

Your personal statement

HOW TO WRITE THE PERFECT TEACHER TRAINING APPLICATION



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The basics

- Your personal statement is:
 - Around 1 page of A4
 - 47 lines long
 - About 4000 characters including spaces
 - Verdana size 11 font
- It will be put through Copycatch, the UCAS plagiarism checking system
 - Don't copy anything from the web, no matter how good it sounds

Make sure you read and answer the question

Your task

- Break down the question and make sure you cover everything
- All of this is important to your application
- This is one of the main ways Warwick decides who would make a good teacher – be convincing

“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.”

What to do ✓

- Thoroughly research the Early Years/PGCE course at Warwick
- Know how many places Warwick has available for your course
- Give yourself enough time to write
- Write your text in Word (or similar) before uploading
- Proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Avoid *italics*, **bold** and underlining
- Ask someone else to proofread – a teacher or other professional
- Be upbeat, concise, positive, enthusiastic and clear

Show your desire to continue with your education

What not to do ✘

- Use jargon
- Ignore specific instructions or guidance
 - Your application may be discarded if you do not prove an ability to follow guidelines
- Give examples without evidence
- Use irrelevant, negative or redundant phrases
 - *“I like reading and socialising with friends” ✘*
 - *“Although I do not have experience in...” ✘*
 - *“I have always wanted to be a teacher” ✘*
 - *“I like working with children” ✘*

Your evidence should demonstrate your capabilities

Structure

- Create a simple structure to guide the Centre for Professional Education at Warwick through your reasons for applying
- There is no right or wrong order to write your statement as long as it is clear
- A short, simple introduction and conclusion can help make your application stand out

How are you going to present yourself as an ideal candidate?

EXAMPLE

A short introduction

- Have a structure – it's much easier to follow
- A powerful introduction is good but make sure the rest of the statement is similarly effective

1. Your experience

Thinking about my own experience in education, I appreciate the incredible impact that teachers have on the lives of young people. I know that teachers provide skills and knowledge used by young people throughout life. Therefore, as a teacher, my greatest aim is to be a role model. I want to cultivate open minds, the knowledge and ability to look at the world critically, and students' belief in their own capacity to make positive contributions to society.

2. What teaching means to you

3. Your future

4. What you want to achieve

Teaching skills

- Talk about how you relate to young people and why you enjoy working with them
- Explain how you would work with parents and as part of wider pastoral teams
- Show evidence that demonstrates your adaptability, interpersonal skills, listening, creativity, enthusiasm, imagination, energy, responsibility, versatility...
- Explain how you cope under pressure and manage your time
- Reflect on your school experiences and talk about what you learned

How will these skills help you become an effective teacher?

EXAMPLE

Specific teaching skills

- What you have done and how you have learned from it
- Do not repeat yourself – choose examples that show your range of experiences and learning opportunities

1. What you did



2. Direct teaching skills



I have been volunteering for two days each week at The Kenilworth School since October 2012, which has given me plenty of experience in classroom-based teaching. I work with the teacher, setting up the classroom for activities, reading with children and supporting some of the lower ability pupils. This experience has taught me about the importance of differentiation in lesson planning and how it is facilitated.

3. What you learned



Other skills

- Discuss the skills you gained from your undergraduate degree, current job or other previous study/employment
- Explain how your talents, hobbies, other languages, ICT skills might be of benefit in a teaching career
- Drama, music, sport, photography, painting sets for plays – talk about the extracurricular support you can offer
- Mention other work/volunteering – community work, elderly people, youth group
- Talk about practical experiences managing people, leading, working in teams and using communication skills

How will these skills help you become an effective teacher?

EXAMPLE

Your skills in other areas

- Consider the teaching environment outside of the classroom – other staff members, planning your schedule
- Think about how to extrapolate previous experiences and apply them to the school context

1. Another skill



My time at university has helped me to develop **excellent time management skills**, especially as I had to work to supplement my income. This year I have been elected as a Social Secretary, **organising special events for my course like course initiations and the Christmas Dinner**. I enjoy this role because I feel it is **important to track progress on events and projects and to make sure that delegation of responsibilities occurs** when necessary.

2. How you implemented it



3. Effect on you as a person



Understanding teaching

- Think about key skills and qualities you have seen in good teachers and how to show that you possess them
- Show that you understand the teaching climate as an institution as well as a career
- Demonstrate that you are aware of current developments in education – policies, proposals, controversies, the National Curriculum and subject knowledge
- Talk about your understanding of the rewards and challenges of teaching
- Show that you have reflected and learned about your experiences in schools
- Demonstrate your enjoyment of work with young people

How does this understanding make you suitable for the job?

