

Writing a Personal Statement

What is a personal statement?

A written description of your achievements, interests, skills and experiences included as part of an application for a job, an apprenticeship or a place at university.

What should I include?

The information you need to include will depend on what you are applying for, but in general remember that your personal statement is a chance to sell yourself! Here are some top tips:

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create a list of your ideas before attempting to write the real thing. ▶ Expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy. ▶ Ask people you trust for their feedback. ▶ Use your best English and don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement. ▶ Be enthusiastic –show an interest in whatever you are applying for! ▶ Present yourself as a rounded individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Say too much about things that are not relevant. ▶ Don't lie –you don't want to get caught out at interview! ▶ Rely on spellchecker as it will not pick up everything – proofread as many times as possible. ▶ Leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed! Set a dedicated amount of time aside to write it. ▶ Be negative!

How do I write about myself?

The best way to write about things you like or are good at is to make sure you expand your answers/ descriptions, like the two examples below.

✗	✓
I enjoy badminton.	I play badminton twice a week with a club that plays in local competitions. I play in both singles and doubles matches. Doubles matches require good team working, an ability to support your partner, to devise a game plan but be able to adapt it as required and fast reactions.
I spent two weeks work experience at a residential home and enjoyed talking to the patients and caring for them.	Undertaking a two weeks work experience placement at a residential home gave me a valuable insight into the caring profession. I enjoyed talking to and caring for the residents and developing relationships with them. I discovered my talent for providing assurance to people who may be anxious or confused, and I feel that this is a vital skill to have when a nurse.

What should I include in my Personal Statement?

The requirements of a personal statement will vary depending on what you are using it to apply for. Below are some examples and information on where to find further guidance on each one.

University

All UCAS applications require a personal statement that will be sent to all the universities you apply for. Here is a suggested structure for what you should include:

- ▶ Paragraph 1: Your reasons for applying (link to future career choices, work experience and current studies)
- ▶ Paragraph 2: What relevant skills and understanding you currently have (give examples of work experience and knowledge/skills developed, also knowledge gained from current course)
- ▶ Paragraph 3: All about you! What are your hobbies and other interests?
- ▶ Paragraph 4: Summary/ final sales pitch!

For more information and guidance, see: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>

Apprenticeship

A lot of apprenticeship applications require a personal statement, either for the employer or college to which you are applying, or potentially both. Remember that the college and employer will be looking for different things in a candidate, so you might have to change the content depending on who your audience is. Here are some suggestions for what you should include:

- ▶ What are your reasons for applying for the apprenticeship?
- ▶ How are you suited to the role?
- ▶ What interests you about this sector?
- ▶ What skills do you already have (perhaps gained outside of school)?
- ▶ What are your hobbies and interests (and how do they relate to the apprenticeship)?
- ▶ What is your long-term plan? What do you hope to do after the apprenticeship?

For more information and guidance, see: <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/resources/>

Job Application

Some jobs applications ask for a 'Cover Letter' (which is very similar to a personal statement). If you need a cover letter, here are some suggestions for what you should include:

- ▶ What role are you applying for and why? Each cover letter should be unique to every job. Make sure you highlight what interests you about the role.
- ▶ What skills do you have that are relevant to this role? Use the job description/ person specification to emphasise your suitability to the role.
- ▶ What would make you a good employee? Don't just repeat what is on your CV, go into more detail and give them a better insight into what you're like as a person.
- ▶ What experience do you have in this area? If possible, include key words from the job description.

Task: Have a look at the following cover letters. See if you can spot the mistakes, suggest improvements and gain ideas for writing your own personal statement.

Example 1:

I am writing to apply for the finance apprenticeship with ACCA Global. Please find my CV enclosed.

I am very interested in the finance apprenticeship offered by ACCA because of the programme's focus on future accountancy strategies.

The ACA brand is a hallmark for quality in accounting and finance. As one of the most respected professional bodies in the UK and around the world.

