

QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT (FOR MASTERS-LEVEL COURSES)



The personal statement is an important part of the postgraduate application process, and it's essential that you get it right. This is your opportunity to show off your skills, motivation and aptitude for studying a particular course.

Differences from personal statements for a first degree:

- The word limit is higher so you are expected to provide more detail
- It is advisable to provide evidence of critical thinking and research skills since these are more significant components in Masters courses

RESEARCH

- Research the course, the institution and its links to careers
- **Think of some reasons** why you want to do this particular course
- Read through the entry requirements and course description very carefully: **identify the key words** and phrases and think about how you can provide evidence of these skills
- Contact the university's postgraduate admissions office to ask about the application process
- Connect with the university's alumni on LinkedIn to ask about their experiences of the course

WRITING (THE FOUR Ps)

Passion for your subject – **Demonstrate** your academic interests, eg, further reading, favourite modules, related events like exhibitions, conferences and workshops.

Person – Why you? **Give evidence** of your previous experiences, motivations, career goals.

Preparation – **Apply your skills** to the skills listed in the entry requirements and course description. Always give evidence to prove you have these skills. These skills could be from academic work, research placements, internships, societies or other roles.

Place – Why there? **Tailor the personal statement** to the particular course and institution: you can apply to more than one Masters course but each personal statement should be slightly different so that it is **relevant** to the individual course. Demonstrate that you have researched the course and the university. What do you like about it: staff interests, modules, resources, the postgraduate community?

PRESENTATION

Make sure you:

- Check your spelling and grammar. A personal statement demonstrates your ability in written communication.
- Use a clear structure. Break up your points into paragraphs that deal with different areas. Be wary of chronology and 'story-telling' examples.
- Are relevant. Go into as much details as possible but be concise and focused.
- Summarise your commitment to the course as concisely and truthfully as possible. The first and last paragraphs are most important.
- End your statement in a positive note highlighting what you hope to achieve by the end of the course.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Be positive and sell yourself
- Do not repeat information such as academic qualifications (include this elsewhere in the application)
- Your aim is to convince the admissions tutor that you and this course are perfect for each other



FURTHER HELP

- Book a careers appointment:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers
- Send your personal statement and receive feedback from a careers adviser:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/contact
- Come along to relevant 'apply yourself' workshops:
<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/events/apply-yourself.aspx>
- Find out more about events, support and resources:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/furtherstudy
- Self enrol into the Canvas course:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careerscanvas/furtherstudy



PLAN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT



WRITE DOWN YOUR REASONS FOR STUDYING YOUR CHOSEN COURSE:

Reasons (eg, favourite module, staff specialism, enhances career prospects, emphasis on research...)

THINK OF EVIDENCE FOR THE FOUR Ps:

FOUR Ps	Evidence
Passion	
Person	
Preparation	
Place	

