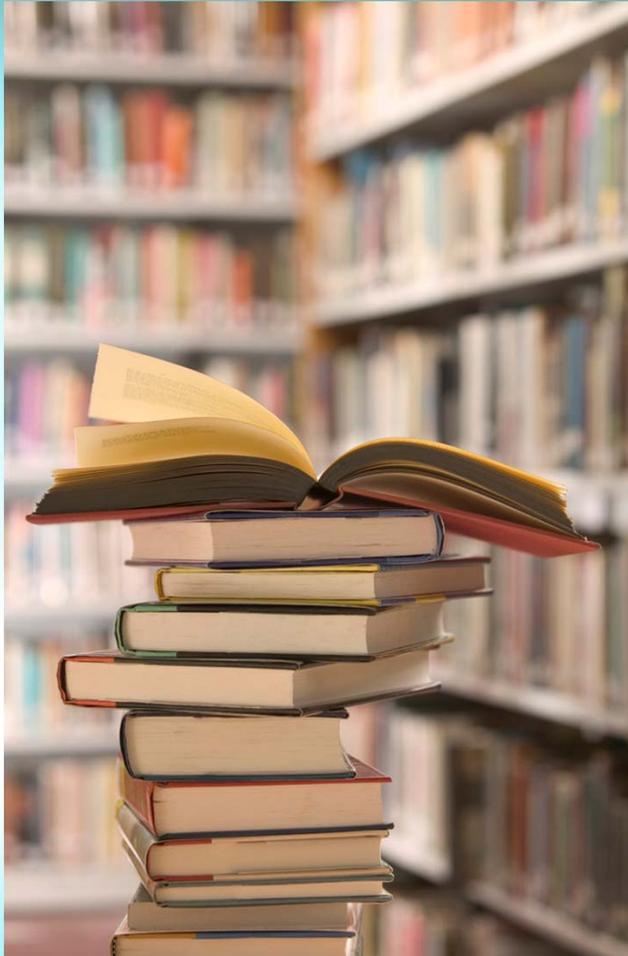
additional resources



Websites of the graduate schools and departments you will apply to (requirements & deadlines).

- **Thompson Peterson's online guide to graduate schools:**
http://www.petersons.com/graduate_home.asp?path=gr.home
- **About Graduate School:**
<http://gradschool.about.com/cs/generaladvice/a/guide.htm>

good luck to you



thank you!

questions?