

Guidance for Writing a Formal Statement

A formal statement is your written account of something you experienced, witnessed or were involved in. It should help the reader clearly understand what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, and what you personally saw, heard or experienced.

Statements must provide an honest, accurate and factual account. The individual submitting the statement remains accountable for its content.

AI may be used to support transcription or structure but must not generate or add information. Any AI-assisted statement must be reviewed and confirmed as a true and accurate account before submission.

Before You Start

Take some time to think through the incident or events. It may help to make brief notes first under the following headings:

- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Who was there?
- What happened first?
- What happened next?
- What did I personally see or hear?
- How did I respond?
- Who did I tell?
- What happened afterwards?

If there was more than one incident, write about each incident separately and place them in date order.

Step 1: Introduce Yourself

Start by briefly telling us who you are and why you were there.

Include:

- Your full name
- Your course and year of study
- Your placement area or organisation
- The dates of your placement

Example:

I am a second-year student nurse and was undertaking a placement on Ward A between 21st September to 8th November 2026.

Only include information that is relevant to the statement.

Step 2: Set the Scene

Provide enough background for someone who was not there to understand the situation.

Explain:

- The date
- The time, or approximate time
- The location
- What you were doing
- Who was present
- What was happening immediately before the incident

Example:

On 12 October 2026, at approximately 10.30am, I was working in the treatment room with my practice supervisor. Two other members of staff were also present. If you cannot remember an exact date or time, say this clearly.

Examples:

I cannot remember the exact time, but I believe it was during the morning medication round.

I cannot recall the exact date, but it occurred during the second week of my placement.

Do not guess or present an estimate as an exact fact.

Step 3: Describe What Happened in Order

Describe the incident from beginning to end, in the order that it happened.

For each stage, consider:

- Who did or said something?
- What exactly did they do or say?
- Where were you standing or sitting?
- Who else was present?
- What could you see?
- How did you respond?
- What happened next?

Use short paragraphs and describe one part of the incident at a time.

Helpful sentence starters include:

- “The first thing I noticed was...”
- “I then observed...”
- “I heard...”
- “Following this...”
- “I responded by...”
- “The person then...”
- “The incident ended when...”

Step 4: Be Clear About What You Personally Observed

Your statement should make it clear what you:

- Personally saw
- Personally heard
- Personally experienced
- Were later told by someone else

Use phrases such as:

- “I saw...”
- “I heard...”
- “I observed...”
- “I was present when...”
- “I did not witness this myself, but I was later told by...”

Do not state another person’s thoughts, feelings or intentions as fact.

Instead of writing “She was deliberately trying to embarrass me”.

Write:

She raised her voice in front of three members of staff and said, “You should already know how to do this.” I felt embarrassed by this interaction.

Step 5: Record Important Words or Conversations

Where possible, include the actual words used.

Place exact words in quotation marks.

Example:

The member of staff said, “You are too slow and are holding everyone up.”

If you cannot remember the precise words, make this clear.

Example:

I cannot remember the exact words used, but the member of staff said words to the effect that I was not suitable for the placement.

Do not add words or change a conversation to make it sound stronger.

Step 6: Identify the People Involved

Include the names and roles of people involved or present, where known.

This may include:

- Staff members
- Students
- Patients or service users
- Visitors
- Anyone who witnessed the incident
- Anyone you reported the incident to

If you do not know someone's name, provide a clear description.

Example:

A healthcare assistant was present, but I do not know their name. They were working on the morning shift in Bay 2.

Only include patient or service-user information when it is necessary. Follow confidentiality requirements and use an identification number or initials where appropriate.

Step 7: Explain Your Response

Describe what you did during or immediately after the incident.

For example:

- Did you speak to anyone?
- Did you challenge or question what happened?
- Did you leave the area?
- Did you provide care or assistance?
- Did you write anything down?
- Did you contact the university or placement team?
- Did you complete an incident report?

Include the date, time and method of reporting where possible.

Example:

At approximately 2.00pm, I reported the incident to my practice assessor in a private office. I later emailed my university tutor at 4.15pm.

Step 8: Explain What Happened Afterwards

Include any relevant follow-up.

This may include:

- Meetings or discussions
- Further incidents
- Changes to your placement
- Support offered
- Actions taken by staff or the university
- Emails, messages or documentation
- Whether the matter remains unresolved

If someone contacted you following the incident, record when this happened and what was discussed.

Step 9: Describe the Impact on You

You may explain how the incident affected you but keep this separate from the factual description of what happened.

You could include any impact on your:

- Wellbeing
- Confidence
- Learning
- Attendance
- Ability to participate in placement
- Relationship with staff
- Sense of safety
- Placement experience

Example:

Following the incident, I felt anxious about asking questions and avoided working with that member of staff where possible. This affected my confidence and my ability to take part fully in learning opportunities.

Only describe your own experience. Do not assume how other people were affected unless they told you directly.

Step 10: Include Relevant Evidence

List any information that may support your statement, such as:

- Emails
- Text messages
- Microsoft Teams messages
- Placement documentation
- Timesheets
- Notes made at the time
- Incident reports
- Meeting records
- Names of witnesses

Do not edit or alter original messages or documents. Keep copies of any relevant information.

Example:

I have retained the email I sent to my personal tutor on 14 October 2026 and can provide this if required.

Step 11: Review Your Statement

Before submitting it, check:

- Is it written in date and time order?
- Have I clearly set the scene?
- Have I included dates, times and locations?
- Have I identified the people involved?
- Have I explained what I personally saw, heard or experienced?
- Have I separated facts from my opinions or feelings?
- Have I included what I did and who I told?
- Have I explained what happened afterwards?
- Have I included any relevant evidence?
- Is everything true to the best of my knowledge?

You may ask someone to help you check spelling, grammar and organisation. However, the account must remain in your own words and accurately reflect your experience.

Important Points to Remember

- Write in the first person using “I”.
- Use clear and straightforward language.
- Write events in chronological order.
- Include as much relevant detail as you can remember.
- Be honest when you cannot remember something.
- Do not guess, exaggerate or make assumptions.
- Do not include information that is unrelated to the matter.
- Avoid offensive or emotional descriptions of individuals.
- Explain what was said or done instead.
- Keep a copy of your completed statement.

Ending the Statement

Finish with the following declaration:

I believe that the information provided in this statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

AI was used to support the transcription and/or structuring of this statement. I have reviewed the final document and confirm that it is a true and accurate account of my experience. **Delete this sentence if AI was not used.**

Name:

Signature:

Date: