



# Postgraduate Teacher Education Personal Statements

## What is the personal statement?

The personal statement is a short piece of writing (47 lines/4000 characters) which you are asked to submit in support of your application to study a PGDE/CE made through UCAS. It is your opportunity to demonstrate your skills, experience and motivation for teaching.

## Before you start:

Remember that this is a very important part of your application. The personal statement and your **reference(s) will be the main factors in the selectors' decision, once you have met the entry requirements.** Take your time to carefully plan out and practise your statement. It is a good idea to draft your statement in a word processed document and get some feedback on it before committing to the final version. You can save & return to your statement as often as you like, so make a note of your username/ password.

## Questions to consider when structuring your Personal Statement:

- Why do you want to be a teacher? - What has inspired you; who/what influenced you?
- Why do you want to work with young people? - What appeals to you about working with this age group; what skills do you possess that will help you?
- Why do you want to teach your subject? - For primary: demonstrate a breadth of knowledge across a range of curriculum areas. For secondary: show how your subject knowledge is relevant to the curriculum.
- What have you gained from working with young people? - Have you had any experience in schools or working with children in other settings? Reflect upon what you did, what you observed, what you learned.
- What else can you offer? E.g. skills in sports, music, languages, arts & crafts, ICT etc.

## Top Tips:

- **Don't waste space with irrelevant or repetitive information. Be succinct and avoid complicated language and overly long sentences.**
- Be specific about what you have to offer. Detail what you have gained from your experiences in schools/working with children. Give appropriate evidence of the skills you possess for teaching.
- Indicate the relevance of other types of experience or skills you possess, e.g. supervising people, sports etc.

- Avoid using negative language. Present any gaps in skills or experience positively.
- Finish with a summary of what you have to offer – leave the selectors with a clear understanding of your suitability for the course.
- Let your enthusiasm for teaching and working with children shine through in everything you say.
- Check grammar and spelling thoroughly! Do not rely on the spelling and grammar check on your word processing package alone. Ask someone to proof read it for you.
- If ‘cutting and pasting’ from a word processing programme, carefully check the formatting.

## Example Personal Statement for Postgraduate Teacher Education

Below is an example of a ‘typical’ personal statement for the UCAS form. There is considerable room for improvement and the underlined notes make suggestions for enhancement.

Dear

I am applying for the PGDE course because I have always wanted to be a teacher. I really like working with children and think that I have the right kinds of skills to become a good teacher.

Notes

- The above statement is far too short: you are allowed 47 lines/4000 characters - use them!
- Remember to specify whether you are applying for primary or secondary courses.
- **It is not enough to say you have developed the “right kinds of skills”. Be specific about the skills you have developed.**
- It is important to have a strong opening statement – it is the first thing the selectors will read so **you want to make an impact. Avoid clichéd phrases such as “I love children” or “I have always wanted to teach”.**
- Think about *why* you have always wanted to teach and clearly demonstrate.

New Paragraph

At school, I was involved with the Primary 1 class when I was in final year. I helped the less able children with reading on a one to one basis. I also help out at my local Brownie pack every week, keeping the girls busy with various activities. I have applied to do the Student Tutoring Scheme through my University at a local school but haven’t heard whether I have got a place yet.

Notes:

- When describing experience with children, make sure you are specific about what you learned from the work and the skills you developed.

- You need to demonstrate (by providing evidence) that you have developed/ have the potential to develop skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, organisation, planning and time management.

New Paragraph

At school I studied a wide range of subjects but the one I enjoyed most was History so that is what I have studied at university. I also took Psychology and Politics in first year and Politics in second year too.

Notes:

- When describing your studies, remember to show how this is relevant to the subject(s) you will be teaching.

New Paragraph

I have been a babysitter for two children for several years and enjoy helping the older child with his homework now that he is at school.

Notes:

- When describing your experience remember to demonstrate the transferable skills you have gained in this role that would be relevant to teaching. For example with babysitting you could **link this to the skill of 'behaviour management'**.

New Paragraph

I am very interested in education generally and keep up to date with current issues by reading the BBC website.

Notes:

- **It is not enough to say that you 'keep up to date' here. Give some details of a recent educational issue you have found interesting.**

New Paragraph

I would love to study for the PGDE course and have a career in teaching.

Notes:

- Explain what you hope to gain from the course.
- The final paragraph should end positively, giving a summary of what you have to offer and stating why you should be offered a place on the course.

## Further Information

For further information or to see a Careers Adviser, please come to a Quick Query or book an appointment on our [CareersPortal](#).

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