**HOW TO WRITE A WINNING STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Firstly, it is better to ask, **what is the purpose of writing a 'statement of purpose'?**

A **statement of purpose** is in nut-shell, a substitute for your **personal interview**. The universities you are applying for cannot take your personal interview before admissions for several technical and time-bound limitations, so they have come up with this alternative to account for your personal interview, a statement of purpose, however, is more comprehensive than a personal interview. It is also a wonderful opportunity to express yourself and let the university know what you are capable of unlike a personal interview wherein your performance is limited to your speaking capabilities.

**Points to remember before you begin to write**:

* Remember that a statement of purpose is an **“essay”** and as such an essay has no **“headings”**, please do not write under headings within which you consider developing your essay.
* A statement of purpose is not your “**autobiography**”, so please do not delve too much into your personal details. This is commonsensical aspect which every student should understand because your readers are interested only in what is inspiring you to pursue higher education and whatever **“personal”** or **“autobiographical”** details you mention should be relevant to your passion in pursuing higher studies in your respective area. For example, a student wanting to pursue higher studies in computer science would like to say, “before entering into my high school, my father gifted me with a personal computer and ever since my life has changed. I always wondered, whether I worked on it or played Counter Strike, as to how computers worked and how these applications are designed. What compelled my passion to take up computer science is my curiosity to develop applications using the computer that can better our lives, that which can give us speed and can solve everyday problems that we encounter....” at the same time, one must remember that your points should be compelling rather than just being plain and ordinary and talking on the surface. Whatever the personal incidents or details you provide should complement your **“passion”** to take up higher studies. Try to provide valid accounts of your experience that should be “**convincing**” to your reader.
* Before you begin to write or type on your computer, “**brain storm**”. Brainstorming is the rough work that you do before you begin to write your essay. Firstly, you may want to start with your introduction but remember brainstorming has no rules. So, take a paper and write at random whatever you want to write in your SOP, not just in the introduction but on the whole, write them in a crude manner without any **organizing**.
* You should “**organize**” your points after the brainstorming. Now, look at what is required in a SOP by your potential university, for example, the length (word count) they are expecting, the areas or aspects they are interested in knowing about you through your SOP. For example, say a statement of purpose needs to be structured in the following manner:

**1. The motivation & Educational Background and Accomplishments 2. Areas of interest 3. Skills acquired and extra-curricular activities 4. Why a particular university for higher studies? 5. Reasons for choosing a particular university 6. A last word.**

Now, go back to your brainstorming and see which points come under the above areas and put them under accordingly. A statement of purpose for freshers aspiring to pursue higher education might differ from that of employed professionals going for higher studies. The above areas given were just “**general”** and therefore you can have your own structure more or less the same. Try to be **“creative”** and at the same time provide valid points to substantiate your interest in pursuing higher study in a particular university. Do not delve much into telling your academic details because your **resume** already deals with it, so the SOP should not go much into academic details unless there is an achievement that you have accomplished through academic performance. Be **“sincere”** in case you have faced some ups and downs in your academics stating valid reasons as to why you faced the problems and how you have worked to overcome those.

* An example outline for working professional SOP would be, **1. The background motivation** **2. Education, Accomplishments and Research 3. Industry Experience and knowledge gaps identified 4.** **Extracurricular activities/interests 5. Ultimate goal 6. Reasons for choosing a particular university 7. Last word.**

**How to begin?**

Done with the brainstorming activity, you maybe wondering how to begin. Remember that the beginning for your essay is probably the most important part. Try to capture the attention of your reader from the start, beginning with a quotation that is very much relevant to your career interest is one very good idea. Beginning with a question is another good way of beginning. Remember that if you begin with a quotation the immediate sentence you write should be your reflection on the quotation or how that quotation is relevant to what you present about yourself in your SOP. If you are beginning with a question, then your essay should attempt to answer the question and the question should be relevant to your passion for choosing higher studies. Let us look at a sample beginning:

**COMPUTER SCIENCE SOP SKELETON**

***BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION***

*How you begin your essay is the most important part and you should begin it in the most interesting way possible. Beginning with a quotation is a very good technique. Search for quotations that are very much relevant to your subject and relevant to your learning experience. Be creative and try to think beyond the text, the quotation might not just relate to your subject, it may also relate to the way you have learnt things in life or about hardships, motivation and so on. For example a student with some backlogs in his/her education can begin with a quotation like,*

***“I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work”***

***-*Thomas Alva Edison**

*Look at the following opening paragraph:*

**“...*Let us fight for a new world...let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men’s happiness...***”-**Charlie Chaplin from “The Great Dictator”**.