EXAMPLE

Understanding teaching

- Show that you have observed and considered what happens in a classroom
- Mention the methods you saw working and what you liked – demonstrate your understanding of pedagogy

My inspiration for teaching stems from my own school experience; particularly because of my Drama teacher. I felt valued because he **treated me as an individual, encouraging me to constantly improve myself.** My Drama teacher's **enthusiasm and commitment motivated us** to work hard.

1. Your experience

In Maths, a subject where I struggled for some time, my **tutor used a variety of learning techniques and his good sense of humour to make learning interesting.** He was approachable and friendly and his **honesty made the classroom a comfortable place to be.**

2. What you noticed

School experience

- Draw examples from any experience you already have
- Mention any upcoming or arranged experience and what you hope to achieve
- Consider taking part in the School Experience Program run by the DfE
- Discuss your impressions of good teaching and how you might have learned and implemented these ideas in classrooms
- Talk about what you have learned from teaching, thinking specifically about your age group and subject
- Think about the skills you have observed, developed and maybe even tested in classrooms

How have these experiences shaped you as a potential teacher?

EXAMPLE

Experience in schools

- Don't give too much information – there is another section of your application where you can detail the schools you have been in
- Discuss something you observed or learned and where it came from

1. Where were you

Between January and April 2011 I spent time as a classroom assistant in a challenging Coventry primary school. I worked with a composite class of year 3 and 4 pupils, assisting the teacher with every lesson including planning. The contrast between this school and the Primary school I worked in in March was significant – I found that a greater variety of styles of teaching were used across ability brackets than I expected.

3. Active reflection

2. Responsibilities

4. Things you noticed

EXAMPLE

Experience in schools

- For ongoing roles in schools, highlight development opportunities – show an increase in responsibility
- Frame your learning experience with specific aims and goals – show you are thinking about the wider picture of education

1. Something you learned

I recognise the importance of communication within teaching; something I learned from working at Nuneaton Summer School in July 2013. I was an assistant in the summer holidays and had to liaise and plan with teachers to help with different activities. In August 2014 I was offered the same role again, but this time I was given the opportunity to independently plan and develop an activity. It had to be based on geography and the environment, with the aim being to produce mini-portfolios of children's work.

2. How you learned it

3. Development opportunities

4. Working with aims

Subject and age group

- Explain why you have chosen this course, subject, age group or specialism
- Talk about the relevance of your degree and any modules you took which support your journey into teaching
- Show your personal interest development in this subject or field, what you have done to support this interest and why you want to teach it
- Discuss any relevant experience with this age group and how you relate to teachers and students in that area
- Primary applications specifically need to show Science, English and Maths experience

What appeals to you about teaching this stage and subject?

EXAMPLE

Subject and age group

- Explain what knowledge helped you decide upon this route
- Don't be generic – show your passion and reasons for this route

My undergraduate degree in Psychology has given me a broad knowledge about language, emotional and mental development of children. This general understanding is important for teaching.

1. Previous learning

2. Development opportunities

3. Your age group

4. Your subject

I am now confident that the 11+ age range is where my main interest in teaching lies as, at this level, I would be able to teach Music or Drama to the depth at which it becomes the most interesting and enlightening.

EXAMPLE

Subject and age group

- Be passionate and genuine about teaching
- Talk about why you specifically are the best match for this age group - back up your argument

1. Your skills

My skills in responsive thinking, sensitivity, patience, high motivation and enthusiasm are valuable skills that I want to pass on to others. I believe the Primary age group is the perfect environment for me to inspire and encourage. This is my motivation for pursuing a career in teaching and I feel that I have a lot to offer young people.

2. Applying those skills

3. Your inspiration

EXAMPLE

Concluding your statement

- Summarise your application and reinforce your appreciation of teaching as more than classroom-based education
- Restate your drive, passion or strongest point of your application and use it to round off your statement

1. Wider consideration

I am attracted to the teaching profession through my understanding that the responsibilities of a teacher do not end with the school day. From previous teaching assistant experience I have seen that teaching provides extensive and sometimes exhausting challenges, but feel that the rewards far outweigh the negatives and I look forward to being able to contribute to this profession.

2. Motivation

3. Anticipation

Good luck!

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