

Writing a Personal Statement

Personal statements are often required in job applications and frequently in applications for postgraduate study. Personal statements are likely to vary depending on what you are applying for, but usually you will be given a word limit (likely one A4 page or less), and it will be your chance to demonstrate how you meet the criteria as set out in the application and/or person specification.

Writing a personal statement for further study

The personal statement is your opportunity to convince academic admissions tutors of your suitability for the programme. It is your chance to articulate why you wish to apply for the course and how you hope to progress your career after successful completion. The statement needs to be concise and well written and should only include information that is relevant. From the outset ensure that you demonstrate an interest, understanding and enthusiasm for the subject/course applied for.

Your statement should include:

- Your reasons / rationale for applying.
- Why this research area or particular course?
- Why the particular university / organisation to which you are making application?
- Your suitability as a candidate. How do you meet the essential / desirable criteria)?
- Evidence of your skills, attributes, aptitudes, abilities, achievements. Provide a broad range of concrete examples for the assertions that you make.
- If relevant, specify fields of interest within subject area and discuss them in detail, demonstrating academic interest, subject specific knowledge, ability and motivation to succeed.
- Use language relevant to the subject area to demonstrate this knowledge.
- Refer to particularly high grades, awards for academic achievement, prizes for project work or dissertation.
- It is particularly important to demonstrate your commitment if you are applying to a conversion course or subject area not directly related to your primary degree. Illustrate why you have now considered this change of career direction.
- Indicate your personal strengths that relate to the course. Reflect on the skills that you have already acquired through work experience/personal experience/voluntary work etc. You may want to include strengths such as strong leadership skills, teamwork, problem solving, communication etc, based on what is required in the course you are applying to.

Points to remember:

- You need to ensure that any points you make are backed up by hard evidence i.e. examples drawn from academic achievements, work experience and extra-curricular activities.
- Consideration needs to be given to the content, structure and style of the statement.
- Once you have decided on the topics to be included in the content, think about how you plan to structure the information. Each paragraph should lead coherently into the next.
- Be positive and try to start each section with the most relevant evidence or information.
- Remember that your statement is also evidence of your written communication skills and therefore must be of a high standard.
- Ensure your examples are appropriate to the question.
- Do not use the same statement for all applications. Each statement should be uniquely tailored to reflect the required criteria for the opportunity to which you are applying.
- Ensure that your sentences are clear, concise and informative. Ensure that the personal statement is proofread for spelling and grammar. Have your final draft checked by a tutor or an Employability Advisor.

Writing a personal statement for Job Vacancy

When completing a personal statement for an application form, you should use a similar approach to above, however it is vital that you use the Job description and Person Specification as this indicates what the employer is looking for in the ideal candidate. In addition you ensure that you match your skills & experience to those that the employer is looking for.

If you need further advice and guidance on how to complete a personal statement for either a job or further education, then call in to your Employability & Careers Hub on campus.

Useful Websites

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/masters-degrees/personal-statements-for-postgraduate-applications>
<https://www.findamasters.com/advice/finding/personal-statement-for-masters-degree.aspx>
<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/how-to-write-a-postgraduate-personal-statement/>
<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/jobseeking-tips/1343/what-you-should-include-in-a-personal-statement>



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