

Writing Personal Statements for PGCE Applications

Careers & Employability Service

www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

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Writing PGCE Personal Statements.

Your personal statement is **crucial** to the success of your application and must be well written and have a logical structure. It must also be mistake free, clearly demonstrate your reasons for choosing teaching and your commitment and suitability for it. Easier said than done in 47 lines – you have to make every word count!

General tips:

- Compose your statement in Word and cut and paste it in. Spell-check it, and proofread it to make certain that it is word perfect – personal statements with a poor level of written English will be rejected. Ensure it has a good structure with an introduction, a middle and a conclusion
- Carefully read the instructions before you start, read right through to the end of the form
- Get your final draft checked – by a careers adviser if possible or by someone else who is knowledgeable in the area and whose judgement you trust
- Research the teacher training providers that you are intending to apply for; which skills/experience/qualifications do they place emphasis on in their course information?
- Research the National Curriculum – use <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk>
- Do not be tempted to copy another's statement – the GTTR Similarity Detection Service is set up to pick up on any statement which is suspected of plagiarism.

You have to answer the question:

"Describe briefly your reasons for wanting to teach giving the relevance of your previous education and experience, including teaching, visits to schools and other work with young people."

Why do you want to teach?

What is your motivation? What has influenced your decision to teach? Avoid saying *"I like children"*!

What skills do you have that will make you an effective teacher?

Consider what skills make up a good teacher and provide **evidence** throughout that you have these skills and how you have demonstrated/gained them. For example:

- Organising skills
- Empathy with young people
- Creativity
- Energy and enthusiasm
- Responsibility
- Commitment to life long learning

Why do you want to teach that age range/subject?

What interests and excites you about this subject or particular age range? For primary – you need to show an awareness of what you will be teaching and how your

qualifications will assist. For secondary in particular - show that you are passionate about your subject area and about transmitting that passion to the young people.

Outline your experience in UK state schools

Include time spent teaching, helping out, observing in schools. You should not just list what you did, but what you learnt. Admissions tutors are looking for your ability to reflect on your time in schools and analyse it - show awareness of:

Teachers' roles and responsibilities including:-

- Lesson-planning – short term and long term objectives
- Classroom organisation – how different activities work, teaching styles
- Classroom management – behaviour, groupings, resources, pastoral care
- Inclusion/diversity issues – how are special educational needs dealt with and pupils with English as an additional language?

Also think about what you observed regarding:-

- The role of ICT/whiteboards etc
- The National Curriculum, current national strategies
- How are parents included?

Explain the relevance of your previous education

How does your degree relate to the subject that you intend to teach? How would you make different subjects interesting? How will the skills and knowledge gained help you in the classroom? Are there any particular modules or projects that relate to the curriculum? Emphasise IT skills gained.

Do you have any other experience with young people of the relevant age?

Have you done any: coaching, tutoring, mentoring, other work with children's groups, e.g. Brownies etc.? Emphasise any leadership roles.

Highlight any other relevant work

Which transferable skills have you developed – e.g. planning, time management, team work, problem solving etc.?

What are your hobbies and interests?

Do you have any other skills that would be useful as a teacher – e.g. sport, music, art, language skills, drama, computing.

What are your ambitions for your future in teaching?

What is your goal for your teaching career? Where do you see yourself in the future? End on a high note!

The Work Experience Section

Here you have 20 lines to outline paid and unpaid work experience, particularly relevant experience for teaching.

This section should be written like a list in reverse chronological order. e.g
June 14th – June 26th 2007 St Mary's Primary School, Manchester, voluntary
classroom assistant. Helped with reading in Key Stage 1.

Exact dates are not critical if you can't remember them (e.g. 3 weeks, summer
vacation 2008 would be ok)

Useful Further Resources

For examples of statements and lots of useful advice:

www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/pgcestatements.htm#write

[www.liv.ac.uk/careers/students/downloads/pgstudy/PGCE Personal Statements Examples 2010.pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/careers/students/downloads/pgstudy/PGCE_Personal_Statements_Examples_2010.pdf)

The Applying for a PGCE section on Prospects website gives a comprehensive overview of the whole process and includes tips on writing your personal statement. This is also available in hard copy in the All Saints Careers Room and on our website:

www.prospects.ac.uk/pgce_completing_form.htm

You apply through www.gttr.ac.uk online and they have a useful section giving tips re your personal statement:

www.gttr.ac.uk/students/howtoapply/personalstatement

The TDA application form wizard which takes you through the process of completing your personal statement:

www.tda.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/application-form-assistant.aspx

Primary school teaching job profile covering skills needed etc:

www.prospects.ac.uk/primary_school_teacher_job_description.htm

Secondary school teaching job profile covering skills needed etc:

www.prospects.ac.uk/secondary_school_teacher_job_description.htm