

## An example of a weak quality personal statement

The example below is of a weaker personal statement from an imaginary applicant applying for the secondary PGCE. The annotations show how it could be improved.

Dear Sir/Madame This is a personal statement and not a formal letter. There is no need to personally address the recipients of your application form.

I would like to be considered as a PGCE student for the Maths programme.

I have got extensive knowledge about the daily application of mathematics in the real world through my experience working within the financial markets. I hold a diploma in Business Studies which comprised various Do remember to proof read your application for spelling mistakes modules in mathematics and business law for which I received a distinction. Is a diploma a degree? Make sure you make clear the level of your qualification. In general the IOE requires a university degree at a minimum of 2.2 in a relevant subject area.

I have good interpersonal skills, and can get on with everybody. This is a statement of a quality that the candidate considers he has. It is always preferable to demonstrate that skill or quality with examples. I have worked my way up from a junior desk assistant to my current role as desk manager. My daily tasks range from basic photo copying/faxing documents to writing short reports/emails to various departments both internal and external to my company regarding trading issues and settlements. As desk manager I am in charge of a small team, checking they get their jobs done on a daily basis and there are no issues outstanding which I would need to follow up on. This candidate has described what they do at work. They have demonstrated leadership skills. This is a good start. However, they have not said how this connects to their ambitions to be a teacher. In fact they have not talked about teaching at all or children so far and they have almost got to the last paragraph of their personal statement.

I think I would be a very good teacher in mathematics because I think I can bring my knowledge of finance to schools. This candidate may have good subject knowledge although it may be limited to finance. They have not demonstrated a passion for maths. Nor have they indicated an awareness of the role of a teacher on a day to day basis. Unfortunately, I have no experience of working with children in a school but I am in charge of a small group of people daily. This is a major stumbling block for this candidate! They have not shown that they have any experience of working with children or even any interest in children. One person comes to me for help regularly with work problems and I help them and I have helped others too. This is positive-what about expanding? I have also worked as a team leader in a high street shoe shop previously where I had to work with and communicate with people of all ages. Our team made the best sales. I am someone who always gets the job done. I think this is a great quality to bring to teaching children in a school. This is true, but a basic liking for children and a passion for their subject comes first.

Look forward to hearing from you.

~~Yours sincerely~~ again this is a -personal statement, not a letter.

- This candidate would benefit from spending some time in a secondary school. The IOE requires every candidate to spend at least 5 days observing lessons in a school. Perhaps they have had experience of working with children outside of a school setting?
- This candidate has many skills including leadership and subject knowledge skills. Now they need to demonstrate a passion for teaching secondary school pupils and their subject.
- This statement is short. The candidate should make use of the available allowed space (47 lines)
- They could give some details of any recent educational issues they have found interesting. This shows that the candidate is keen and keeps up to date with recent educational developments especially the National Curriculum.
- Finally they could give their statement a little structure with an introduction, a main body and a final concluding paragraph. The focus of each section should relate to their potential as a PGCE student and secondary school teacher. A summary at the end of what they have to offer as a PGCE student and what they hope to gain from the course would be helpful.