**Today, we are not just at the threshold of a new world but much deeper into it, we have been living and witnessing the materialization of change through computer technologies. Computer technologies, that are central to the foundation of the 21st century, are continuously evolving providing potential for newer ways of changing our world and making it a better place to live in. Computers have made life better and faster if not easier; computers have become indispensable to our lives. Right now, I am typing this essay using a computer, fully trusting that it will produce a result far more superior to what I can manage with my hands. It has always been a fascination for me as to how computers work and what can be the newer ways to explore the world of computers to make our world better. This interest became a passion for me when I was exposed to computer courses during my middle school. Having pursued computer science engineering at undergraduate level, further propelled my passion for computer science along with providing me a deeper insight and in-depth understanding of the subject.**

*At the end of the first paragraph, you need to present your thesis statement. A thesis statement is a statement that contains the gist of your essay, it is the statement that should be supported all through the rest of your essay. The purpose for which you are writing your statement of purpose needs to outlined in the thesis statement. For example,*

**Fresh from my under graduation in Computer Science, I am determined to expedite my research interest and a masters degree seemed the most appropriate choice for realizing my aspirations.**

*Another example of thesis statement,*

**Having had more than one year of professional experience of working as a software engineer, a masters degree in Computer Science seems a viable career choice for me and I would look forward to making the best use of the opportunity which I positively wait to receive.**

*Yet another exampl****e****,*

**With a distinction in my under-graduate study in Computer Science Engineering, and with a sound analysis of Dr. Pierre Conor's ongoing research in the field of advanced software developer tools, I am positively convinced that your university where Dr. Conor pursued his research is my masters destination.**

(*Try to be as creative as possible but at the same time you should be able to emphasize on your skills and capabilities in a convincing manner. Do not use too many adjectives, keep it simple and at the same time readable to your reader.*)

***EDUCATION, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND PROJECTS IF ANY***

*Here, you should explore more on the development of your passion towards a particular area ever since your schooling. Don't go too much autobiographical but whatever you state should have a valid reason that supports your taking interest in the subject of interest.*

*Let us have a look at an example:*

**My parents set the foundation to my life and nurtured me through a value system which makes me what I am today and defines what success means to me. I have always had the freedom to choose my work according to what interested me and had the flexibility to grow in the career path of my choice. My interest in Mathematics made me realistic in my approach towards life and its complicated challenges. With the foundation of computer education during my school days, I had visualized a blueprint of how my professional life should look like. For almost six years I learnt computer science courses at school. Further, I took up Mathematics and Physics stream in my senior school education. With further determination, I completed my under-graduation in computer science engineering from St. Martin's Engineering College, a premier college with state of art facilities, affiliated to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad, India. My college is one place where the world spins on a change axis and managing change is what I could learn the best from my college life.**

**Ours is a large universe within which we become a part of a larger reality. My father always told me, “Success always lies in sense of larger connectedness”, and later I understood that this is what forms the essence of Networking. The computer chip is created in the manner of how each one of us is hooked to one another at the flash of a thought. During my college, I have learnt that the best way to test the assimilation of knowledge acquired in the classroom is by putting it into practice. I believe that project works and paper presentations are the means through which one can understand the subject better. During my undergraduate studies, I have lead my team to complete a project titled, “Cooperative Data Possession for Integrity Verification in Multi Cloud Storage” in the area of web technology based on IEEE format. The project focused on improving the perceived latency for all clients participating in an interactive network application by using JAVA Script.**

**My under-graduate study in computer science is the most important step in my preparation for a career in research and teaching, and a demonstration of my ability for the same. During my course, I could realize my passion for abstract mathematics when I learnt Fourier series and Transforms, Discrete Mathematics, and Numerical Methods. Apart from that, the principle concepts I learnt were Cryptography and Network Security, Databases, Operating Systems, Computer Networks, and Graphics and Systems Software. Courses such as Digital Logic Design, Electronic Devices and Circuits, Circuit Theory, Computer Architecture and Microprocessor and Micro-controller made me explore the internal structure of a computer in-depth. I have good command in C and JAVA languages and I am also comfortable with applications software like Microsoft Front-Page, Macromedia Flash and Adobe Photo-shop.**

***EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/INTERESTS***

*This continues from the above section,*

**While in engineering, I also took upon the responsibility of facilitating some of the difficult subjects to my juniors, I was assigned this responsibility by my professor who believed in my teaching prowess and my subject knowledge from an empirical perspective. As a facilitator to my juniors, I had learned a lot as teaching is also a process of learning. Participation in technical and cultural festivals conducted in my college as well as elsewhere, developed my social skills and the trait of leadership supplemented with precise decision making; I realized the importance of these skills only when I joined as a Software Engineer at Stampede Capital Limited after successfully finishing my engineering.**

***INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE IF ANY* (***Those going for higher studies after job experience***) *AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS IDENTIFIED***

**Participation in technical and cultural festivals conducted in my college as well as elsewhere, developed my social skills and the trait of leadership supplemented with precise decision making; I realized the importance of these skills only when I joined as a Software Engineer at Stampede Capital Limited after successfully finishing my engineering. Although my aim was to pursue higher education, I thought taking up a job will help in boosting my confidence as industry experience assesses one's practical application of knowledge. Also, I was enthusiastic to see how far I can take the theoretical knowledge that I have by applying it in empirical scenarios. In my capacity as a software engineer, I was given the best supervision and independence to take informed decisions which helped me in providing life skills the usefulness of which is invaluable. I was provided good training and I stood in the top 5% of the freshers during my training in terms of performance.**

**My role was to analyse the software development process right from requirement to software testing. Later, I also worked to enhance the already existing designs and processes which exposed me to a lot of new things. I observed that I needed to know a lot because every day, I come to know of a new concept or a new algorithm paradigm that needs to be studied and applied. While at job, I realized that the knowledge I have is somehow limited in its capacity because I see a lot of new things everyday and my curiosity knows no bounds; at the same time I felt I need better exposure and in-depth training to tap my research skills. Because knowledge can never be saturated, I began to contemplate on higher studies after two years of rigorous work experience. With an ultimate career objective to contribute to the vast change that is happening with the help of computer technologies, I am aspiring to pursue masters in Computer Science which will provide me the right kind of platform for my aspiration. My inspiration is Mr. Thomas N. Bulkowski and his software named "patternz". He is the owner of the site "thepatternsite.com". Mr. Bulkowski a software engineer by profession, studied computer science at Syracuse university and has designed few tools which are very unique in terms of logic. He has done a remarkable work but the tools he designed work only at the end of the day style.**

***ULTIMATE CAREER OBJECTIVE***

*(Continued from above*) **My career objective is to extend such work on real time scenarios. In order to realize my idea of using such kind of tools in real time scenarios, I need in-depth knowledge of Algorithms, programming, data mining. I also felt it as a need to go back to academics because it is necessary that I bridge this knowledge gap between learning and practical application. Also, my job has become more demanding of my capacities, therefore, with passion on one hand and with a necessity and demand on the other I have taken this decision to go for Masters in Computer Science.**

***REASONS FOR UNIVERSITY CHOICE***

*(The reasons you give for the choice of particular university should not be too general but should consist of researched information. Let the university know that you have already gathered enough information before applying. An example of this part)*,

**While doing our major project in our 5th semester, we were faced with trouble of lack of information and key to resolve an algorithm. I was searching everywhere for the solution to this problem when I came across a research paper titled, “.......” written by Pierre Conor. After reading the paper, I did not find a solution to deal with the present problem but I came to know the clue on how resolve it. (***I am not giving particular details of the paper because I am trying to invent a fictional situation. This is just a model indicating how your research potential should be presented***). When I was going through your university website, I came across the faculty profile of Dr. Conor and I was instantly overwhelmed upon such a discovery. My interest in joining your university was indeed founded the day I read Dr. Conor's research work. My ardent wish, now, is to attend Dr. Conor's classes and take up research ventures under his supervision. Apart from that, I see that your university has excellent research facilities as well as world-class professors like Dr. Daniel Briggs, Dr. Linda Roberts, Dr. Patricia Edwards to name a few.**

***LAST WORD***

*This is the concluding paragraph to your essay and here you try to summarize your interest in seeking admission to the university of your choice and in the final sentence restate the thesis sentence that is written in the first paragraph in a slightly different style.*

**With the association that I share with the research done in your university, I felt that your university is my first preference. I would like to contribute to the research going on in your university to the best of my capacity and utilize the facilities in a responsible manner. I am confident that I can deliver and live up to my expectations with the best of conduct. The journey ahead promises to be a challenging one, it may no doubt be arduous and demanding at times. That said, I am hopeful about getting admission into your university and with that hope I request that my application be considered for admission with substantial financial aid.**

*Please note that the “****Headings****” in this skeleton are made for your convenience and are not to appear in your essay because an essay does not essentially need any headings.*

*…...............................................................****GOOD LUCK****......................................................................*