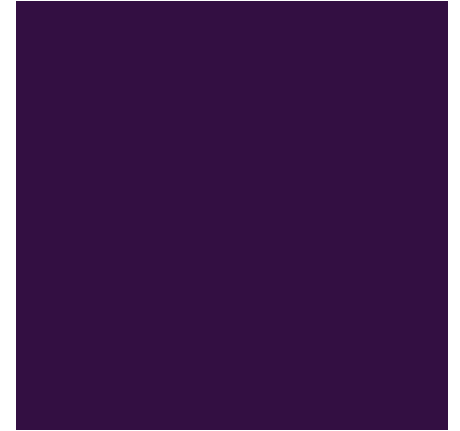




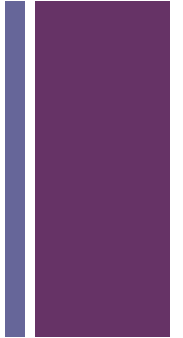
Statement of Purpose

Diane Özbal

Aylin Vartanyan Dilaver



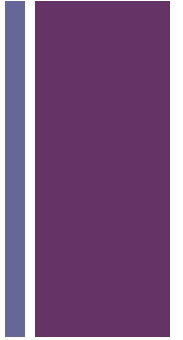
The Purpose of the SOP



- “The statement of purpose gives an applicant the opportunity to express non-quantifiable characteristics for consideration to an admissions committee. This may include the applicant's personal or professional strengths and goals or passion for career fields related the academic program. (...) Graduate school is rigorous, and admission is often competitive. (We) want to select students who are not only academically qualified, but also show commitment to achieving success in the program from start to finish.”
- Melinda Maxwell, Director of graduate Admissions, University of North Georgia
(<https://www.gograd.org/resources/grad-school-statement-of-purpose/>)



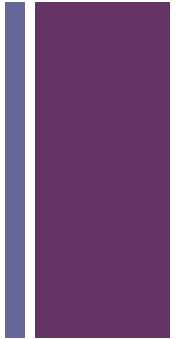
The Applicant – Personal Information



- Background, your story
- Specialties and Strengths (Skills and Knowledge)
- Clear Articulation of Goals and Interests (What do you hope to accomplish with this degree?)
- Address the question “WHY”- your vision about yourself in the field
- A talk with a mentor or a good friend



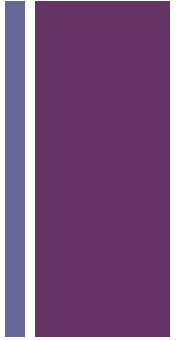
The Applicant and Academic Background



- Academic Interests
- Academic achievements/strengths (Make sure you refer to a thesis, paper or project that you have accomplished.)
- Qualifications for graduate research and readiness for independent work
- Lab/project experience (vivid examples)
- A talk with a professor who knows you well
- Research the institution you plan to apply to (why are you a good fit to this program?)



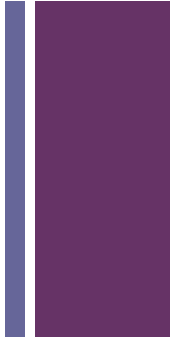
The Applicant and Professional Experience



- Professional Employability (Lab/Projects etc.)
- Professional experience
- A talk with a professional mentor
- How your professional experience relates to the field you want to study



How may your SOP stand out?



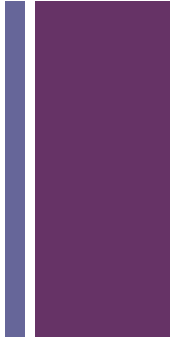
“Most Statement of Purposes, unfortunately look quite the same. There is nothing distinctive about the person in it.”
(personal characteristics, experiences, and specific interests in the field)

David Garlan

Carnegie Mellon, Associate Dean for the MA Program



Non-Cognitive Skills in SOP's

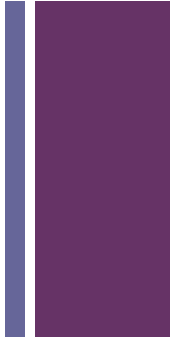


“What do we mean by non-cognitive skills? We mean all of these attributes of the student that are more likely to help them succeed than not. These include grit and determination - evidence that students have been able to overcome challenges in their studies or part of their lives”

