

How to write a personal statement for college/sixth form/apprenticeship applications

First, read the course/job description. Take note of anything that interests you.

Writing about the course Why are you applying for your chosen course(s)/apprenticeship? Explain why you want to do your chosen course(s)/apprenticeship. For example, someone who wanted to work with animals might write 'I would like to study a BTEC in animal care as I am passionate about looking after animals. I already look after two dogs and it will help me in my future career plans.'

Why does this course interest you? You can write about anything you've read about the course(s)/apprenticeship that you find interesting and would like to find out more about. For example "I think it will be interesting to learn more about infection control in health and social care, as this is very important to keep patients healthy," or "I am very practical and I think I will enjoy learning practical plastering skills".

Why do you think you are suitable for the course(s)/apprenticeship? In this section, you can write about any experiences you have had that are related to the course(s)/apprenticeship, or any skills you've learnt that might help you. For example, if you have done any related volunteering or work experience, or if you have a part-time job such as babysitting, which shows more general strengths such as responsibility or commitment. For example "I babysit regularly for a family friend. I always arrive on time and ensure that the 5 year old I look after is put to bed on time after I have read her a story".

Do your current studies (e.g., GCSEs) relate to the course(s)/apprenticeship you have chosen? If so, how? You can let the provider know how much you enjoy a subject by writing about a course you have already studied that you found really interesting or you were good at. Remember, you don't have to have studied a course at GCSE to study it at college or sixth form though. You could write "I really enjoy GCSE geography, especially learning about climate change. I am looking forward to finding out more at A Level".

Skills and achievements Write about anything you have done that might help with your application. Write about anything you are proud of passing, for example, grade 2 in piano, or being selected for a sports team. Include any awards you have done, such as Duke of Edinburgh, or competitions and activities in school. You can add any positions of responsibility you have held, for example, being on the Student Leadership Team or helping friends or family.

Hobbies and interests

Make a list of your hobbies, interests, and anything you do socially.

- Think about how they show your skills and ability.
- Try to link them to skills and experience you might need on your chosen course(s)/apprenticeship.

Work history Include details of placements, work experience, voluntary work, or jobs, especially if it is relevant to your chosen course(s)/apprenticeship. Try to show how this experience gave you new skills or made you think about your future plans, for example, things you really enjoyed or were good at. Also include any part-time work you are still doing, like a Saturday job or babysitting.

Career plans Use this section to tell the provider what you might like to do in the future as a career after completing the course. Explain how you would like to use the course(s)/apprenticeship you have applied for to help you reach your goal. In a college/6th form application it's fine to say you are undecided about your future but that you know that the subjects you have chosen to study will interest you. However, for an apprenticeship application you should make it clear you have done your research and you are confident this is the right choice for you. You might say "I am planning a career in construction, as a quantity surveyor," or "I am undecided about my future career but am keen to explore my options and do work experience during sixth form".

Dos and don'ts when writing a personal statement

- Do use your best English and check your spelling and grammar are correct.
- Do be enthusiastic – if you show your interest in the course, it will help your application.
- Do ask people that you trust, like your teacher/adviser or parent/carer to read through what you have written and give you feedback.
- Don't exaggerate – you might be asked about what you have written if you attend an interview with the course provider.
- Don't leave it until the last minute – it's a good idea to give yourself time to think about what you write to make sure you don't forget anything.
- Don't let worry about your personal statement stop you from applying. Most colleges and sixth forms in Leeds don't turn applications down on the personal statement. Be super careful with apprenticeship applications though. Ask someone you trust to check your apprenticeship application.