### Key Sections of an SOO homework assignment (template)

#### **1. Background**

* Briefly describe the program, mission need, or problem to solve.
* Summarize the current environment (technical, organizational, or operational).
* Mention any prior efforts, pilots, or legacy systems relevant to the effort.

#### **2. Scope**

* Describe the general nature of the work without prescribing specific solutions.
* Identify key users, stakeholders, or beneficiaries.
* Include any known constraints (e.g., regulatory, technical stack, geographic limits).

#### **3. Objectives**

List 3–6 clear, outcome-based objectives the vendor must meet. Each objective should be:

* Measurable and aligned with mission outcomes.
* Flexible enough to allow for vendor innovation.

**Examples:**

* Improve the user experience of the visa application portal.
* Reduce FOIA request processing time by 30%.
* Deliver a functional MVP within 90 days of contract award.

#### **4. Deliverables**

* Identify expected high-level deliverables (e.g., MVP, user research report, roadmap, sprint demos).
* Focus on outputs and outcomes, not prescriptive tasks.

#### **5. Performance Standards / Metrics**

* Define how performance and success will be evaluated.
* Include relevant KPIs, service levels, or acceptance criteria.
* Align metrics with the objectives listed above.

#### **6. Constraints / Assumptions (Optional)**

* Identify known dependencies (e.g., data access, systems integration).
* Include mandated frameworks or compliance requirements (e.g., Section 508, FedRAMP, FISMA).
* Note any technology preferences, constraints, or assumptions critical to planning.

**7. Best Practices for Writing a SOO**

* Keep concise: ~15 pages or fewer
* Focus on outcomes, not detailed solutions
* Use clear, plain language
* Involve contracting early
* Align with modular acquisition if applicable

**8. Common Pitfalls to Avoid**

* Writing a SOW disguised as a SOO
* Overloading with technical specs
* Vague or unmeasurable objectives
* No clear success criteria

**9. After the SOO is Drafted**

* Review with:
  + Legal
  + Contracting
  + Program leadership
* Use it to:
  + Guide industry engagement (e.g., draft RFP, industry day)
  + Enable vendors to propose SOW or PWS in response

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