

Personal Statement Guide

1

Brief introduction: Sum up why you want to study your chosen subject.

Aim: to grab the reader's attention and show your enthusiasm for your chosen subject.

Tip: You can leave writing your introduction to one of your later drafts.

The answer to one of these questions should help get you started: Why do you want to study your chosen subject? or How did your interest in the subject begin? What do you find interesting about the subject?

2

Show your suitability for the course by demonstrating your interest in your chosen subject. This section is VERY important.

Tip: The best way to demonstrate enthusiasm and interest is with evidence of relevant wider reading and/or enrichment activities related to the course being applied for (this could include work experience). It is not enough just to mention what you have read or done, it is important to be specific about what in particular interested you and why. Universities are looking for detailed analysis and reflection. If applying for a professional degree, include relevant work/volunteering experience, making reference to key professional qualities.

Note: What you include must be well researched/well thought out.

How have you taken your interest in the subject further?

3

Show you have relevant academic skills/knowledge to do well on the course.

Tip: Highlight relevant aspects of the subjects you are currently taking, look at specific content and approach to learning (e.g. note-taking, research skills, presentation skills, time management, team work).

What aspects of your current subjects will help you with your degree course?

4

Show you have the personal qualities required to cope with the demands of studying at university.

Tip: Use extracurricular activities to demonstrate these qualities. Highlight strengths in areas such as communication, leadership, working well as part of a team, being self-motivated, time-management, coping with pressure, organisation etc. If applying for a professional degree, make reference to the qualities you are developing that make you suitable for your chosen profession.

Note: Don't just write a list. Instead, explain what you have learned and the skills you have gained from extra-curricular activities, achievements, positions of responsibility etc. past and present:

5

Close with a final thought.

Tip: Don't repeat something you have said earlier, add something different. Use positive and powerful language.

Career goals? What are you looking forward to most (in relation to your subject)?

DO:

Be **specific**, avoid being vague. Show you are **up-to-date** with your subject. Use **positive** language, rather than negative. Be **original**, but treat humour with caution. Check **spelling and grammar**. **Honesty** is the best policy. Get **feedback** from others.

DON'T:

Don't **overuse** a particular word or phrase. Don't use **cliches or quotes**. Avoid using **'I'** at the start of each sentence. Don't use **complex** words just for the sake of it. Don't **ramble**. Don't **copy** any part of someone else's personal statement.