Liesl Folks

Buffalo SUNY, Dean of School of Engineering

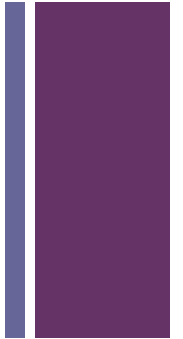
+ Timeline



START THINKING ABOUT
YOUR SOP'S EARLY (Give
yourselves at least two
months to prepare, take
notes, create a mind map,
write and rewrite)



How to grab the attention of the reader in your SOP



- Anecdotes (Be realistic and honest. Avoid being childish and avoid starting your statement with a reference that you wanted to study in this field since you were 5!)
- An example of how your personal experience shaped you into who you are today as a prospective MA/PhD student
- A quote from a favorite author, writer, philosopher or even a film or TV series that relates to your academic field or to who you are as a scholar
- A story of how you overcame a challenge
- Stick to the “Purpose” in the SOP. What is your aspiration to study in the field?



What do graduate schools want?

By Melinda Maxwell

<https://www.gograd.org/resources/grad-school-statement-of-purpose/>



What grad schools do want to see

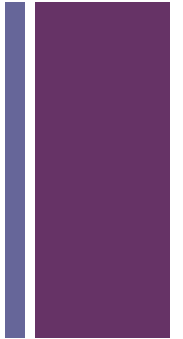
- “We want to know why a student is pursuing admission to this particular program”
- “We look for wording and language showing evidence that the applicant thoroughly and carefully researched the program”
- “Applicants should strive to illustrate why it’s a mutually beneficial fit, including drawing clear connections between the degree and any of their future goals”
- “Many students forget the simple step of clearly outlining what they are willing to commit to the program”

What they don’t want to see

- “We do not want to see poor writing or grammar,”
- “Similarly, lackadaisical statements of purpose will be dismissed”
- “We also want to see students who understand how to maximize character limits to reflect substance”



Flaws related to form and language in Previous SOP's. (by Diane Özbal)



- Lack of sentence variety
- Lots of sentences starting with “I” (I did this and that- I am committed, I completed...etc. Try combining sentences and avoid excessive usage of the “I”)
- It is important to talk about yourselves in an SOP but try to refer to your qualifications related to your field as much as possible. (You might be interested in dance for example but it would be important to relate this interest to how you dealt with a challenge or conflict in your own field)
- Avoid useless information. Remember the fact that your SOP will be read by professionals in the field. Do not shower them with information that they already know about or they might NOT be interested about.



UNNECESSARY WORDS

Example 1: Before

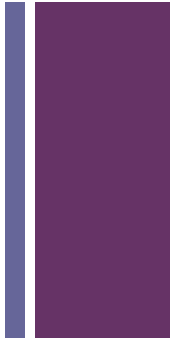
- When it was time to decide on where to study for my Exchange period, I was looking for a university where I could delve deeper into my topics of interest and challenge myself academically in a learning context different from what I was used to. X University in Y seemed like the ideal place for me. Its School of Business and Economics had a range of courses related to decision-making, a special Masters' program in Human Decision Science, and a unique challenging education system called Problem Based Learning. This system was actually the reason why students looking for a stereotypical Exchange experience weren't advised to choose this school, since it required students to come prepared to each class having learned the content of an average of 4 scientific articles so that they can discuss it all among themselves under the supervision of a tutor. With its demanding workload close to that of a graduate school, I believe that my experience at X University has prepared me thoroughly for a rigorous academic program. Furthermore, it allowed me to learn more about my topics of interest in an academic context.



