

HOW TO WRITE A KILLER PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Have you been asked to write a personal statement as part of your application for an opportunity abroad? Below are some helpful tips on where to start and how to make your statement stand out!

WHAT?

A personal statement is your opportunity to show selectors in a few paragraphs what makes you the best candidate for the programme. You should be sure that this piece showcases your motivation behind applying for the experience, as well as why you uniquely would be an unmissable asset to the programme.

Your application will be compared against number of others and your personal statement needs to make it stand out!



WHERE TO BEGIN?

Try brainstorming your ideas on a piece of paper first.

Start by finding the root of your motivation to join the programme. This should be clear, near the beginning of your piece and from the heart.

What is special about this specific programme that attracted you to it? Be specific, your excitement for the programme should shine through. Check their website for a place to start as it will have plenty of useful information.



WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOU THAT MAKES YOU A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE PROGRAMME?

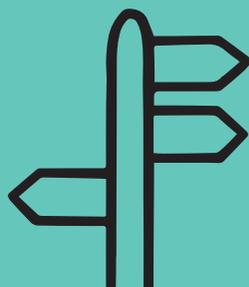
Make your statement shine! Volunteering experiences, extra skills, language expertise, extra-curricular projects - everything counts. Show you are a pro-active and enthusiastic person who is always willing to go above and beyond.



WHERE TO NEXT?

What are you hoping to gain from the experience?

How do you plan to give back to the country / programme / others as a result of your participation? Selectors want to see how this experience fits into your bigger picture, and that you are focused on sharing the benefits with others if given the opportunity.



THE BASICS

- Make sure that you research about the country that you are applying to go to, and educate yourself about key parts of the culture beyond the superficial stereotypes. Demonstrate your genuine interest in the country by expanding on one of the key points that you have researched to show that you are motivated by more than just the food or weather etc.
- Know your deadlines, and give yourself plenty of time to revise and proof read. It is also a good idea to have someone else look over it and give you their thoughts, you can ask a friend or visit Essex Abroad and the Employability and Careers Office for their feedback.
- Make it count – this might be your only chance to show your personality and passion for the opportunity so make sure this comes across in your writing.

Vary your examples from a variety of sources including education, volunteering and work experiences. Show you are involved in community and that you are willing to go the extra mile.

- Capture the reader's attention. This is not a long essay; your personal statement should be energetic, to the point and engaging. The first and last sentences are critical – these should be sharp! Don't be afraid to be surprising.
- Make sure it has a logical structure. Introduction outlining what you are going to address. The body of the statement should address the questions: Why this specific programme? Why you are a good candidate? How you would use this experience in the future? The conclusion should summarise your points, and end with a bang.

STEER CLEAR OF...

- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Long confusing sentences, remember this is not an academic piece!
- Exaggerating the truth or sounding arrogant
- Clichés - "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity" or "Since I was a child, I always wanted to go to..."
- Too many bullet points



**SO COME ON,
SHOW US WHAT
YOU'VE GOT.**

Need more help? Get in touch!

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▶ www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad