

SOP - Guidelines

The purpose of a personal statement is to help a university or college to find out about you and your suitability for the course you are applying for. It is an opportunity for you to present your goals, experiences, achievements and qualifications in the best possible way as well as demonstrating your writing ability.

A lot of universities and colleges do not interview, they will use your application and personal statement to decide whether or not you are suitable for the course. It is therefore vital that you spend time and care on your personal statement. Tutors not only look at your academic achievements, they want to gain an impression of your motivation, ability, interests and personality.

What should be included in your statement?

You should provide detail on the following and not just list them.

- **Your reasons for choosing the course**

Explain why you think the subject is interesting, why it is important to you, and why you are enthusiastic about that particular course.

- **Reference to any future plans or career aspirations**

What are your short or long term goals and career ideas?
Have you got any ideas about what you would like to do after graduation?

- **Extra curriculum/outside interests and hobbies**

Talk about your hobbies or interests to give an impression of you as a person. Include any positions of responsibility held or awards you have won. Describe what you have gained from your interests, rather than just providing a list.

- **Relevant background or experience**

This may include paid work experience, travelling abroad or unpaid work experience, for example, work shadowing, voluntary work or being a carer. What did you learn from this experience?

- **Personal qualities and skills**

Do you possess specific skills needed for the course? If so, what are they and why are they relevant to the course?

Conclusion

- **Sell yourself!!** – Admissions tutors are looking for students who can analyse their skills and experience and give reasons why these have led to an application for the courses chosen.
- Your personal statement provides an indication of your communication skills, in terms of basic spelling and grammar, and also the ability to express information and ideas clearly.