

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement is a common requirement for entry to post-graduate courses in Ireland and abroad. A good personal statement can mean the difference between getting an offer and being rejected.

A personal statement is your opportunity to tell the university or college why they should select YOU as a student. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm, commitment and suitability for the course or profession that you hope to pursue.

Your personal statement needs to include the following information.

YOUR MOTIVATION

Explain why you want to do your chosen course

- What has influenced your decision to pursue this course and career?
- Avoid using clichés – e.g. ‘It’s always been my dream....’, ‘I’ve always known that I wanted to...’. Instead, be specific about your reasons for choosing this course and wanting to work in this profession/sector. Where possible include examples/experiences that demonstrate your points.
- Research the course you are applying for and explain why you want to study it.



MATCH

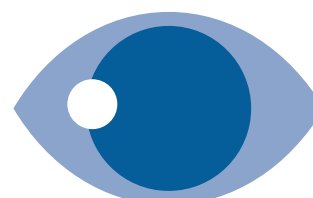
Explain why you are suitable for this course/profession



- What specific skills or abilities do you have that relate to this profession/sector?
- What transferable skills have you gained that you feel are relevant to a career in this area (e.g. communication, leadership, organisational, etc...)?
- Explain the **relevance of your previous education** to your chosen course.
- Highlight **relevant work experience** that you may have in this profession/sector e.g. work shadowing, voluntary or unpaid work. What have you learned from these experiences?
- Mention your **interests** that relate to your chosen course, which allow you to further demonstrate your skills and abilities.
- Highlight any **achievements** that you have including academic, professional or personal achievements – particularly if they relate to the course.

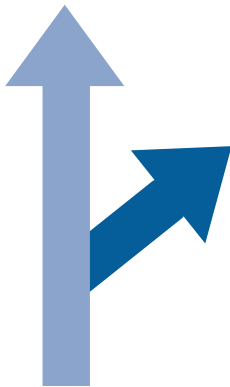
YOUR CAREER PLAN OR VISION

What are your **future career plans** once you have completed your chosen course? Show that you have researched careers in this area, have clear goals and are committed to completing the course.



A DIFFERENT COURSE OF STUDY

If you're applying for a subject that is in a different field to your undergraduate degree, explain why you have decided to change your direction of study.



Think about:

- How you will bring fresh insight to your course as a result of your undergraduate degree.
- The reasons for deciding to change your field of study.
- How changing your direction of study will help you with your future career.

Mature Students

Mature students should use the personal statement to explain what they have been doing prior to applying for the course. A mature student might have valuable experience that could count as prior experiential learning and strengthen their application.

GENERAL TIPS

- 1 Use standard, calibri, size 12 font when writing your statement – do not use bold, italics or underlining. Write your statement in Microsoft Word first, spell and grammar check, and then copy and paste it into the application form.
- 2 The length of a personal statement may vary depending on the university or college so please be aware of the number of characters or words allowed.
- 3 Research the website of the university/college that you are applying to and use information where appropriate;
 - Read the mission statement – can you relate your own background and values to the values and ethos of the institution?
 - Does the university/college offer particular academic or extra-curricular activities that you are interested in or can contribute to?
 - Read the information provided about the course for which you are applying. It may provide an entry profile or explain what the university is looking for in their students and what qualifications or experience you'll need for the course. Explain how you match this profile in your statement.
 - Be aware of application deadlines and give yourself plenty of time to prepare.
- 4 Always elaborate on your skills – say how and where you developed these skills and give specific examples.
- 5 Use the 'ABC' rule when giving examples of your experience;
 - A – Activity (State the task completed.)
 - B – Benefit (What was the benefit of this task for you?)
 - C – Cause (How can you relate this task and benefit to the cause i.e. the course/profession you wish to pursue?)

TIP: On completion read your personal statement carefully, paying particular attention to spelling and grammar. Ask a trusted person or a professional to also check it for you.