# PRD: Pocket-Prep

**Date last updated: 12/5/2018**

## This app is for the students aspiring for graduate studies in United States. Today, the STEM courses have about 70-80% of International students enrolled for graduate studies. Our product will provide well informed guidance, planning and counselling to the students. Unlike the resources available today like agencies and other apps, our app would provide students the ability to plan their application process at their own speed and provide them with highly essential resources which are required today while applying abroad.

## Motivation

### Customer Segments

* Students aspiring and planning to study abroad:

These are the students, who are currently still in their undergraduate programs, and are planning to study abroad, either to expand their knowledge or to find better opportunities abroad , or both. This segment is usually confused about their aspirations, and generally follows the advice of their peers and tends to follow the herd. We plan to clear their mind and give them their own individual choice to plan and dream.

* Working Professionals:

This customer segment mainly compromises of people who are on a job and are planning to leave their jobs to study abroad for better opportunities. Although this segment tends to have a plan and have an aim in their mind, we understand that the main issue with this segment is time constraint and the difficulty to manage the application process with their current jobs. Our hypothesis is that Pocket-Prep would be able to help them by letting them plan and take follow up of their application process at their own pace and convenience.

* Students currently pursuing graduate studies:

These are the students who are currently pursuing their graduate studies, and have possibly used Pocket-Prep for their preparation. We expect this to be a small segment. These students are those, who would like to help students who are aspiring and planning to study abroad possibly for free or by charging moderate costs.

* Candidates living in remote locations, aspiring to study abroad:

Candidates living in remote locations, which has lack of information related to the admission and application process either move to a bigger city or drop their plans because of lack of clarity. The app will inspire capable candidates to apply for the universities they dream of and provide finance related information as well.

### Insurance and Loaning agencies:

Insurance agencies will be provided the independence to upload their schemes in the application and make their business profitable. The app will provide these agencies better reach to all the users.

### Personas:

* Aakash, student in fourth year engineering:

He is an engineering undergraduate student, who has recently appeared for the exams required for the course he has planned. He aims to go to the United States of America. Many of his friends are also going abroad, and because of that he has been left confused as to which university should he choose. He lacks transparency of information, and his peers are giving biased suggestions. Our app will provide unbiased university reviews and suggestions, and also help him out by connecting him with individuals already studying in the universities he aspires to study in.

* Software Engineer, Priya:

She is a working professional, who has been working in an MNC since the past 3 years, and always had a plan to change career paths down the line and has some universities already on her mind. She currently is planning, but due to lack of time and workload, she is not able to start with the process. She is having a hard time to plan her process and is already very close to the deadlines of several universities.

* Rahul, currently studying abroad in USA

He is pursuing his masters from USA and has been away from home for the first time. He is from India and wishes for Indian food so that he can prepare it at his own apartment. The app will provide nearby location of Indian grocery stores, and provide information about Indian Restaurants nearby.

### Unmet Needs

* Unavailability of one-stop solution for the admission and application process

Even though several consultancies claim to provide all the required guidance and training required for studying abroad, on closer inspection it turns out that their services are tier based and basically means that more you pay, more services you are provided. In addition to this, online websites and apps only seem to provide one segment of the application process, be it university selection, visa process or exam preparation.

* Lack of accessible resources for students living in remote locations

Students living in remote location, must travel to bigger cities just to apply and proceed with their applications. This in turn takes away their time they can spend with their family just when they’ll be gone abroad and away already.

* Huge investment required to join consultancies

Consultancies tend to charge huge amount of money, in the range of INR 20,000 to 40,000 which seems to be expansive for the services they prove and the already expensive admission process.

* Lack of transparency, and evident partiality by agencies and consultancies

Websites and agencies sometimes sponsor a specific university or a service for their own benefits and hide the more relevant options from the students. Also, we have found that students tend complete most of the applications all by themselves and end up getting confused with so many applications in hand.

* Lack of knowledge regarding the various benefits available to students studying abroad

Students currently studying abroad are unaware of the various benefits they can avail as students abroad and end up paying more then asked.

