

Sample further study applications

(July 2020)

SAMPLE PHRASES FOR EACH SECTION

Introduction:

I would like to pursue a Masters/Post Graduate Diploma in...because I feel it will...

Possible reasons:

Help me to specialise in an area of great interest to me ...

Develop knowledge/skills/play to my strengths in ... (give examples) ...

Fulfil my long-term aim of working in... (long-term career goal)

Help me to gain credibility and professional recognition in area of

Will give me valuable work experience through ... (work placements, internships)

Will provide me with exemptions for...

Reputation of course/college/delivery methods....

Current academic record:

I hold a degree in xxx and am currently studying (postgraduate/short-training courses)....

Consistently high academic track record (grades) in ...

Subjects studied and how they tie into the programme – perhaps you already have experience of working in teams, going on field trips (tie into various methods of course delivery the course is offering)

....

Skills gained in college, e.g. team work, research, communication skills etc

Employment experience:

Mention any relevant employment – when and where you worked and for how long (be specific).

Include paid and voluntary work. Mention the skills you gained. If you feel what you worked at is not totally relevant then describe your responsibilities in a way that makes what you gained appear as relevant as possible to what you are applying for in terms of the general skills that you gained.

Skills/personal qualities:

Include info on core skills if not mentioned elsewhere and include reference to any traits that you have that will make you an excellent candidate e.g. “I feel my wealth of experience in x area will contribute to the learning experience of other students” / “In the past people have told me I am an excellent motivator of others and as such I feel I would benefit any group that I might be a part of”.

Positions/tasks of responsibility:

Mention any tasks of responsibility, the skills you gained and how they may relate to your ability to fulfil the requirements of the course.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

(See also the TUD Career Development Centre Resource Sheets on Action Verbs and Phrases for CVs).

Choice of course:

- “I have chosen adegree because it will enable me to study.....in more depth”.
- “I would like to pursue a post-graduate Masters in...because..”.
- “Having researched your programme, spoken to admission tutors and met with careers advisers, I believe this course will provide me with xxxx”.
- “I have carried out my own self-assessment in terms of values, interests, personality and skills and believe that the course matches my long-term career goals”.

- "I have studied the course outline (show evidence of this research, e.g. spoke to careers adviser, course co-ordinator/someone who has completed course, read prospectus, researched FDRs and website etc)".
- "I am confident that my academic achievement to date would allow me to successfully complete this programme..".
- "I am confident that I have a number of key strengths and personal attributes that I can bring to the course. For example, I am a good team player, enjoy contributing ideas, providing feedback and can support and motivate others, willing to learn, open to constructive criticism, for example,..."
- "Success and interest in my..... have confirmed my interest in studying.....".
- "In addition to my course texts I have read and this has confirmed my interest in pursuing.....".
- "With my practical experience in..... and my academic achievements in.....".
- "Success in my college studies and extra work in.....has given me a secure academic foundation with which to approach a degree in.....".

Relevant work-related skills you have gained:

- "I gained valuable knowledge of.....and experience in....during.....".
- "I enjoyed working as abecause it gave me valuable insight into....".
- "Working voluntarily as a has provided me with valuable experience in....".
- "Taking responsibility for....developed my skills in....".
- Personal interests-relevant to the course:
- "I love using my spare time to pursue my interest inand feel the attention to detail this requires would be highly valued in"
- "I have recently competed in the Dublin Mini Marathon which required a regular commitment to training and a high level of self motivation. I feel I can bring these qualities to my studies".
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Conclusion:

- "My choice of degree has been researched thoroughly, building on my existing studies of....and my work experience in..."
- "Completing your programme would help me fulfil my ambition of becoming a"
- "I am looking forward to and the chance to further my knowledge in....."

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL STATEMENTS (quoted/adapted from Stelzer, USA):

See also:www.essaybank.com

Statement #1:

My interest in science dates back to my years in high school, where I excelled in physics, chemistry, and math. When I was a senior, I took a first-year calculus course at a local college (such an advanced-level class was not available in high school) and earned an A. It seemed only logical that I pursue a career in electrical engineering.

When I began my undergraduate career, I had the opportunity to be exposed to the full range of engineering courses, all of which tended to reinforce and solidify my intense interest in engineering. I've also had the opportunity to study a number of subjects in the humanities and they have been both enjoyable and enlightening, providing me with a new and different perspective on the world in which we live.