When you read my CV you will see, I have 2 years of work experience doing administration and accounts for Staffs Media and this has given me team-work skills, as well as the ability to work confidently as an individual. I am a committed student, on course to achieve three A-levels. My focus and interest in maths has provided a groundwork of knowledge that will be needed for this apprenticeship. I have excellent skills using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel.

Thank you for considering my application, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for an interview so that we can discuss your apprenticeship programme in greater detail.

▶ What do you think is good/ bad about this personal statement? How could it be improved?

Example 2:

I would like to apply to study midwifery because it's something close to my heart. I am a mum to Sophia Jasmine who has recently turned one years old. I live in Oswaldtwistle and enjoy having my own home. My parents and twin sisters live close and are great babysitters for my daughter. I am a 'people person' who loves to meet new people and socialise. I work within an excellent and progressive care setting within a busy administration department. I have worked in community and social care setting for the past four years and have had varied experience of working with vulnerable groups of people from young people to older people and families. I have always worked with people and enjoy face to face interaction with people from all walks of life. Last year I give birth to my daughter and had a very traumatic experience as I developed the life-threatening health condition, sepsis and my daughter had neonatal sepsis. Our experience has shown me a different side of the healthcare and medical issues that affect women who give birth. I have also experience longer terms health issues as a result of this experience and I feel my experience has given me an insight and compassion into helping other who go through a similar situation. I am familiar with services locally and understand the clinical pathways for midwifery. I am caring, relatable and trustworthy. I am organised and understand the commitment of juggling a family, study and work and am excited about expanding my knowledge and being able to achieve qualification in order to gain my dream job. I know midwifery isn't just about delivering babies but giving the women and her family the best possible care throughout her pregnancy and in the post-natal period. I gained numerous GCSEs at school and have extended my learning to level 3 within my work capacity. I have also undertaken several work-related courses in various subjects and have a broad knowledge of health and social care issues. I supplement my current studies with various volunteering positions including a community befriending mentor and creche worker. I have worked and

Name: _____

Year: _____

School: _____

volunteered within a social enterprise since I was 16 years old, working with various age groups experiencing social isolation and physical and mental health

issues. As part of this work I have undertaken public facing roles including reception work and cafe assistant, working in various customer service environments. Within this environment I have met people from all backgrounds, cultures and with various presenting mental health problems. My parents are social workers and have given me the opportunity to understand various issues that may people face and I feel I have a good grounding in the remit of how and why to help people through community and therapeutic interventions. This year I have embarked on an Access course at Accrington and Rossendale College, whilst still maintaining my part time job. My employers have been accommodating, so I can attend my college course. It has been hard at times but I know it will benefit me in the future. It has shown me I have the determination to achieve my end goal of becoming a midwife. From the beginning of the course, I have sacrificed my free time to make sure my assignments have been completed on time. Previously I enjoyed spending time with my family going on country walks and socialising at the weekend with my friends. After completing my midwifery degree I would like to specialise in teen pregnancy. I, myself has been a young mother and understand the struggles and challenges that comes with it. I feel I will be able to relate and be emphatic towards teen mothers. I understand that being a teen mother it will come with some physical and emotional issues they may develop throughout their pregnancy and labour. I am aware of the challenges that I may face during my studies and balancing a family life. My desire and commitment to become a midwife has been strengthen by my life experiences.

▶ What do you think is good/ bad about this personal statement? How could it be improved?

Example 3:

Please find enclosed my CV in application for the post advertised in the Guardian on 30 November.

The nature of my degree course has prepared me for this position. It involved a great deal of independent research, requiring initiative, self-motivation and a wide range of skills. For one course, [insert course], an understanding of the [insert sector] industry was essential. I found this subject very stimulating.

I am a fast and accurate writer, with a keen eye for detail and I should be very grateful for the opportunity to progress to market reporting. I am able to take on the responsibility of this position immediately, and have the enthusiasm and determination to ensure that I make a success of it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this application and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

▶ What do you think is good/ bad about this personal statement? How could it be improved?