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Guideline for writing a good SOP the first time.

Southern Cross University (SCU) has 6 separate SOP templates. It is important to note that some countries have more than 1 SOP template and you should ensure that you use the correct one.

Specific information about which template to use in your country can be found on our online GTE Guide at: <https://educoglobal.com/southern-cross-university-gte-guide/#/>

Although there are 6 different templates, the requirements are the same for all. **The intention of the SOP is to:**

1. Show that the student has a clear understanding of how the course they will study will benefit their future.
2. Show that the student has a clear understanding of the demand for their proposed occupation in their home country.
3. Show that the student has a clear understanding of how their course will help them get a better job when they return to their country.
4. Show that the student has a clear understanding of the salary they can expect to get after completing their course and returning to their country.
5. Show that the student has a clear understanding of the return on their investment. In other words, the student should demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of the total cost of their study in Australia, including tuition fees, living costs and travel costs and how long it will take them to earn this back when they return to their country.
6. Show that the student understands how studying this course in Australia will benefit their future and why they are unable to study the course in their own country.
7. Show that the student understands the type of university Southern Cross University is and that the student has a clear understanding of their course, its structure and learning outcomes.
8. Show that the student has clearly researched their options and can explain why they have chosen Southern Cross University over other universities.
9. Explain any gaps in the student's study. This means that the student needs to explain what they have been doing since they completed their last course of study.
10. Explain what the student's future intentions are when they complete their course.

Evidence of Research:

Many of the questions in the SOP require evidence of research. Where evidence of research is required, the student must provide it, otherwise they may need to provide a new revised SOP, or their SOP may be rejected.

Evidence of research includes links to information the student has used to formulate their response. The student should explain their evidence and how this has helped them make their decision. The student must ensure that evidence of research is provided for ALL questions as indicated, otherwise their SOP may be rejected. Simply adding links is not sufficient and the student must explain their evidence and how it helped them make their decision.

Why do we require a SOP and evidence of research?

In order to meet the Genuine Temporary Entrant criteria, Immigration Officers need to be convinced that the student's intention of coming to Australia is for the purpose of study. It is expected that they would research their options carefully because they are investing a lot of time and money in their education. Writing a good SOP and researching their answers not only helps them get a positive response from the University, but also helps them prepare for their visa application. We strongly recommend that the student submits a copy of their SCU Statement of Purpose together with their GTE statement to the Department of Home Affairs when they lodge their visa application. This will assist Visa Officers understand the process we have undertaken to assess students carefully.

Below are some tips on responding to the SOP questions using the EL3 template as an example. These are NOT example answers. This is a guideline on how to write the best answer. Not all SOP templates require answers to all these questions.

Q1: Read Ministerial Direction 69 and explain what you understand its requirements to be.

This question requires the student to read Ministerial Direction 69 and explain in their own words what it means. A simple explanation is enough. We just want to know that the student understands its intention.

Q2: Explain the value of this course to your future.

Avoid generic statements. The student should be specific about how this course will benefit their future in terms of career development, financial benefits and learning outcomes. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q3: Explain how this course is consistent with your current level of education.

A simple response is required here. The student needs to explain how this course is relevant to their current level of education. In other words, we want to see a link between their previous study and their proposed course.

Q4: Explain how this course will assist you to find employment or improve your employment prospects in your home country.

The intention of this question is to prove that the student is aware of the prevailing employment conditions in their home country. The student must provide evidence of the demand for their intended occupation in their home country and how this course will help them to achieve their career goals. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q5: Explain what your expected salary is when you return to your home country.

Evidence of research is important in this answer. It is expected that the student would provide evidence from more than one source to show what salary they can expect to get when they complete this course and return home. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q6: Why have you chosen to study this course in Australia and compare Australia with at least 2 other countries that you have considered.

It is important that the student ‘compares’ Australia to at least two other countries. This means that the student needs to clearly state which other two countries they are comparing Australia to and to list the positives and negatives of each country. It is not enough to simply say why they want to study in Australia. They must show that they clearly understand the differences between Australia and the 2 other countries that have chosen. Ideally, the student will compare things like tuition cost, cost of living (including accommodation and transport), lifestyle, culture, safety etc. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided to support their answer. Do not make generic comments without supporting evidence.**

Q7: Why can't you study this course in your own country?

Avoid generic comments such as “My country only concentrates on theory and Australia is more practical”, or “Australia’s education system is better than my country’s”, or “My country requires entrance exams which are difficult to pass”, etc. Students must be able to support their comments with evidence. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q8: Tell us about your family.

We need to know if the student is married or single, how long they have been married (if they are married), whether they have children or not, whether their family intends to accompany them to Australia, whether they have any family members (including extended family such as cousins, aunts and uncles) living in Australia and, if so, what they do and whether they are on a visa or are they Australian residents. **No evidence required.**

Q9: Tell us about your spouse and children (if any)

If the student is not married and has no children, they do not need to complete this question and can just write “NA”. If the student is married, they should tell us about their spouse, what they do, their education level, English language ability etc. If they have children, we want to know how old they are and what they understand about school arrangements in Australia. **No evidence required.**

Q10: Tell us about your economic circumstances in your home country.