In the realm of engineering, I have developed a special interest in the field of laser technology and have even been taking a graduate course in quantum electronics. Among the 25 or so students in the course, I am the sole undergraduate. Another particular interest of mine is electromagnetics, and last summer, when I was a technical assistant at a world-famous local lab, I learned about its many practical applications, especially in relation to microstrip and antenna design. Management at this lab was sufficiently impressed with my work to ask that I return when I graduate. My plans following completion of my current studies are to move directly into graduate work toward my master's in science. After I earn my master's degree, I intend to start work on my Ph.D. in electrical engineering. Later I would like to work in the area of research and development for private industry. It is in R & D that I believe I can make the greatest contribution, utilizing my theoretical background and creativity as a scientist. I am highly aware of the superb reputation of your school, and my conversations with several of your alumni have served to deepen my interest in attending. I know that, in addition to your excellent faculty, your computer facilities are among the best in the state. I hope you will give me the privilege of continuing my studies at your fine institution.

Statement #2:

Having majored in literary studies (world literature) as an undergraduate, I would now like to concentrate on English and American literature.

I am especially interested in nineteenth-century literature, women's literature, Anglo-Saxon poetry, and folklore and folk literature. My personal literary projects have involved some combination of these subjects. For the oral section of my comprehensive exams, I specialized in nineteenth century novels by and about women. The relationship between "high" and folk literature became the subject for my honours essay, which examined Toni Morrison's use of classical, biblical, African, and Afro-American folk tradition in her novel. I plan to work further on this essay, treating Morrison's other novels and perhaps preparing a paper suitable for publication.

In my studies toward a doctoral degree, I hope to examine more closely the relationship between high and folk literature. My junior year and private studies of Anglo-Saxon language and literature have caused me to consider the question of where the divisions between folklore, folk literature, and high literature lie. Should I attend your school, I would like to resume my studies of Anglo-Saxon poetry, with special attention to its folk elements.

Writing poetry also figures prominently in my academic and professional goals. I have just begun submitting to the smaller journals with some success and am gradually building a working manuscript for a collection. The dominant theme of this collection relies on poems that draw from classical, biblical, and folk traditions, as well as everyday experience, in order to celebrate the process of giving and taking life, whether literal or figurative. My poetry draws from and influences my academic studies. Much of what I read and study finds a place in my creative work as subject. At the same time, I study the art of literature by taking part in the creative process, experimenting with the tools used by other authors in the past. In terms of a career, I see myself teaching literature, writing criticism, and going into editing or publishing poetry. Doctoral studies would be valuable to me in several ways. First, your teaching assistantship program would provide me with the practical teaching experience I am eager to acquire. Further, earning a Ph.D. in English and American literature would advance my other two career goals by adding to my skills, both critical and creative, in working with language. Ultimately, however, I see the Ph.D. as an end in itself, as well as a professional stepping stone; I enjoy studying literature for its own sake and would like to continue my studies on the level demanded by the Ph.D. program.

SOME ADVICE FROM ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Lee Cunningham
Director of Admissions and Aid
University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

The mistake people make most often is not to look at what the questions are asking. Some people prepare generic statements because they're applying to more than one school and it's a lot of work to do a personal essay for each school. On the other hand, generic statements detract from the applicant when we realize that we're one of six schools and the applicant is saying the same thing to each and every school despite the fact that there are critical differences between the kinds of schools they may be applying to. They don't take the time. They underestimate the kind of attentions that is paid to these essays. Take a look at what the essay asks and deal with those issues articulately and honestly. At least two, and sometimes three, people read each essay. I read them to make the final decision. Our process works so that each person who reads the application does a written evaluation of what he or she has read and the written evaluations are not seen by the other reader.

Steven DeKrey
Director of Admissions and Financial Aid
J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management (Northwestern University)

We're looking for a well-written, detailed essay that responds directly to the question. The questions are about extracurricular activities, motivation, challenges, commitment to the school that kind of thing. We see a variety and that's fine. Our approach is very individualized. The way the applicant devises the answer, determines the length and develops the response is all part of the answer. The level of effort applicants put into essays varies considerably, which sends messages to the admissions committee as well. Over-involved, elaborate essays send one message, while very brief and superficial essays send another message. Trying to second-guess what we are looking for is a common mistake, which we can sense. We can tell when applicants use answers to other schools' questions for our essays; we're sensitive to this. Poorly written essays are a bad reflection on the applicant. Don't over-elaborate; we're reading a lot of these kinds of essays. Also, don't be too brief or superficial. We like to have major ideas presented well.