UNNECESSARY WORDS

Example 1: After

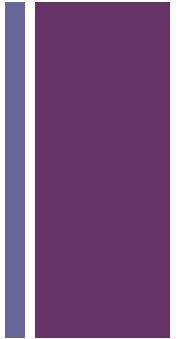
- For my Exchange period, X University in Y seemed like the ideal place for me. Its School of Business and Economics had a range of courses related to decision-making, a special Masters' program in Human Decision Science, and a unique challenging education system called Problem Based Learning. This system had a demanding workload close to that of a graduate school and prepared me thoroughly for a rigorous academic program. Furthermore, it allowed me to learn more about my topics of interest in an academic context.





UNNECESSARY WORDS

Example 2: Before



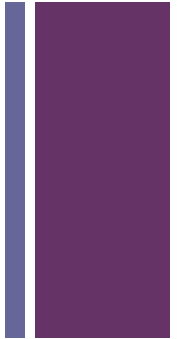
- Among all the courses that I took at Bogazici University, Econometrics was the one that most excited me and aroused my interest the most. Passing the Econometrics course with merit, redounded me a strong basis for econometrical data analysis which I think is of great importance for an economist, for understanding and working with the data, also to be able to conduct further research in the area. Therefore I took Master level economics course during my Erasmus period in X University in Winter semester 2017-2018, Political Economy of Inequality from Dr. A. B. and worked on an econometrical analysis research paper by discussing about it during his meeting hours, which I will submit at the end of March 2018.



UNNECESSARY WORDS

Example 2: After

- Among all the courses that I took at Bogazici, Econometrics was the one that most excited me, aroused my interest and supplied me with a strong basis for econometrical data analysis. I took a Master's level economics course during my Erasmus semester at X University in 2017-2018, Political Economy of Inequality from Dr. A.B. and worked on an econometrical analysis research paper, which I will submit to him at the end of March 2018.



+ OVERUSE OF I; ME; MY

Example 1: Before

- **I** have always been interested in automobiles. Even at the age of 8, **I** disassembled **my** first radio controlled (RC) car to understand why it was no longer working. In the following years, **I** used tools and gadgets with **my** father, also an engineer, to assemble or disassemble several things such as new furniture, a bicycle, etc., which directed **my** attention to the mechanics of things around **me**. **I** graduated from one of the best Anatolian high schools of **my** home city, Adana, and received **my** high school diploma with a grade of 94.41 out of 100, ranking 5th among 150 classmates. In addition to this high success indicator, **I** had a tremendous result in the national university admission examination, ranking 1115 among 1.8 million students, in the 0.06th percentile, which in turn led **me** to one of the greatest universities in Turkey. Since wanting to get a broader understanding of engineering in mechanical senses, **I** chose to study mechanical engineering at Bogazici University.

+ OVERUSE OF I; ME; MY

Example 1: After

- **I** have always been interested in automobiles. Even at the age of 8, **I** disassembled **my** first radio controlled (RC) car to understand why it was no longer working. In the following years, **I** used tools and gadgets with **my** father, also an engineer, to assemble or disassemble several things such as new furniture, a bicycle, etc., which directed **my** attention to the mechanics of things. Since wanting to get a broader understanding of engineering in mechanical senses, **I** chose to study mechanical engineering at Bogazici University.

+ OVERUSE OF I; ME; MY

Example 2: Before

- In **my** high school years as **I** was reading the history of civilization, the idea of building pyramids, inventing the first water pump, the first steam engines and many others fascinated **me**. Until that moment **I** had thought all the inventions were made by people who had extreme powers. Then **I** understood that they were just a bunch of engineers who changed the world by detecting the problems and solving them by nature itself. It was exactly this realization from which **my** passion to become an engineer emerged. **I** can say that **I** have successfully accomplished **my** aim by finishing my Bachelor studies in 2015 and M.Sc. in 2017. Aspiring both to expand **my** scientific horizons as well as to be acquainted with specializing skills, **I** am applying for the PhD position in Energy and Environmental Engineering at X University.

