



## KNU Office of International Affairs

# International Study Program Personal Statement & Study Plan Guidelines

## Introduction

Students applying for Student Exchange or Study Abroad Programs offered by the KNU Office of International Affairs (OIA) are required to submit a Personal Statement/Study Plan as part of their application.

The composition must provide an overview of your academic background, why you are applying for international studies, and the schools and courses you are interested in attending. The final composition is submitted directly to the Office of International Affairs at KNU.

## Content & Format Guidelines

The Personal Statement/Study Plan for OIA International Study Programs requires five (5) components:

- The Header
- The Opening Paragraph (Introduction)
- Academic Background & Objectives
- University Preferences (Top three choices)
- Conclusion

### Section 1: The Header

At the top of the page, the letter must include a header with the following information:

- Your full name & student number
- Document title (i.e. Personal Statement & Study Plan)
- The name of the office & the name of the program (i.e. Office of International Affairs International Study Program)

**NOTE:** For this application letter, you do not need a traditional letter greeting such as *Dear Sir or Madam*, or *To Whom it may Concern*. Just begin your first paragraph as though you were writing an essay.

### Section 2: The Opening (Introduction)

There are several ways to begin this type of composition. Consider the following types of introduction and choose a style that you would feel most comfortable with.

#### Option A: "Direct Statement" of Intention

In the first paragraph, you can begin with a direct statement explaining what you are applying for. You can then include information on your major, year of study, and why you are interested in the program (what you hope to gain from the experience).

I am applying for the international student exchange program offered at Kyungpook National University (KNU). I am currently enrolled in my second year of studies at KNU, majoring in English Language and Literature. I have always excelled in languages, in particular English; and although I thoroughly enjoy my courses at KNU (especially those focusing on contemporary American writers), I would like an opportunity to experience American culture first-hand, as a way of both enhancing my understanding of western literature and further developing my English language skills.

### Option B: The “Personal Background” Approach

Alternatively, you can begin with an explanation of why or how you became interested in your major (or field of interest). It could be a personal story or just an explanation of how your interest developed. You could include a statement explaining what you are applying for at the end, or include that information in a later paragraph.

I grew up surrounded by numbers. My father became a businessman after he graduated with an economics degree, and my mother has been an accountant for nearly 30 years. I have often said that as a child, I was more familiar with stock figures than cartoons. Moreover, while I was in high school I watched the enthusiasm with which two of my cousins pursued their own economics and business degrees. It was only natural then, that I choose economics as my major, a field in which I have always felt at home.

### Option C: The “Creative” Opening

Finally, you can begin with a quote and then link the quote to your own point of view. This would then be linked to your reasons for choosing your major and/or your decision to study abroad.

The American playwright, Henry Miller, said: "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." I am very interested in new media art so I believe that advanced and innovative ideas are my assets leading to success. Exploring new cultures, finding new knowledge, and meeting talented people will enrich my ways of seeing things from different perspectives. Broadening my horizons in countries that have vibrant art, historical and cultural backgrounds will strengthen my new media art sense. For these reasons, I am applying for the student exchange program offered by KNU.

## Section 3: Academic Background & Objectives

In this section you should provide information on your previous academic studies. You need to show that you have clear academic objectives and that you are ready to pursue overseas studies.

- What types of courses have you taken? (Don't be too specific, just focus on the subject areas your classes have focused on)
- What subjects or aspects of your major are you most interested in?
- What other types of academic training have you had? (You could mention your foreign language abilities and any language training you have had)
- What are your future academic goals? (What type of academic experiences would you like to have?)
- Alternatively, you could mention your professional goals – what type of career are you planning to pursue?

## Section 4: University Preferences

In this section you must list three universities you are interested in attending in this program (provide at least one paragraph for each university). The key is to show that you are aware of the universities and the types of courses they offer (this indicates a clear academic strategy and preparedness).

Begin with your first preference (the university you would like to attend the most).

- Mention one or two specific classes you would like to take and explain why
  - What particular aspects of the classes (subject, activities, etc.) are you interested in?
  - How would these classes help you achieve the academic goals mentioned in Section 3?
- You could mention an aspect of the university that you are interested in (facilities, opportunities, etc.)

- You could mention a particular professor at the university that you would like to study under (**NOTE:** Ideally this should be someone well-known in your field whose knowledge you would benefit from – don't just choose random professors to add to your letter).

In the next paragraph, mention your second choice. Provide the same details as before. Then do the same for your third choice.

## Section 5: Conclusion

Finish your composition with a brief summary of your main points:

- Restate your main reasons for applying for this program.
- Explain how you think it will benefit you (what you will gain from the experience or how it will help you achieve your future goals)
- Note: Although you are repeating some of the information you wrote in other parts of the composition, phrase the important points differently.

## Sample

**NOTE:** The writing style, details, and organization of key information in personal statements and study plans will vary from person to person. This is fine as long as the writer includes all required information.

### The Header

Full Name, Student Number: 12345678  
 Personal Statement & Study Plan  
 KNU Office of International Affairs Student Exchange Program

### The Introduction

In this example, the writer explains how they became interested in their academic field.

I grew up surrounded by numbers. My father became a businessman after he graduated with an economics degree, and my mother has been an accountant for nearly 30 years. I have often said that as a child, I was more familiar with stock figures than cartoons. Moreover, while I was in high school I watched the enthusiasm with which two of my cousins pursued their own economics and business degrees. It was only natural then, that I choose economics as my major, a field in which I have always felt at home.

### Academic Background

The writer gives an overview of what they have studied so far and mentions their academic objectives.

For the past two years I have immersed myself in the study of economics at KNU, with courses such as Principles of Economics, History of Economics, History of Korean Economics, and Microeconomics - which was far more interesting than I had expected. My goal is to build a career as a financial advisor. Looking ahead, however, I realize that there are a number of other areas I need to focus on, and perspectives that I need to experience in order to have a well-balanced understanding of economics. For that reason, I would like to take part in the student exchange program offered by the Office of International Affairs at KNU.

### Study Preference 1

The writer explains which university they are most interested in and why.

Based on my research of potential universities, I am most interested in the economics program offered at \_\_\_\_\_ University. My main reason for this choice is the opportunity they provide for an internship in the financial department of a local firm as part of my studies. This would be an immensely valuable experience for me, and a significant step towards achieving my career goal of becoming a financial advisor. I think my prior work and GPA will make me an ideal candidate for their program.

Study Preference 2

The writer explains their second choice of universities and explains why they would like to study there.

Alternatively, I would very much like to attend \_\_\_\_\_ University. If possible, I would like to enroll in classes taught by econometrics expert Professor \_\_\_\_\_, whose work I am familiar with through my previous studies at KNU. I think attending her lectures would provide me with unique insights and perspectives related to various economic phenomena. I would also like to enroll in the data analysis classes which give students a chance to take part in authentic case studies of various firms.

Study Preference 3

The writer explains their third choice of universities and explains why.

My third choice would be University of \_\_\_\_\_. I am especially interested in the public finance and numerical analysis courses being offered there. These courses would certainly provide me with a number of important skills needed in financial advising and would be a good addition to the classes I have already taken as part of my major.

Conclusion

The writer summarizes their main reasons for wanting to study abroad in terms of how they would benefit from the experience.

I believe that challenge and adventure are a vital part of life, and that real experience can be as important as good grades when it comes to building a career. The KNU exchange program will enable me to broaden my perspectives, gain exposure to new ideas, meet and interact with a diversity of new people, and take on subjects that will reinforce and add to my knowledge of economics as I work towards my professional goals. I sincerely hope that I will be given the chance to benefit from this valuable opportunity.