Michael D. Rappaport
Assistant Dean of Admissions
UCLA School of Law

Applicants should take the time to look at what the law school is asking them to write about. At UCLA, we say, "we know you have lots of extracurricular activities - we want to know how you differ, what makes you unique? What can you bring to the first year class that's going to make you distinctive from the other 99 people who are already there?" The fact that you were active in your fraternity or sorority is really not going to do it. What we're looking for is somebody who, in their personal statement, stands out as being so unusual, so diverse, that they're extremely attractive as a law student for the first-year class. Maybe what's going to make them distinctive is the fact they spent six months living in a log cabin in Alaska. You try to give the law school some justification for admitting you. With a lot of people, there's nothing that's going to make them distinctive. If that's the case, they've got to recognize that, indeed, the essay is not going to make that much difference here at UCLA.

We're also asking if there's any reason their LSAT or grades are not predictive. You'd be amazed at the number of people who completely ignore this--they don't take advantage of the opportunity. Most law schools operate fairly similarly. There's a certain group of applicants whose grades and LSAT scores are so high that the presumption is that the applicants are going to be admitted unless they do something terribly stupid to keep themselves out. I have seen applicants whose personal statement has done that, but it's extremely rare. At the other extreme is another group of applicants who, no matter what they write, are not going to get in.

The applicant has to realize, first of all, where he or she stands. If you have a straight-A grade point average and a perfect LSAT score, you don't have to spend a lot of time worrying about your personal statement. On the other hand, if you know you're in the borderline area, that's where the personal statement becomes very, very important.

The applicant should take the time to read the application to see what the schools are asking for. Sometimes the school will ask for a general description of why you want to go to law school, or why they should admit you, something of that nature. In such case you can be fairly sure that the school is just interested in the essay to see how well you write. So what you say isn't as important as how you say it. On the other hand, some schools are more specific - UCLA being a very good example of that.

Make sure the essay is grammatically and technically correct and well written. Avoid sloppy essays, coffee stained essays, or ones that are handwritten so you can't read them. You'd be amazed at what we get!

Beth O'Neil
Director of Admissions and Financial Aid
University of California at Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall)

We're trying to gauge the potential for a student's success in law school, and we determine that, principally, on the basis of what the student has done in the past. The personal statement carries the responsibility of presenting the student's life experiences.

Applicants make a mistake by doing a lot of speculation about what they're going to do in the future rather than telling us about what they've done in the past. It is our job to speculate, and we are experienced at that.

Applicants also tend to state and not evaluate or reflect upon their experiences. They give a recitation of their experience but no evaluation of what effect that particular experience had on them, no assessment of what certain experiences or honours meant.

They also fail to explain errors or weaknesses in their background. Even though we might wish to admit a student, sometimes we can't in view of a weakness that they haven't made any effort to explain. For example, perhaps they haven't told us that they were ill on the day that they took the LSAT or had an automobile accident on the way. Such things are legitimate reasons for poor performance. I mean, we understand that life is tough sometimes. We need to know what happened, for example, to cause a sudden drop in the GPA.

Another mistake is that everyone tries to make himself or herself the perfect law school applicant who, of course, does not exist and is not nearly as interesting as a real human being.

Dr. Daniel R. Alonso
Associate Dean for Admissions
Cornell University Medical College

We look for some originality because nine out of ten essays leave you with a big yawn. "I like science, I like to help people and that's why I want to be a doctor." The common, uninteresting, and unoriginal statement is one that recounts the applicant's academic pursuits and basically repeats what is elsewhere in the application. You look for something different, something that will pique your interest and provide some very unique insight that will make you pay some notice to this person who is among so many other qualified applicants. If you're screening 5,500 applications over a four or six month period, you want to see something that's really interesting.

I would simply say: Do it yourself, be careful, edit it, go through as many drafts as necessary. And more important than anything: be yourself and really show your personality. Tell us why you are unique, why we should admit you. The premise is that 9 out of 10 people who apply to medical school are very qualified. Don't under any circumstances insert handwritten work or an unfinished piece of writing. Do a professional job. I would consider it a mistake to attempt to cram in too much information, too many words. Use the space as judiciously as possible. Don't submit additional pages or use only a portion of the space provided – use the space well.