

A Student's Guide to Writing Your Best Personal Statement

Step 1: Prepare

You should begin to gather your thoughts and brainstorm on what motivates you to want to study abroad. Start by writing down all your relevant experiences in chronological order to determine what details to include. You will need to provide a study gap explanation if you have been out of school for a number of months. You should explain what you have accomplished since being out of school, whether you have been working and/or gained volunteer experience during that time. If you haven't already completed all the necessary research regarding the UK, the university/college, and their program of choice, this is the time to do it.

Check out the link to the Personal Statement checklist and/or sample provided either by the university or ApplyBoard located in the Personal Statement Requirement on the ApplyBoard Platform and found further down in this guide.

The checklist will help you get an idea of the information that is required in each paragraph of the Personal Statement. Taking the time to plan a Personal Statement roadmap will ensure that your message is precise and effective.

Step 2: Write

It's time to start writing. If you prepared well, the writing part should be easy! The Personal Statement should be written at a level equivalent to your English test scores so don't worry about being perfect. Your message is more important than anything else so please remember to write it in your own words.

You should begin by giving background information about yourself, your education, your family, and any relevant jobs or projects. You should state your goals and intentions of going to the UK to gain a quality education. Your Personal Statement should focus on your life story and your decision to study in the UK, as well as explain the reasoning behind the university and your program of choice. The educational institution, as well as immigration, want to learn more about you and what you have done to prepare yourself for this program.

Make sure to covers the following areas:

- Academic history and relevant work experience
- Reason for choosing the UK and not choosing any other education destinations or home country
- Reason for choosing the particular university/college and course
- Your incentive to return home and what you will gain by obtaining this education

Step 3: Justify

You will need to justify your interest in the UK and the program you have selected. Ensure you provide evidence of the research that you have completed and can either provide supporting documentation or can access it easily if requested. In most cases, your interest in a particular course needs to be supported by your previous field of study or work experience. If you have chosen a field outside of your prior experience, you must have a strong statement as to why you have chosen this course, and you must keep in mind that it might not be approved by the university/college.

Examples of supporting documentation that may strengthen your Personal Statement are:

- Financial bank statements and documents that show that you and/or your sponsor(s) can financially afford the costs of your education, travel, overseas health insurance and accommodations while in the UK
- Resumes and letters from your employer or volunteer work you may have done
- Potential future job offers and expected salaries
- Medical records to justify any study gaps that you may have

Step 4: Proofread and Rewrite

Review your Personal Statement and ensure that it tells your true story. Ask others to read your Personal Statement and provide constructive feedback. It may take a few revisions before you are satisfied that you have written your best statement of purpose. A strong Personal Statement will leave a lasting impression on the university's admission team and immigration.

Below is our Personal Statement checklist that you can use to get an idea of what a good Personal Statement should look like. It tells this sample student's personal story of wanting to go gain a quality education in the UK and then return home to help grow his country's economy. Please remember that your Personal Statement should be written in your own words and this sample should only be used as a guide.

Personal Statement Checklist

- All students applying for a study visa to the UK must be able to demonstrate that they intend to travel to the UK temporarily with the primary purpose of gaining a quality education.

- This may be perceived as an 'integrity assessment tool' that the Department (the UK Government) uses to assess an applicant's eligibility and genuine intent to study in the UK.
- The student visa program is not a way for international students to maintain ongoing residency in the UK.
- The Personal Statement requirement helps identify applicants who are using the student visa program for motives other than gaining a quality education.
- The Personal Statement, in the context of applying for university/college, is an essay that is a very important part of the UK university application.
- The Personal Statement needs to be catered to the specific university/college and program that the student is applying to.
- The Personal Statement MUST be written in the student's own words, nothing may be copied from the internet or written by another individual.
- Must be 2-4 pages in length.
- Each of the below topics must be covered in the Personal Statement and written in paragraph form.

What to include in your Personal Statement:

Paragraph #1 Personal Introduction

- Introduction and background, explain your goals and highlight any achievements.

Paragraph #2 Previous education

- Academic transcripts showing qualifications and date(s) achieved, name of the education provider(s), length of study, certificates of attainment.

Paragraph # 3 Study Gaps (if any)

- Reasons why there is a gap in your studies including where you did not maintain enrollment.

Paragraph #4 Current Employment (if any)

- Your current employer & company address, period of employment, details of your position, the name and contact details of someone who can confirm the circumstances of your employment. Include volunteer activities if they pertain to

your chosen field of study.

Paragraph #5 Ties to your home country of residence

- Evidence of family and social ties to your home country. Occupation of your parents and/or spouse, and your annual household income. Include any family owned fixed assets such as property, land or companies. You need to show that you have significant incentives to return home. Please include if you have any military commitments in your home country.

Paragraph #6 Reasons for choosing to study in the UK

- Explain the benefits of studying in the UK and your knowledge of the UK Education system. Show the research you did of your proposed education provider. Explain how continuing your studies in the UK will improve your current situation.

Paragraph #7 Reasons for choosing the course of study and university

- Show the relation of the course to your previous education/employment. Describe the value and benefits the course will bring to your life in your home country. Be specific about the course content. Include any potential employment offers and opportunities in your home country, providing details of expected salary and other benefits.

Paragraph #8 Knowledge of location and life in the UK

- Show your knowledge of the campus you wish to attend and the surrounding area, including your plans for accommodations. If your spouse, guardian, and/or children will be accompanying you, include their planned activities while in the UK.

Paragraph #9 Research of similar opportunities in other countries

- Explain your reasons for not studying in your home country or any other country. Show the research you have undertaken to explore similar programs and provide evidence of how the same qualifications/skills would not be obtained.

Paragraph #10 Financial Capacity

- Include evidence of funds to cover annual cost, evidence of annual income, loans, scholarships and grants. The financial capacity MUST cover, first year of tuition, living costs, travel expenses and health insurance. Provide details of all your sponsors. If your spouse, guardian, and/or children are accompanying you,

evidence must cover their costs.

Paragraph #11 Your immigration history

- Previous visa applications for the UK or other countries, visa refusals or cancellations. If you are a minor, we consider the intentions of your parents, legal guardian or spouse. If you have a prior visa refusal, explain the reason for refusal and describe how you have changed your circumstances.