

Personal Statement Guide

? What is the purpose of a personal statement?

The personal statement is to let the college know a bit more about you – try to think of it as if you are introducing yourself to us and letting us know about your successes and interests. This is an important part of your application and may make the difference as to whether you are selected for interview. Remember, this is to give us extra information that is not already included in your application.

You have already told us about your academic qualifications –we now need to know about you as an individual, why you want to do the course you have applied for and why you are choosing to come to college. Make sure your personal statement is structured – see below.

Thinking about the structure of your Personal Statement

Try to be clear about what you want to tell us about yourself and why. Try to put your thoughts in order so that your statement has a beginning, middle and end.

Beginning: Say why you want to come to college, what you want to study and why.

Middle: This is where you would talk about your skills, experience and achievements and why these are going to help with your course or make you a good student.

End: Finish up by saying what you hope to achieve by coming to college.

Make sure you sound enthusiastic about what you are applying for and don't try and copy from anyone else – remember it's you we want to know about!



As you can see, skills, achievements and experience can all be related to each other. See below for some examples

Skills – remember not to under-sell yourself! Below are some examples of skills that might be worth mentioning.

- 'I have been learning trombone over the last 4 years at High School. This shows the ability to commit to something and also a good level of discipline as learning a musical instrument requires regular practice. (This example could also be applied to someone involved with dance or football.)
- 'I help with my local Brownie pack every Tuesday evening- I enjoy working with children and would like to apply for the Intermediate2 Child, Health and Social Care course. I have gained good communication skills from organising games and activities and have learnt to be a good team player from working with the other leaders and helpers.
- 'My work experience was in the kitchen of a large hotel. Throughout the week I had to do general cleaning jobs, take customers orders and serve food and drink. From this week I gained listening and communication skill, it also improved my work ethic through time-keeping and organisational skills.

Experience – remember to comment on how this has affected you personally. Below are some examples;

- 'The experience of playing trombone in the District Brass Band has taught me the importance that every player has in any team. I have also learnt to listen well to others around me and to work with the staff and the other players. It's also been good fun to meet other students from different schools and makes me feel confident about coming to college and getting to know a whole new set of people.'
- 'I help with my local Brownie pack every Tuesday evening- this experience has made me certain that I would be suited to a career working with children. Their energy and enthusiasm is fantastic and I enjoy helping to think up ideas for new activities. I have learnt to have a good awareness of child safety and I am happy to help take responsibility for the children in my care.'
- 'I had a week of work experience in the kitchen at the Hilton hotel at the end of 3rd year and would now like to apply for SVQ2 Professional Cookery – this gave me a realistic idea of what it's like to work in a professional kitchen.'

Achievements – these are not only successes for which you have received a certificate, this section can also include tasks or projects you have been involved with that make you feel proud of yourself and where you think you have learnt something about yourself or other people. It might be an idea to refer to your GLOW profile for some ideas. Below are examples of the type of achievement that might be suitable to mention.

- Successfully completing a Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Being a carer for your Mum
- Learning British Sign Language (BSL) at lunch time
- Passing Grade 5 Trombone and playing in the District Brass Band
- Being chosen to represent the school in a cross country running competition

When you state your achievements give details about exactly what was involved, what you learnt and how this helps you towards your course application. Here is an example;

- Since my Mum became ill a couple of years ago I have had to take on more responsibility in the house. I have to help her get up and dressed before I go to school and then cook the tea when I get home. This can be hard sometimes but it means I am very organised which will be a big advantage when I come to college.

Writing about yourself can be challenging but through Curriculum for Excellence you will be used to reflecting upon your own learning experiences. Complete the grid below to help you get started on your personal statement. Just write down words and phrases.

Why do you want to come to college?			
Why do you want to study the course/courses you have chosen?			
Aims for the future			
Skills	Examples	What you learnt	How will this help with your studies?
Experience			
Achievements			

Dos and Don'ts!

Do	Don't
Plan what you are going to write and expect to do a couple of drafts before settling on your final statement.	Use flowery or fancy language – try to keep your statement simple, straightforward and structured.
Show enthusiasm about the course or subject area you are hoping to study.	Lie or exaggerate – you may get caught out at interview!
Try to be specific where possible, for example, rather than stating you like reading, you might say that you enjoy reading novels by Dan Brown because.....	Copy anyone else's work – remember your personal statement is about you!
Reflect on any specific statement you make e.g. if you mention a skill or activity try to say what you gain from this and how this will help you as a student.	Just write a list of activities or skills. Try to pick a few which are relevant to the courses you are applying for and give some details on how they will enhance your ability to study.
Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.	
Ask a reliable adult for feedback.	
Proof read your statement before submitting.	
Always save in a back-up file in case your statement is lost/deleted.	