### Existing Solutions

Existing Solutions include:

* Yocket App**:**

Web and app service, currently the most used app in this segment This app helps students identify potential universities, on the basis of the history of previous students. It provides a way for the aspiring candidates to connect with students currently studying. Along with that, it provides extensive university suggestions and reviews. However, it lacks in SOP, LOR and exam guidance. Also, it lacks in solution for students already studying abroad.

* Private Counselling organization:

They provide university selection, guidance, exam preparation and guidance for SOP and LOR. They prove out to be an expensive affair, and lack presence in smaller cities. Some organizations tend to provide biased reviews as well. The substantial money involved prevents students to not join the agencies.

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| **Company**      **Features** | **PocketPrep** | **Yocket** | **Edulix** | **Private**  **Counselling**  **Organizations** | **CollegePond** |
| **App** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **No** | **No** | **No** |
| **Exam Prep/LOR & SOP guidance** | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| **Revenue model** | **Freemium** | **Freemium** | **Freemium** | **Paid** | **Freemium** |
| **Application Planner** | **Yes** | **No** | **No** | **No** | **No** |
| **Visa/Immigration/**  **Travel Guidance** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| **Medical/Travel Insurance facilities** | **Yes** | **No** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Support Post Travel** | **Yes** | **No** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |

### Differentiation

All the existing solutions, either provide part-services, or provide them at relatively high costs. Our app will be a one stop solution, at charges anyone can afford. It will also have the transparency and provide the freedom to the students to make choices. The availability is also one plus point, and it will provide guidance for students in remote areas and help them achieve their dreams without even moving from their areas. Along with this, the application planner would help the working professionals who have hard time managing the application process along with their jobs. We will be providing an Application Planner and Professional Chat option, which none of our competition offers. Along with this, we will be providing the ability to buy insurance and loan schemes within the application itself, thereby making the process easy and hassle free.

### Why Now?

Since we ourselves are international students now, we understand the difficulties faced and now are equipped with the information, resources and power to change that. In addition to that, more and more individuals are planning to study abroad to change their careers, and/or gain additional knowledge or specialize in a specific field which creates an ever-growing market.

## Storyboards & Verbal Use Cases

**A prospective applicant has just decided to apply for US MS program. She is not sure where to start.**

* She can prepare a profile at Pocket-Prep and just by selecting her current undergrad course and her interests; Pocket-Prep can present her viable course options she can apply to.
* Upon selecting her choice of course, she can use now understand the process to apply to the MS programs using the instructional videos available in the ‘Videos’ section.
* Now she has additional doubts and questions, and then she attempts to chat with a counsellor guide available through the app and gets her doubts cleared.
* After this, she done with that she uses the deals and book section to buys books to study

**A working professional who is in the process of applying to MBA programs**

* He has already decided on the course to apply and appeared for GRE and TOEFL. He is wondering which universities would fit his profile. Since he is a working professional, he has hard time finding time to go to a consultancy and manage everything.
* He prepares a profile on Pocket-Prep and uses the University Selector to understand the options he has available.
* Upon careful evaluation, he selects a bunch of universities.
* After that, he uses the Application Planner, enters all the stuff he needs to do, related to each university and then the app asks him to enable notifications
* The app notifies him each time one of his tasks is due, thereby keeping him pro-active and keeping him focused on his office work as well.

**A student who is already studying is United States**

* Having used Pocket-Prep before, he feels that the app changed the way he applied to universities and he understands the difficulties faced by other fellow students.
* He goes to the forum section and attempts to clear the doubts of the students.
* He is contacted by several students using the chat features, and he tries to clear the doubts of all
* Thanks to his active approach, he is approached by the Pocket-Prep team and creates paid videos related to his university and his experience which hare curated by the team and then uploaded on the app.

