Writing a personal statement. **(July 2020)**

Why do course directors use personal statements?

A personal statement gives you the opportunity to present aspects of yourself and your background that may not be apparent from the other parts of you application.
Course directors use the statement to:

help select applicants,

generate questions for interview (where applicable),

clarify that you understand the nature of the course

to distinguish whether or not you are suitable if a 'borderline case'.

This statement is a chance to show you have the commitment and qualifications to work or pursue further study in your chosen field. It is a *personal* statement, not an academic assignment or a CV. Personal pronouns are acceptable. Starting every sentence with "I" is not advisable, of course and you may feel self-conscious. However, do not be too modest! You need to provide *evidence* that *you* have relevant requirements in an interesting, authentic, succinct, structured and personal way.

What are the steps to writing a good statement?

1. The first step is to be clear on what is required *A typed personal statement should be of approximately 600 words explaining why you wish to undertake the programme(s) of your choice, outlining how it fits into your career objectives".*

2. Brainstorm and research your self-assessment, based on questions such as:
    - Why did you choose the programme / job?
    - What are your past successes?
    - What are your core values and interests?
    - What got you to this point in your life? (Events, people, …)
    - What is distinctive about me? List at least five key attributes
    - What learning influences have shaped me? Give credit to people, books etc.
    - What special courses, modules or skills would make me more successful in this programme or job?
    - What challenges have I overcome in my academic, work or personal life recently?

    You can start online by brainstorming key aspects of the related job(s) on www.prospects.ac.uk in the 'Explore types of job section' and get a list of relevant competencies in the entry requirements section.

Writing personal statements; Useful websites.

   http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Personal_Statement_Library
   http://www.studential.com/guide/write_personal_statement.htm
   http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement   UCAS specific.

Plan the structure of the personal statement and divide it into 'chunks'. You will need an introduction and conclusion of course. There is no blueprint for the perfect personal statement – however you might consider focusing sections on:
   - Outlining why you chose this programme or job
   - Relevant academic or work qualities attributes and achievements
   - Evidence of relevant personal qualities or skills that make you suitable

   It is particularly important to back up statements with evidence. If you say you enjoyed a particular module, for example, clarify the aspects you enjoyed; if you refer to particular experiences then say what you achieved and learned; if referring to interests and experiences outside college then outline the extent of your involvement.

Brainstorm the answers initially, get help and feedback from a wide variety of sources and write it all down.

3. Do not procrastinate! Write your first draft and you will feel better right away. It is much more productive to craft and develop something written than to talk and worry about possible options.

4. Write your introduction last. Do not begin with "My name is…" Spend time crafting the first sentence – you might start with a quotation or interesting point. Every sentence is now important, edit out anything that appear boring or irrelevant.

5. You seldom see your own 'typos'. Print out a draft and have at least two other people proofread it to ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. A good test is to read it aloud and see if it slows the reader's progress – make it easy to read.

Where can I get more help?

We would be delighted to give you feedback on the personal statement at the Career Development Centre – make an appointment through Careers Connect on www.dit.ie/careers

For those applying to UK colleges through UCAS, there is comprehensive help on their website at
https://www.ucas.com/search/site?keywords=personal+statements%3A

For those applying to the USA; **Education USA** www.educationusa.state.gov is the educational information and resources branch, of the U.S. Department of State.

Remember, universities will usually check personal statements and admissions essays for plagiarism. There are many samples available online and these can be very useful in order to get ideas for structure etc., however we advise that when writing *your* personal statement that you start with a 'blank slate' and work solely from your own personal experiences.