

## UNIT 1: ACADEMIC TRAJECTORIES

### LESSON 2: PERSONAL STATEMENTS

#### Lesson aims:

- Understand the purpose of a personal statement
  - Understand the aspects of a strong and weak personal statement
  - Listen for specific details of a conversation.
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#### Lead-In

1. *Discuss with your classmates the following question:*

### What documents are necessary if you want to study abroad?

#### Reading I: Application process

1. *Read the Study Abroad Application Checklist from a university in the UK. Discuss why the documents are necessary for a study abroad program. Example:*
- You must have a passport if you want to travel abroad.
  - You need to have a sufficient level of language in order to participate in the program.
  - It's important to have insurance if you are traveling abroad, in case you get sick or have an accident.

#### **Study Abroad Application Checklist** **For International Students Applying to Larchmont University in the UK**

Before submitting your application, please ensure you have prepared the following documents and requirements:

- **Completed Application Form**

Fill out the online application provided by our admissions office.

- **Valid Passport**

Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of your study period.

- **Academic Transcripts**

Submit official academic records from your current home institution.

- **Proof of Language Proficiency**

Provide results from recognized tests (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge, DELF, DELE) depending on the language of instruction.

- **Personal Statement / Motivation Letter**

Write a brief essay explaining your academic goals and reasons for choosing our program.

▪ **Letters of Recommendation**

Include 1–2 letters from academic or professional references (usually professors or advisors).

▪ **Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Résumé**

Summarize your academic background, work experience, skills, and extracurricular activities.

▪ **Proof of Financial Support**

Submit recent bank statements, scholarship confirmation, or sponsor letters showing you can cover tuition and living costs.

▪ **Health and Travel Insurance**

Provide documentation of coverage for the full duration of your stay in the UK.

▪ **Medical Certificate / Immunisation Records**

Some programs may require a health certificate or proof of specific vaccinations.

▪ **Copy of Visa (if applicable)**

Submit a copy of your visa or begin the application process once accepted.

▪ **Portfolio or Additional Materials (if required)**

For art, architecture, or design programs—include a digital or printed portfolio.

▪ **Application Fee Payment**

Pay the non-refundable application fee (amount listed on our website).

▪ **Interview (if requested)**

Some programs may require a virtual or in-person interview during the selection process.

♥ **Tip:** Start preparing early! Some documents may take time to obtain or translate.

For detailed instructions and deadlines, visit our Admissions Portal or contact our International Office.

## Listening

1. Listen to five short dialogues of students talking about an application process. Take notes about what they are applying for.
2. Listen again and take notes about where they are in the application process.

	What are they applying for?	Where are they in the application process?
Dialogue 1		
Dialogue 2		

	What are they applying for?	Where are they in the application process?
Dialogue 3		
Dialogue 4		
Dialogue 5		

## Reading II: Personal statement

When applying for a semester abroad program, master's degree, or PhD it is common to include a personal statement or letter of motivation in the application process. Usually there are specific questions that the applicant has to focus on and a word limit.

1. *Read the questions (a, b, or c) that the student was asked to include in their personal statement. Discuss what kind of information the student should include in their answer to each question.*
  - a) How do you think your previous experience will influence the way in which you approach your studies in this program?
  - b) In which ways do you imagine you will use what you will learn in the program?
  - c) Which previous professional or academic experiences have influenced your decision to apply to this program?
2. *Read the paragraphs (1, 2, 3) below and match them with the questions (a, b, c).*

- [1] Studying architecture has allowed me to explore the connection between space, culture, and human experience. During my undergraduate studies, one of the most influential experiences was a design studio focused on sustainable urban regeneration. Working on a group project to repurpose abandoned industrial spaces in my hometown gave me insight into how architecture can shape communities and address environmental challenges. I also completed a summer internship at a local architecture firm, where I contributed to the early planning stages of a mixed-use residential development. This professional experience reinforced my desire to study architecture in an international context.
- [2] These experiences have prepared me to approach the semester abroad program with a strong sense of purpose. I am eager to deepen my understanding of architectural theory and practice, especially in the context of the UK's rich architectural history and its emphasis on sustainable and inclusive design. I hope to participate in workshops and collaborative projects that challenge my assumptions and expand my creative thinking.

- [3] The knowledge and skills I gain through this program will be directly applied to my final year thesis project, which will focus on adaptive reuse and urban resilience. In the long term, I plan to work in an international design firm where I can contribute to innovative, socially conscious projects. Studying in the UK will not only enrich my academic foundation but also help me grow as a globally minded architect.

### A weak personal statement

3. Read the paragraphs below from a personal statement. Which question (a, b, c) from exercise 1 does each paragraph attempt to answer?

Question	
	1. I had a class last year that mentioned things about society and identity, but I didn't fully understand everything. I think if I take some classes abroad, it might make more sense. I also think the UK has a lot of history, so maybe I'll learn more about social issues by being there. I hope the new environment will inspire me.
	2. I want to study abroad because I've always dreamed of going to Europe, and this program seems like a good opportunity to do that. I think it would be really interesting to live in a different country, try new foods, and meet people from other cultures. I also like sociology because I enjoy talking to people and learning about how people live.
	3. I'm not completely sure what I want to do with sociology yet, but I might want to help people or work in something related to culture. I believe this program will help me grow as a person and change my perspective in ways that I can't really explain. I really want to explore new places and see what it's like to study in a different setting.

4. Analyze the paragraphs in exercise 3 with more detail. **Highlight** parts of the writing that could be improved. Discuss the following questions with a partner.

1. Relevance to the questions	a) Do the paragraphs clearly answer all three questions?	
	b) Which parts go off-topic or focus too much on personal travel and lifestyle?	
2. Clarity and specificity	c) Are academic or professional experiences described in detail?	
	d) What information is too general?	
3. Connection between	e) Are there explanations about how past academic or professional experiences influenced the decision to apply?	

<b>experience and goals</b>	f) Is there a clear connection between their past, present motivations, and future goals?	
<b>4. Tone and formality</b>	g) Is the tone appropriate for an academic application?	
	h) Which parts of the paragraphs are too informal or personal for a university audience?	
<b>5. Purpose and impact</b>	i) After reading these answers, do you understand why the student wants to study abroad and what they hope to achieve?	
	j) What is missing that would make the answers more convincing to a university admissions team?	

### Final Lesson Task: Improve the weak personal statement

1. *Consider the ideas that you discussed in the previous exercise to help you improve the paragraphs in the weak personal statement. You are welcome to modify the information in order to create more relevant, formal, and convincing answers.*

### Exit Ticket

*Can you do these things?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I can understand the purpose of a personal statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can understand the aspects of a strong and weak personal statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can listen for specific details of a conversation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	

### My Top 5 Words from this lesson:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

### Homework: Self-study

[90 minutes per week]

1. **Reading:** examples of good personal statements (Purdue University)  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job\\_search\\_writing/preparing\\_an\\_application/writing\\_the\\_personal\\_statement/examples.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/preparing_an_application/writing_the_personal_statement/examples.html)