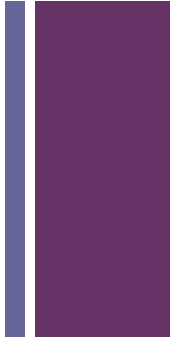
+ OVERUSE OF I; ME; MY

Example 2: After

- While reading the history of civilization in high school, the idea of building pyramids, inventing the first water pump, the first steam engines and many others fascinated me when **I** realized that they were not made by people in extreme power but by a bunch of engineers who changed the world by detecting the problems and solving them by nature itself. It was exactly this realization from which **my** passion to become an engineer emerged. **I** have now successfully accomplished this aim by obtaining a B.S. in 2015 and M.Sc. in 2017. Aspiring both to expand **my** scientific horizons as well as to gain specialized skills, **I** am applying for the PhD position in Energy and Environmental Engineering at X University.



USELESS INFORMATION UNRELATED TO YOUR FIELD (Before)

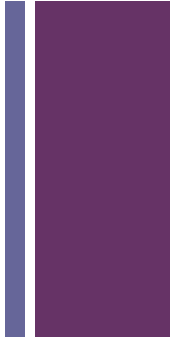


Even my six-year-old brother knows that Britain is one of the top counties in trade, manufacturing, exporting service etc. It is also a great place to build and run a business, and easier compared to Europe. It would be a great advantage for me to study in a top-ranked university in Britain. Being a member of Z University offers me lots of opportunities in international business. Right now, I know that I am underqualified to manage a company and to make the right choices for the future of the company. Studying engineering and taking management related courses is not enough for that, but it is a good start. That is why I set my mind on being a student in Z University. The idea of it seems like a utopic life style.

Z University is a great place for me to get a master's degree. I especially want to study in Britain and Z University is in an environment that has the most student population ratio. My mother studied in Britain when she was at my age. I have been listening to her experiences in Britain since my childhood. Z University is in a traditional British environment. Living in Durham University is a great opportunity for me to live the British experience and to make international friends which have the same interests as I do, like playing volleyball or planning to work as an international manager. I want to get into the sports community in Z University and choose my college accordingly. I am a huge fan of sports. I played volleyball in a professional team called ES Volleyball in high school and continued my sport activities in university. The college system in Z University excites me. People who have same interest are living together and I will probably find my best friends in the college I will choose if I am accepted to the Z University.



USELESS INFORMATION UNRELATED TO YOUR FIELD (After)



I see huge potential in our family company, but I need management skills to carry on the business. Consequently, I want to study management in a top British university. Z University offers lots of opportunities in international business. Although I am underqualified to manage a company right now, studying engineering and taking management related courses is a good basis. Obtaining an MS in Management at Z University is, I hope, the next step.

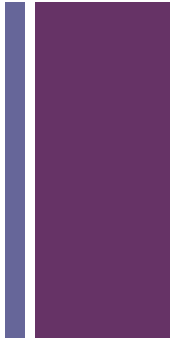
I especially want to study at Z University because of its student population ratio. In addition, Z University offers the opportunity to live the British experience and to make international friends with similar interests. I enjoy sports and chose Z University accordingly. I played volleyball in a professional team called ES Volleyball in high school and continued my sport activities in university, so the sports culture at Z University excites me.



Online Examples

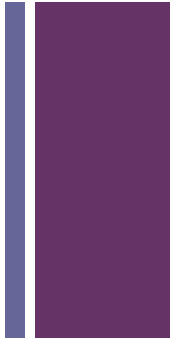
(From <https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/graduate-school-statement-of-purpose-sample/>)

- <https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/03/PrepScholar-SOP-Sample-One.pdf>
- <https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/03/PrepScholar-SOP-Sample-Three.pdf>
- <https://www.gograd.org/resources/grad-school-statement-of-purpose/>





Other Samples



- http://ls.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/statement_of_purpose.pdf
- http://www.engineeringpersonalstatement.com/engineering-personal-statement-examples/?utm_source=quora180
- <http://vonahn.blogspot.com.tr/2009/12/advice-on-grad-school-applications.html>
- <https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/agep/advsoystem.pdf>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/preparing_a_n_application/writing_the_personal_statement/index.html