**Insurance Vendors who would want to sell their policies to students**

* Many students are not aware of what insurance to choose from. What is the deductible
* Insurance companies have different insurance plans (silver,gold,platinum)
* Vendors from these companies usually must post on social media and explain to everyone about the benefits of their insurance
* PocketPrep provides this platform wherein students can select an insurance approved by their respective universities

## Detailed Design & Features Description

### Design Principles

* Usable and simple design
* Ease of use
* Modern/clean
* Scalability
* All the sections treated differently
* Ease of finding and using all the features

### Pricing Model

* Following Freemium Model
* Our free model would be ad supported, though ad functionality would be added in the later stage. The premium model would be ad free.
* We shall try our best to show advertisements that don’t hamper the overall user experience.
* Premium version would have certain benefits. Payment Information would be needed to enable access to premium features, and membership will renew until cancelled.
* Membership available for Week wise, Month wise and Quarterly.

**The Free to Use features, for every student would be:**

* Forum
* Personal Profile
* University and Course Selector
* Videos and Documents (Basic)
* Study Materials and Deals
* Chat with other students (Only up to 5 students per week)
* Application Planner (Trial for a specific time)
* Suggestions for similar profiles
* Search for other user Profiles

**The Premium Features would be:**

* Application Planner
* Privacy Chat
* Exclusive Videos and Documents
* Chat with a Professional expert
* Unlimited Chats with students
* Ad Free

### Features/information architecture

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| **Feature** | **Detail (Also on Wireframes)** | **Dependencies** | **Priority** |
| Sign up | -Able to choose between profiles of ‘Existing student abroad’ or ‘Student aspiring to study abroad’  -Create account using email address and password  -Security questions |  | 1 |
| Create Profile | Personal information  Education status  Exam scores (Optional)  Username  Work Status | The dependency is to get the terms and conditions and getting legal approvals to store applicants’ information. | 1 |
| Log In | The applicants will be able to login to the Pocket-Prep app with the username (or email address) and password set up by them while registering on Pocket Prep. The user name and password will be validated. |  | 1 |
| Forgot Password Page | The applicants will be able to reset their password in case they forget by using the registered email address, phone number or security questions |  | 1 |
| Dashboard and Available Features | Upon logging in, the user would be able to see the following features:  Forum  Personal Profile  Application Planner (Premium Only)  University and Course Selector  Search for Profiles (Premium Only)  Videos and Documents (Freemium)  Study Materials and Deals  Chat and chat box |  | 1 |
| Forum | * Post questions and answer the questions * Thread based * Monitored by admins |  | 1 |
| Application Planner | * Excel sheet design * Notifications according to dates set * Will introduce trial version of application planner   *Premium Feature* | Notifications | 1 |
| University and Course Selector | * University Selector according to Profile Information * Course suggestions according to selections * Ability to save the suggestions to Application Planner |  | 1 |
| Search for Profiles | * Searching Profiles based of filters * Filters: Score, University, Date |  | 2 |
| Study Materials, Insurance and Loans | * Collaborations with Book, Insurance and Loans * Book, Insurance and Loans links available |  | 1 |
| Advertisements | * Minimal advertisements to be shown to the free user. * The premium model will be ad free. |  | 2 |
| Chat and Chat Box | * Ability to chat with current students * Inbox for chat store   *Premium Feature* | Chat feature to be limited to only 5 students per week for free to use students | 2 |
| Professional Chat | * Chat professional available all the time   *Premium Feature* |  | 1 |
| Pre-defined Group | * Groups will be made according to the demands of the user * User would be able to join the groups made by the app team |  | 3 |
| Make Payments | Users will be able to pay to use the premium features |  | 1 |
| Upload Video and Document | Users will be able to upload restricted videos and documents, to get rewarded |  | 2 |
| Referrals |  |  | 3 |
| Content pages – About us, Contact us, FAQs | The content pages such as about us, contact us and FAQs will have applicants answer their queries and contact us for any technical help |  | 1 |
| Logout | The logout link will be available on all |  | 1 |

* **MVP: Minimum Viable Product**

All of the above features with the priority 1 would be part of the minimum viable product (MVP).

Initially, the application would be Android only, owing to the popularity of Android in the target region.

* **vNext**

Anything listed as priority 2.

