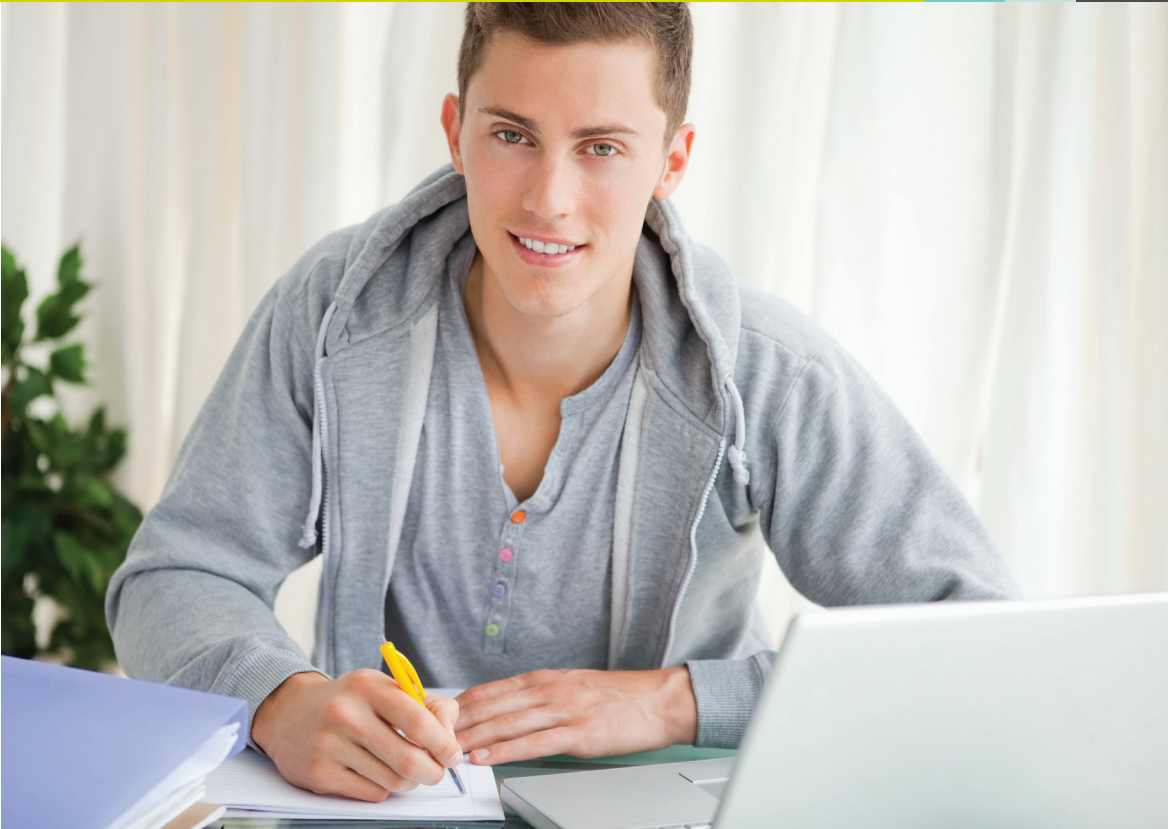


Writing a Personal Statement for Teaching Applications

Careers and Employability



University of
Chester





Writing a Personal Statement for Teaching Applications

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

© University of Chester

October 2014

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the copyright owner, other than as permitted by current UK legislation or under the terms of a recognised copyright licensing scheme.

You need to know.....

- All applications for initial teacher training programmes for 2015 offered through Higher Education Institutions, SCITTs or School Direct will be made through a single online system, UCAS Teacher Training
- You will be able to search and apply for English and Welsh programmes from late October 2014. At the time of writing, a date has not yet been set so it is worth checking the website throughout the month.
- You should write your draft personal statement in Word so you can check it for spelling and grammatical errors. Then copy and paste it into your application
- You have 47 lines (4000 characters) to maximise your potential to be a successful teacher. If possible, leave a blank line between paragraphs
- Allow plenty of time to enter the personal statement online

Work experience section

- You have 20 lines in which to list dates you have worked (paid and unpaid), with job titles, name of employer and responsibilities
- List it under 'related' and 'non-related' work experience
- Use the personal statement to elaborate on how this work experience is relevant to teaching

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 age group/key stage
4. Additional factors
5. Concluding paragraph

1. Introductory paragraph

Why you and why teaching?

- 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
- Stress what you can give to, rather than take from, teaching

Why you?

Try taking a couple of minutes to write a list of the skills and personal qualities which you have (and can demonstrate), that illustrate you have the potential to be a good teacher.

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 (last 3 years only)

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 was effective and not so effective and why?

It's not just the what but the how!

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

✘ - only gives information

"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:

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

What if you have no relevant experience?

Few PGCE courses will be prepared to interview you if you have not had at least one week (and preferably more) of school-based work experience prior to writing your personal statement. If you haven't got this 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
- You're only attracted because of the training allowance
- 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:

- Standards and Testing Agency (STA)
- Get into Teaching (Department for Education)

Talk to your referee NOW

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
- Why you have targeted a particular type of training course e.g. for flexibility, reputation, key stage
- 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
- Further experiences planned

5. Concluding paragraph

- Commitment to the course, acknowledge its requirement for dedication, stamina, time management, initiative etc.
- Reinforcement (but not repetition) of your commitment to teaching
- 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
- Include some humour
- 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

Your checklist:

Teachers must have

- energy
- dedication
- patience
- enthusiasm
- control
- interpersonal skills
- ability to think on their feet
- stamina
- creativity
- good time-management
- self-discipline
- organisational skills
- supervisory skills
- administrative skills
- communication skills
- leadership skills
- an analytical mind
- good judgement
- a sense of humour

Sources of help

- UCAS Teacher Training
- Admissions tutors
- Career Consultants – make an appointment or come to a drop-in session

Careers and Employability



University of
Chester

