

# How to write a personal statement for teacher training

## You need to know ...

- you have 47 lines (4000 characters) in which to persuade selectors to offer you an interview! It must be concise and sell your potential to be a successful teacher.
- write your draft personal statement in Word so you can check it for spelling and grammatical errors and then copy and paste it into Notepad, or other simple editing software, before copying onto the online application form.
- the UCAS Teacher Training system may count the lines differently from Word. We recommend that you write your text in Verdana and font size 11. Blank lines and other invisible formatting will be included in the line/character count.
- Previous applicants have found the system to be time consuming, so allow plenty of time to enter the personal statement online.

## Your personal statement must demonstrate that you have:

- relevant skills
- relevant background knowledge
- relevant work experience
- sufficient motivation/desire
- required mental capacity
- physical stamina
- strong commitment
- realistic aspirations
- suitable personal qualities/values

## Sections in your personal statement

1. Introductory paragraph – why teaching and why you?
2. Relevance of your work experience – including your reflections, opinions, self-development, observations
3. Why this key stage/subject
4. Additional factors
5. Concluding paragraph

## Introductory paragraph

### Why teaching and why you?

- Think about your opening sentence – avoid:  
‘I have always wanted to teach’

'I believe teaching is very worthwhile'

- Concentrate on what has influenced your decision to teach, how the idea has developed, what you have to offer in terms of personal skills and attributes

**Tip! Stress what you can give to, rather than take from, teaching**

### **Why teaching?**

- What was the trigger point?
- How did the idea develop?
- What has shaped your thinking?
- What did you do to find out more/develop appropriate skills?
- Have certain people influenced you?
- Communicate your enthusiasm
- Convey your desire to work with young people (backed with evidence)

## **2. Relevant experience**

### **School based experience:**

- what did you do?
- what did you learn about yourself?
- how did the experience develop/influence you?
- what did you achieve?
- what key stages did you experience?
- what techniques did you observe – effective and not so effective and why?

### **It's not just the what but the how!**

"I enjoyed helping the children with their reading ..."

X Information only

"Taking a reading lesson showed me how/that ..."

✓ Demonstrates development and reflection

### **Other work with young people (paid or unpaid):**

- youth groups
- after school clubs
- mentoring
- summer camps

### **Other types of work experience:**

- This can still provide some evidence of skills that you have acquired and developed

## **What if you have no relevant experience?**

Few training providers will be prepared to interview you if you have not had at least two weeks school-based work experience prior to writing your personal statement. If

you are unsure whether you have sufficient work experience contact selectors directly as each will have their own requirements.

The personal statement offers you the opportunity to reflect on your experience. If you have more experience planned, state this, giving details of schools and dates.

If you don't have the requisite number of weeks work experience why not delay your application by one year and begin a planned programme of work experience as soon as possible?

### **Don't apply if...**

- you can't think of anything else to do/everyone else on your course is applying
- it will do in the meantime till you decide on other careers
- you think it's a 'soft option'

You can always come back to training in the future after you've experienced an alternative career area.

### **An inspirational personal statement will lead to an interview so ..**

- Start doing some background reading NOW e.g. Times Educational Supplement, Tuesday's Education Guardian (available online)
- Research latest government initiatives, have an opinion, know your key stages

[National Curriculum online](#)  
[Qualifications and Curriculum Authority](#)  
[Department for Education](#)  
[Get into teaching](#)

### **3. What key stage/subject you want to teach and why**

- draw on relevant work experience, what you have observed and again match with your skills and preferences
- refer to any research you have done into the various key stages
- additional skills/factors which have influenced your choice

### **4. Additional factors**

- National curriculum A level subjects
- additional courses you have done e.g. IT, language
- value added skills: sport, music, art, drama, language
- why this course/type of course
- further experiences planned

## 5. Concluding paragraph

- commitment to teacher training, acknowledge its requirement for dedication, stamina, time management, initiative etc.
- your awareness of physical and mental challenges that lie ahead
- career plan
- sense of humour!

## Top Tips

### Your personal statement should:

- be persuasive, interesting, enthusiastic
- be fluent, relevant, realistic, specific
- mention young people – it is as much about enabling them to learn as it is about you wanting to teach
- be honest – if you're ambitious, say so!

### Avoid:

- overuse of short sentences, all beginning with 'I'
- general statements and narrative
- I feel, I think, I believe – try to use a range of positive action words e.g. planned, managed, implemented, organised
- making a statement (e.g. 'it was rewarding') without qualifying it with evidence of how it affected you
- using examples like baby-sitting or helping younger brother with reading as relevant experience

**Contact Admissions Tutors for advice – that's what they're there for!!**

## Sources of help

- [UCAS](#) (helpline 0871 334 4 447)
- [Teaching Agency](#) (helpline 0800 389 2500)
- Training providers
- Duty advisers 10am – 4:30pm, weekdays
- Lunchtime [workshops](#)

## Your Checklist: teachers must have ...

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ energy                         | ▪ stamina               |
| ▪ dedication                     | ▪ creativity            |
| ▪ patience                       | ▪ good time-management  |
| ▪ enthusiasm                     | ▪ self discipline       |
| ▪ control                        | ▪ organisational skills |
| ▪ interpersonal skills           | ▪ supervisory skills    |
| ▪ ability to think on their feet | ▪ administrative skills |

- communication skills
- leadership skills
- analytical mind

- good judgement
- a sense of humour