

## **Personal Statements for College**

Every college application form will have a section that allows you to explain why you are applying to the course and why you think you are well-suited to it. This is your opportunity to sell yourself to those who are considering your application.

It might be called a 'personal statement' on the form, or you might simply be asked to 'provide further information to support your application'.

Either way, you're being asked to do the same thing: to write a few paragraphs that tell the college why they should offer you a place on their course.

### **1. Read about the course you're applying to:**

What does it involve?

What kind of skills does it require?

You must show that you understand what the course involves and that your interest, skills and experience are well-suited to it.

### **2. Make note of:**

- ✓ your extra-curricular activities, inside and outside school
- ✓ your work experience
- ✓ any awards or achievements
- ✓ your current skills

Which of your skills and experiences are most relevant to your application?

***Prioritise these!***

### **3. Make a plan.**

Think about how you're going to structure your statement and the main points you want to include.

### **4. What to include.**

You might have different reasons for applying. For example:

- Completing the course will help you pursue the career you want
- You have a strong interest in the subject
- Completing the course will allow you to progress to a higher level of study

Show that you are enthusiastic about studying the course and that you have a clear idea of how it will be of value to you.

## **5. What makes you suitable?**

The college staff want to know that you'll be a good student, well-suited to the demands of the course. Therefore, they want to hear about your experience, your interests, and your skills.

Think about your activities, inside and outside school. Which ones are most relevant to the course you're applying to?

Maybe you:

- ? play in a sports team or club
- ? play a musical instrument or attend dance lessons
- ? are a member of another club or society, in or outside school
- ? have gained relevant work experience
- ? have done some volunteering or helped in the community
- ? have won an award or completed a project e.g. Duke of Edinburgh or Young Enterprise
- ? have held a position of responsibility e.g. as a mentor, a team captain, or a group leader
- ? have taken part in a college taster course, had work experience or have attended an event related to your subject

Explain how these activities have prepared you well for the course you've applied to:

Some might be directly related, for example:

If you're applying to an engineering course, maybe you spent a week in an engineering related environment or even spent it on an engineering programme?

Others might have helped you develop skills that will be useful on the course: e.g. communication skills, teamwork, responsibility, or commitment.

Remember, you want to show that you understand what the course involves and that you have the interest, skills and experience to perform well in it.

## Points to Remember

### **Make sure it is well written!**

A badly written statement will not go down well so take your time to get it right.

Check your spelling and grammar. Do a few drafts and ask a teacher to proof read it before you paste the final version into your form.

**Explain your examples!** Don't just list all your activities and experience. Explain why they are relevant to the course you're applying to by mentioning the skills they involve. Structure it clearly:

- 1) Begin by explaining why you want to study the course. Make your interest and enthusiasm clear!
- 2) Then move on to explain how your experience and your activities have prepared you well for the course. Write about the most relevant examples.
- 3) End with a sentence that re-emphasises your commitment to and interest in the course.

Remember to order your points logically. For example, you could have a paragraph on your work experience, a paragraph on your activities in school, a paragraph on your activities outside school etc.

### **Be honest!**

Remember, if you are invited to attend an interview, the college staff will probably ask you some questions based on the information you included in your personal statement. So don't dig yourself a hole by making stuff up!

Write about activities and experiences that you'll be able to talk about in the interview.

### **Don't worry!**

Sure, this part of the application form needs a bit more thought and time. But don't worry about it. The colleges just want to hear a bit about you - this is your opportunity to tell them why you're going to make a good student.

Your statement doesn't need to be too long. Think about the things we've suggested, plan what you want to say, then draft it out.

Take your time with it and you'll arrive at something you're happy with