

Tips for writing your Personal Statement

The PhD personal statement should highlight your academic background, relevant experiences, and motivations for pursuing research. Unlike the research proposal, which focuses on the specifics of your PhD project, your personal statement will provide a broad view of your readiness and fit for doctoral study. It will complement your CV by offering additional insights on your potential as a PhD candidate, and is particularly valuable for candidates returning to academia or those with limited academic experience, as it allows you to highlight your transferable skills, unique experiences, and personal growth. Produce 500 words maximum, typically on one page A4. The following are suggested aspects you may wish to include, however this list is not prescriptive or exhaustive.

1

Introduce Your Background

Share your academic and professional journey succinctly. Focus on experiences that directly relate to your PhD interest. If your passion for the subject began early, mention it briefly but concentrate on the topic's appeal, not personal history.

2

Explain Your Research Interest

Articulate why you're drawn to this research area. Highlight the significance and potential impact of the topic, what attracts you and how your skills align with it.

3

Highlight Your Academic Experience

Don't just list degrees; explain how specific courses or projects prepared you for PhD research.
Unique Contributions: Discuss your academic strengths and how they distinguish you in this field.

4

Showcase Relevant Extra-Curricular Experience

Include experiences that demonstrate skills useful for a PhD, such as leadership, project management, or collaboration. Highlight qualities like resilience or initiative if they're pertinent to the research or field.

5

Share Your Goals and Motivations

Explain how the PhD aligns with your career aspirations and long-term goals. Demonstrate that you've thoughtfully considered the challenges and rewards of a PhD.

6

Address CV Gaps or Irregularities

Use the statement to clarify any gaps in your education or career path. If there were setbacks, explain how they led to growth and focus in your chosen field.