



ENGLISH TRACKERS
editing by experts

HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT

FOLLOW OUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ENSURE
YOUR POSTGRADUATE APPLICATION REMAINS
AT **THE TOP OF THE INTERVIEW PILE.**



RESEARCH

What are your reasons?
Why this course?
How have you prepared?



WRITING

Give yourself time.
Exemplary spelling and grammar.
Read the guidelines.



REVIEW

Give yourself time.
Seek professional help.
Common pitfalls.

RESEARCH

WRITING

REVIEW

WHAT ARE YOUR REASONS FOR WANTING TO UNDERTAKE POSTGRADUATE STUDY ?

You need to identify specific reasons that it is the right thing for you. Consider your long, medium and short-term goals.

WHY IS THIS COURSE OR PROJECT OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO YOU ?

The answer to this could be personal. You might have been influenced by the experiences of someone in your family or have been inspired by following an expert in a particular field.

It could also be professional. You may want to expand on previous employment experience or wish to deepen your knowledge in a specific field.

Your interest might be purely academic. You may wish to continue research started during your degree or further your knowledge of a subject that you have been studying as part of your employment.

You need to identify at least three solid reasons for your application ; each must clearly relate to the specific programme to which you are applying.

WHICH ELEMENTS OF THIS COURSE PARTICULARLY APPEAL TO YOU ?

You might be interested in a research module that gives you the opportunity to study overseas or has an employment related element. Study the programme carefully and record which aspects of it meet your specific requirements.

HOW HAS YOUR PREVIOUS ACADEMIC STUDY PREPARED YOU FOR THIS COURSE ?

There may be specific elements of your undergraduate study that would be a good precursor to this course. Consider the skill-set you developed during your undergraduate study – how does it relate to your new programme of study.



GIVE YOURSELF TIME

READ THE GUIDE LINES

Make sure that you have **read all of the instructions** and understand the requirements.

Check word counts, identify specific questions that require answering and check acceptable upload formats for additional documents.

GET THE STRUCTURE RIGHT

You should include an introduction, which **briefly** states your case, a main body, which summarises why you are **the ideal candidate for the programme**.

Your personal statement will take longer to write than you think. **Allow yourself plenty of time** to research it, write it and review it (see step three).

EXEMPLARY SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

The importance of exemplary spelling and grammar cannot be over-stressed. **Grammar and spelling errors will negatively influence your chances** of being selected for a programme.

HONESTY & SET THE CORRECT TONE

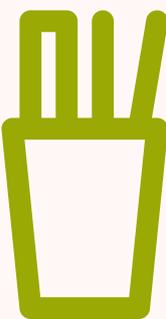
Demonstrate pride in your achievements but don't over-enhance them. Don't ever be tempted to fabricate evidence of your accomplishments ; **dishonesty will always come to light**.

Remember that your audience is the admissions board. **Your tone should be polite and professional**. You should avoid being over chatty or using colloquial language.

You need to strike a balance between **showcasing your personality** and giving facts about your experience, skills and knowledge.

PROVIDE THE CORRECT LEVEL OF INFORMATION

Provide a level of information that demonstrates your specific interest and skills, but doesn't repeat them. Approximately **half of your personal statement should showcase you and your interests** ; the other half should focus on the course.



ALLOW TIME

A **break** – a few days to a week – from what you have written will help you to add to what you have already said and pick up errors more easily.

CHECKING

Ask friends to **read it through and pick out simple mistakes.**

You could also ask a tutor to check your statement. If it is somebody that knows you well, they will be able to offer constructive advice and support.

PROFESSIONAL HELP

Consider engaging the services of a professional editor to give your personal statement a final check and the required level of polish. Little things like correct sentence structure and the improvement of flow can **make a big difference to the success of your personal statement.**

COMMON PITFALLS

Incorrect Word Counts

Check word counts first – you don't want your statement to be cut off before the end!

Over Emotive or Effusive Language

Use language that is descriptive and correct, but don't spoil your efforts by trying too hard. The language you use should reflect your enthusiasm but it should also sound like you.

Repetition

It can be tempting to reword something that you have already said in order to increase your word count. This will make your application look weak. If you are not sure what else to include, go back to your research notes.

Plagiarism

Although there are some excellent personal statement examples available online, do not, under any circumstances, be tempted to copy these. Plagiarism is easy to discover and may result in your application being thrown out.

Forgetting What You Said

Keep a copy of your statement so that when you are invited for an interview you can review what you said.

Your personal statement will have a direct influence on your future. Writing it can be a daunting task, but it doesn't need to be. Stick to the three steps and avoid the pitfalls we have listed, and you will have a successful personal statement.

Good luck with your future !

REVIEW



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