* Introduce Premium Videos
* Ability to upload documents and videos
* Chat with students
* Search for profiles
* Advertisements
* **vLongTerm**
* Introduction of iOS Application
* Referral feature
* Pre-defined Groups
* Exclusive collaborations with universities and vendors to hold webinars and meetups
* Introduce Machine Learning to improve suggestions
* Introduce another country other than United States

## User Walkthroughs: Visual Use Case Walkthroughs with Comments

Since we will be following the freemium model, the wireframe models in this PRD would;d be based on the ‘Premium Model’, laced with all the features expected to be incorporated in the app, in the coming months.

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Use Case: User enters his/her required details, and on pressing show suggestions, a popup listing all the universities opens. The user has the independence to add those universities to his/her application planner

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Use Case: The user can select the profiles he/her want to view, filter it according to preference and accordingly chat with the chosen user. Premium user would have the ability to disable chat (The message icon greys out) and only send message rather than receive message.

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Use Case: The user can upload a video or a document. The user would b prompted with all the benefits available on uploading a video/document. Attaching a file with all the details would be enough.

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The user will be listed with all the possible insurance vendors the app has and will be given the ability to view all their features with full transparency. Upon expanding it, contact information of the insurance and loan provider will be visible as well. A secure payment gateway will guide the user, to buying this/her choice of loan/ insurance.

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## Roadmap / Timing

We are working on rolling out the product with full basic functionality. We created the landing page and shared it across various social media channels with email signups for students that want to take part in our beta product launch. Accordingly, we will already begin marketing the concept before the MVP is available for public use.

**Alpha Launch:** We anticipate having the product ready for internal use after 1.5 months of

development time. This launch will include all wireframes from earlier with some features left out for the future rollouts. Initially we will have the planner functionality with more customization flexibility for the user. One advantage is since most of us have gone through the application process ourselves internal testing amongst team should be helpful. We plan to include our friends/family/students to test this app for a week’s time before beta launch. After this testing has occurred, we will take an additional week to fix all the bugs found during Alpha launch using our bug tracking system.

**Beta Launch:** Once the Alpha bugs have been fixed, we will launch our Beta version. This

will be initially be sent to individuals that have signed up via our landing page. We will not widely promote our product during beta but allow anybody to sign up for Beta. We will be using crashlytics to monitor user feedback and make revisions to our app. Once we have gathered statistically significant usage data from these users, which we anticipate will take one month’s time, we will set our product roadmap for the final product aka Version 1 of the application. We have identified a few modifications which we are planning to deploy in version 2 and 3.

We will attempt to release features every two weeks and do A/B tests to scientifically judge

how these product enhancements affect conversion rates from individuals that simply sign

up, to individuals that complete their listing (owners and captains) or book a boat.

**Version 1 of PocketPrep**: Initially all the features planned for the MVP would be launched, along with the premium version with Application Planner and Professional chat as the premium initial features.

**Version 2 of PocketPrep:** Further feedback would be taken from the users, and functionality will be improved. Additional features like chat, ability to search and lookup profiles, and the ability to upload videos and documents will be launched. This is the primary app model which we are aiming for.

## 

## Metrics

**Subscriptions to Web Optin**

**Registrations to Subscriptions**

**Downloads to Registrations**

**GA Metrics**

* **Conversion rate**
* **Sessions**
* **Revenue**
* **Searches**

**User Engagement Metrics**

* **WAU**
* **MAU**
* **# of posts created**
* **# of videos watched**

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| --- |
| Qualitative Metrics |
| Users with most no of posts |
| Top videos/articles viewed |
| Top university searches |
| Top course searches |
| Page views |
| Most student deals purchased |
| Average number of pages visited |
| Total number of pages visited |
| Average time spend on a page |
| % of users with n stages completed in application planner |
| % of users by customer segment |
| # Of new users/existing users |
| % of signups by channel groups |

We would like to track metrics categorized into the following:

* **GA Metrics** – We would like to measure user activity per page. The conversion rate in terms of purchases made. Other metrics include User checkout rate, user session, revenue
* **User engagement metrics** – Since this entire process takes about a year’s time. Week to date or Month to date analysis would be fair compare to a daily analysis to track user activity. Finding user with most posts and most viewed videos will help us provide better content
* **Qualitative metrics** – Top metrics computed during app usage will better help us in planning features for the next release. The application planner is one of the key premium features and we would like to track user activity on its display and detail pages.

