How to write a personal statement

An applicant's personal statement is an essential part of the information we use to evaluate and assess applicants for acceptance onto a postgraduate course. The personal statement should be a short reflective essay that is focused and allows us to hear the applicant's voice. It is the opportunity you have to promote yourself and show the University that you are the right candidate for the course.

A good personal statement can be the difference for a successful application.

What to include in your personal statement

Spend time to think and plan your statement. Consider what you want to say before you start writing. A personal statement should not be a timeline of your life – it's a statement of your reasons why you are applying for a specific course, your academic interests and your potential to successfully complete the course.

Why are you applying for this postgraduate degree?

What we are looking for is a clear narrative that explains your reasons why you want to apply for the course and what made you choose it over other courses of a similar content. You should use some evidence to show you have really thought about your course selection and explain how you expect the course to help you in your future personal and career aspirations.

If a particular field of study or research is of interest to you then you should identify it in your statement. For example, if a previous formal or independent study stimulated you to consider studying a particular area then include it in your statement.

We look for a convincing statement where the course that you want to apply for feeds into your passions and interests and how you anticipate it will benefit your future career. If your chosen subject or field of interest has impacted in your life outside study, such as voluntary work or internships, then you should mention it in your personal statement.

Tell us about you

The personal statement you write should be telling us about you. Your academic performance can be assessed from your previous studies and certificates. What we want to see in your statement is why you think this course would be a good fit for you.

Although, we do expect serious and focused applicants to have reviewed our webpages before applying, you should not copy and paste information from the website or from other people's statements or ideas, as this will only lead to delays in the processing of your application.

Please note that if you are a non-UK applicant requiring a student visa to study in the UK, you should be prepared to discuss the contents of your personal statement fluently. This document could be used in an interview with the UK visa authorities.

Structure of your personal statement

- The personal statement should be written in the form of a reflective essay
- It should not be longer than 500 words (one A4 page)
- It should have a structure that is logical; a captivating introduction followed by the main body of information of your experience and reasons for wanting to do the particular course and concluding by telling us why you are the ideal candidate for this course.
- Use clear language and keep your sentences short
- Use correct grammar and spelling

Remember: Do **not** use the same personal statement if applying for more than one course – each statement should be course focused. Be specific about why you are applying for that particular course.

In a nutshell, the personal statement should discuss the following:

- Why you are applying for the course
- Your interest and suitability for the course
- What you hope to achieve by studying the course
- How this course is relevant to your future career or personal development objectives
- How your academic, work or voluntary related knowledge, skills, experience and positions of responsibility are relevant to your selected course
- Your personal hobbies and interests
- Any additional information that you feel is relevant to your application