What is the Personal Statement?

It may also be called 'supporting information' and is your opportunity to show you match the criteria for the job in terms of skills, knowledge, experience and motivation.

Before you start

Make sure you read these notes in conjunction with the NHS Guidelines - Making Successful Applications (https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/success_applics.html). Study the job specification / job description carefully. Look at the essential/desirable criteria for this particular job - employers will use these to help them decide whom they will interview. Research the Trust/hospital /department /role - you will need to show you know something about all of these … so do your HOMEWORK!

Writing style

You need to come across as a professional person who is safe to practice as a nurse. Your writing style is one way in which you can convey this. Remember they will be thinking about the importance of keeping accurate and legible records in accordance with both local Trust policy and NMC guidelines.

- write in short sentences using clear, succinct, plain English - use spellcheck but remember it is not fool proof (may be the right spelling but the wrong word e.g. write / right!)
- check grammar - generally get someone else to proofread, especially if you are unsure
- make sure your statement has a clear and logical flow and write in themed paragraphs, following the structure of the Person Specification. This will help ensure you cover all the criteria
- consider the words you use - make them count (examples include 'empathy' , 'caring' , 'professional' , 'accountable' , 'committed' , 'motivated' , 'advocate')
- think about introducing the attribute you are going to discuss at the start of each paragraph:

Example attribute: 'Recent clinical experience in a range of settings…'

I have gained a range of relevant experiences in a variety of clinical settings including neurological, gynaecological, acute medical, palliative care…….‘

What to include

The length of your personal statement may well depend on a predetermined word count. The NHS Standard Application Form permits up to 1500 words. Whatever the word count is you need to ensure that you have covered all the essential and preferably the desirable attributes as well. You also need to provide evidence. You can use examples from your clinical placements, previous/current jobs, voluntary work, hobbies and interests.

Typical skills and qualities to evidence include:

- *MDT*, why team work is important, your contribution to the team
- assessing complex needs of patients
- planning, implementing and evaluating appropriate nursing interventions
- communication skills - both verbal and written
- understanding of confidentiality in a health care setting
My current role as staff nurse on the acute stroke unit has a strong multidisciplinary approach as many of the patients have very complex care needs following their stroke. I work closely with the medical team, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and dieticians to ensure patient care is co-ordinated and all the care needs of patients are fulfilled. I ensure that I have thorough knowledge of the patients so that I am able to contribute to decision-making regarding in-patient care and discharge planning at the weekly multidisciplinary meetings. I strongly believe that effective multidisciplinary working is vital in providing holistic care as no one profession can meet all the care needs of a patient and their family alone.

Other common themes

- **teaching and mentoring** - have you supervised health care workers? Or what good practice have you observed?
- **the patient** - that is what the job is about! Try to be patient focussed
- **role of the registered nurse** - how is this different from student nurse? your ability to work at that level - often expressed on the job specification as ‘accountability’
- **NMC** - you need to acknowledge it and show that you work within the guidelines - for the safe administration of medicines for example. Do you understand what clinical governance means? How can you evidence this?
- **current issues** - Do you know what the 6Cs stand for and about the Francis Report?
- **policy and procedures** - recognise the importance of working to local Trust policies, values and procedures - in Sheffield Teaching Hospital's Trust you need to address their PROUD values for example
- **continuous professional development** - how are you going to continually develop your knowledge and skills? What have you done so far to evidence your commitment to this?

How to start and finish? Can be problematic

To start, always explain why you are applying for this job in this department/hospital/trust - show them you know something about them and the role and how you share their values. You could also show your motivation for choosing nursing in the first place - but keep it succinct:

**Example opening paragraph**

'I am a third year Advanced Diploma student nurse at xxx University. I am a highly motivated professional person who strives to provide individualised care that incorporates the six ‘Cs’ of nursing. As a compassionate person I strive to continually improve and advance my clinical skills and knowledge by incorporating evidenced based research into every aspect of nursing care. I am applying to Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust as I share the Trust's core values. The PROUD acronym is one I know will positively impact patient care and is a means to achieve high standards of excellence.'

End your application on a positive note - summarise why you feel you would make an ideal applicant:

'I believe I would make an ideal applicant for this post because I am very committed and enthusiastic about working in the field of palliative care and would welcome the opportunity to use my maturity, experience and skills to deliver compassionate care at XXX hospice.'

Further help

For an appointment with an employment adviser, please book in with Sue Fellowes or Gemma Linfoot-King by going to the Robert Winston Helpdesk or telephoning 0114 225 5564.

For further information and advice, see careerscentral.shu.ac.uk or phone the Careers and Employment Service on: 0114 225 2491 (Collegiate Campus) 0114 225 3752 (City Campus)