The student should tell us how they intend to finance their study in Australia, who their financial sponsor is and what their annual income is. The annual income should be quoted in their own currency and in Australian dollars. **No evidence required.**

Q11: Do you have military service commitments in your home country?

If yes, student needs to advise whether or not they have completed their military service and, if not, when will they complete it. If no, simply write “no”. **No evidence required.**

Q12: Tell us about the political and civil situation in your home country.

The student is expected to be able to show their understanding of the situation in their home country. A simple response will be enough here. **No evidence required.**

Q13: Have there been any gaps in your study?

This question is often incorrectly answered. The student must tell us if there is a gap of more than 2 months since they completed their last course and tell us what they have been doing since they completed their last course. They may have been working or preparing for English tests etc. Please explain what they have been doing in the gap. **No evidence required.**

Q14: Why have you chosen Southern Cross University?

This is one of the most important questions and student must be able to clearly explain what they understand about Southern Cross University. DO not copy and paste information from the SCU website. DO not make generic comments about SCU being “one of the best universities in the world” or “SCU has amazing facilities” or “SCU has excellent teaching staff” etc. The student must clearly demonstrate that they understand what SCU has to offer and explain why they have chosen SCU. It is important that they explain what they know about Southern Cross University. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q15: Tell us about 3 other education providers that you have considered and why you have decided not to go with them.

This is another very important question. This is another question where a comparison is required. It is not enough to list 3 other universities and say “SCU Is cheaper” or “SCU has better facilities” etc. Students should compare the course they have chosen at SCU and compare the course structure to the other 3 universities and explain why the SCU course structure is more appealing to them. They should compare the location of the universities, services, reputation, class size, recommendations etc. It is important that the student actively COMPARES SCU to other Australian universities and provides evidence to support their answer. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q16: Tell us what you know about living in Australia and the area where your SCU campus is located.

The student must show that they have researched the city their campus is in. For example, if they have chosen the SCU Perth campus, tell us why they chose Perth over Sydney or Melbourne, what Perth has to offer, compare the climate in Perth to Sydney and Melbourne, what do they know about the lifestyle, safety and culture there. Students should also be able to explain where their campus is in relation to the city, what they know about public transport options etc. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q17: Tell us about your proposed living arrangements.

The student needs to show us that they have researched the accommodation options in their chosen city. They should give a clear indication that they know the difference between shared accommodation, Homestay, private rental and how much each option will cost them. They should also be able to tell us how they intend to search for suitable accommodation. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q18: Explain in detail the financial benefits of studying this course at SCU.

Here we are asking the student to explain their return on investment. The student needs to clearly show that they understand the total cost of their stay in Australia, including total tuition fees, living expenses and travel costs for the duration of their stay. They should also indicate a realistic understanding of what salary they will earn when they go back to their home country and how long it will take them to earn this money back. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided.**

Q19: Tell us how this course will benefit your country.

We do not require a lot of detail in this answer and we do not need evidence of research. All we want to see is that the student understands how their study in Australia will directly impact social and employment needs in their home country. **No evidence required.**

Q20: Tell us about your future plans after your graduate from this course.

Does the student have a job offer when they return to their home country? If so, provide evidence from the employer. If not, how do they intend to find employment when they return? **No evidence required unless they have a job offer when they return.**

Q21: Where do you intend to permanently live and work when you complete your qualification?

The student should tell us if they intend to apply for Post Study Work Rights in Australia after they complete their course and how this will help them find employment when they return. If they intend to live and work in another country, where is that and how will this qualification help?

Q22: Is there anything else you would like us to consider when assessing you against the GTE criteria?

Most students leave this blank. It is ok to leave this question blank as it is not a compulsory question. However, it is a good opportunity for the student to give more details about them and why they want to study their course at SCU in Australia. **No evidence required.**

Q23: Have you ever held a visa to another country, or have you ever had a visa refused to any country, including Australia?

This is a very important question and it must be answered truthfully. If the student has never applied for a visa to any other country, they can simply respond “no”. If they have applied for a visa to another country (including Australia), they should answer yes and provide details. The intention is for us to be able to help the student meet the GTE criteria and have the best chance of successful visa outcome. If the student has a previous visa refusal, we must see the reasons for the refusal and will ask for the visa refusal notice. If there is a good explanation for the visa refusal, there is no reason for us to deny the application. **It is essential that evidence of research is provided if there has been a previous visa refusal.**

Q24: Have you been to Australia before?

If the student has been to Australia before, we want to know what visa they held and how long they were here. A simple answer is enough here. If no, simply write “no”. **No evidence required.**

Declaration:

It is essential that the student signs and dates the declaration. We cannot process the GTE unless the student has signed and dated the SOP.