## International

With majority of students opting for United States as of now, we are currently focusing on improving the data related to United States. However, with the education awareness on the rise, we expect more students to consider other countries like Australia, Germany, New Zealand and Canada. We will eventually expand our application to them as well.

Our app is mainly Indian Student oriented, and eventually we plan on making it universally applicable and give the ability to the students of other countries to use it as well.

## Projected Costs

We as a team of 5 founders won’t be taking any remuneration until the full launch. After carefully considering the overall costs we have collectively decided to outsource the application development in India. Since majority of our customer segment in India it would be better to have office setup in India. Moreover, majority of our customer segment are android users, we would initially launch our app only on android only. We plan to hire two software engineers who have expertise in java app development, one Cloud developer who can handle our cloud infrastructure and one Marketing/Social media analyst. We are initially going to hire two experts/counsellors on a contract basis who can handle customer request in terms of question asked on forums and chat. AWS makes for elimination of hardware and hardware maintenance. We plan to use EC2 for computation. We are planning to use Snowflake which is a AWS cloud based data warehouse. The main advantage of using snowflake is it offers scalability and support for large amount of data. We will have to pay 45000$ per software engineer and 50000$ for cloud developer. It will also include office space and infrastructure costs which could amount to 370,000$

## Operational Needs

Payroll for application development, administration and marketing team will add to the operational expenses. We will also need to set up office space and cost pertaining to utilities. Since we are dealing with student information, we may have to learn about privacy protection acts and take legal advice. At the beta launch we will hire a social media expert that will manage all online content and customer service issues. Once PocketPrep establishes itself and we get increasing user registrations we will hire a customer service personnel to facilitate the customer’s needs. Two software engineers will be hired full-time to work on development of the PocketPrep application, which will include new versions. Additionally, we will hire an intern to work on maintenance of PocketPrep. We will work with existing master’s students who can share their experience through videos and blogs. They can conduct Q&A sessions, webinar to answers student doubts and questions. We are planning on giving 50$-$100 gift cards to students who provide their testimony through videos and articles. There is no defined plan at this point of time on how many students we want for this.

## Addressing Caveats/risks

As with most new ventures, PocketPrep has some key strategic risks that must be accounted for for the product to succeed. The management team at PocketPrep has identified three

primary strategic risks: Privacy Concerns, Legal Concerns, and Competition.

Issues related to data security will be addressed by ensuring that all data is encrypted and stored on an AWS S3.

- Privacy concerns: Personal data concerns and concern about violation of personal data are two of the most common concerns that have been expressed by potential aspiring students.

About personal data, potential customers are concerned about both the security of

data stored by PocketPrep as well as concerns about students misusing forum.

- Legal Concerns : Integration with various loan/insurance vendors could pose a problem. Developing a sense of trust is crucial for application. There is scope of misuse here.

- Competition: Pocketprep is a service that will become more valuable to students and vendors as the scope of use increases. Competitors like CollegePond, Edulix We need to ensure that the service provided is low cost and fun for users. After doing some statistical analysis we have seen that the first choice for students is private counselling organizations. Although websites like collegepond, edulix have created their own branding and offer some of the same features which we are offering.

- Storage and Capacity concerns: Overwhelming response by students, to upload videos and documents might pose a problem. We plan to impose a certain limits on all the uploading, and will furthere investigate and come up with a much comprehensive solution.

Potential Solutions

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| --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Solution** |
| **Privacy Concerns** | * **System to report spams and suspend user accounts for such users.** * **Encrypt data storage in AWS S3** * **Certain chat features will be restricted to only premium account holders.** |
| **Legal Concerns** | * **Impose certain restrictions on medical insurance vendors** * **Implement appropriate authentication in the app** * **Have a trust certificate issued before any kind of affiliations** |
| **Competition** | * **Ease of use** * **Inexpensive** * **Put more efforts in marketing and work on quarterly improvement of metrics** |

## Group Members:

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