

Kick-start your UCAS Application:

Polishing your
Personal Statements

Fred Binley, Schools & Colleges Liaison Officer

Personal Statements

What is a personal statement?

The personal statement is your chance to persuade an admissions tutor that you – rather than dozens of other equally well qualified students - are worthy of a place on their course. Remember, you are aiming to demonstrate: why you want to study the subject and what makes **you** the right person for the course!

You have about 4,000 characters, (47 lines of text) in which to convince the tutor that: you are a highly motivated student who has researched the courses for which you are applying and is committed to that course of study, that you are self motivated and responsible, and that you are able to manage your time effectively showing a balance between academic work and other interests. The tutor will be looking for evidence that you:

- suit academic study
- understand what the course involves
- are capable of independent learning
- are an interesting person who will contribute to university life
- are mature enough to benefit from university life and will complete the course

A personal statement should be targeted towards a specific area of study, in much the same way that a CV is targeted towards a particular job, so if you are applying for a number of slightly different courses, you will need to find the common thread that attracts you.

Think of your personal statement as consisting of three main sections describing:

1. why you have chosen the course?
2. what have you gained from your studies?
3. what type of a person you are?

Ideally, your statement should end with a sentence, which emphasises your suitability for a university education.

How should I structure my Personal Statement?

The following paragraphs suggest the type of information you could include in each section.

Part 1 - Why have you chosen this course?

Possible reasons could be that you:

- enjoy the subject, or particular aspects of the subject – state which aspects and why. It could be a particular book, a talk or a discussion, which stimulated your interest.
- are looking forward to studying in greater depth – state specific interests
- possess the skills required for the course – state which skills
- are looking forward to putting theory into practice – give details
- have a particular career in mind – state which career and why, plus give details of any relevant work experience/work shadowing/taster courses.

If you want to become a doctor, dentist, teacher, physiotherapist or vet, relevant work experience over an extended period of time is essential. Details of this should form about half of your personal statement.

Part 2 - What have you gained from your studies?

In this section you can provide evidence that you are suited to academic study and can take responsibility for your own learning. You can do this by:

- explaining the rationale behind your choice of A level subjects
- giving details of the areas you have found most interesting (try to sound enthusiastic but don't go over the top)
- giving examples of instances when you have read around the subject instead of focussing on set texts
- giving details of lectures and courses you have attended, and activities in which you have taken part, that have extended your understanding of the subjects you are studying. Be specific – what aspect of the talk seized your imagination and prompted you to find out more?
- drawing parallels between the skills you have developed through your A level subjects and those needed for your university course

If you are going to try to explain disappointing AS results, this is the best place to do it. Be careful however - emphasise the positive (give details of individual units you have done well on) and make sure your subject tutor also explains any underperformance in their section of your reference.

Part 3 - What type of a person are you?

This is where you give details of any posts of responsibility you have held, work experience not previously mentioned, and other activities and interests.

Be specific – if you were a prefect, what did you do and what skills did you need and gain?

Activities and interests which you could mention, include:

- Young Enterprise
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Millennium Volunteers
- Social, sports and leisure interests
- Master classes / Summer schools

Include only those things which are reasonably current, and emphasise the skills you have developed.

Make sure your personal statement is read through and checked by a tutor so make sure that you don't invent experiences or exaggerate your own importance!

If you are planning a gap year you should explain why and give brief details of what you are intending to do.

Part 4 - The concluding or summary statement

The final sentence should bring the reader's attention back to either your choice of course, or your ability to succeed at university. It is important that you present yourself as somebody that can cope with the academic demands of a degree course and also has the skills to survive away from home. Try one of the following:

- think of an experience which you have not already mentioned, which relates to the course
- think of an experience which you have not already mentioned which relates to your suitability to succeed at university
- identify an area which you have already mentioned, and find a way of building on it for a concluding comment about your course or suitability for university

What about Similarity Detection?

UCAS check each incoming personal statement, on every application, against a library of all personal statements previously submitted to UCAS. They also sample statements collected from a variety of websites and other sources including paper publications. Each personal statement received at UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed. Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service team.

Universities are notified of any cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of plagiarism. Applicants will also be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection Service has

found that their personal statement merits investigation. The decision about what action, if any, to take regarding notified cases rests with the admissions tutors at individual HEIs.

Some Helpful Phrases

Use these guidelines and the exemplars to give you inspiration, but above all make your personal statement your own – admission tutors are quick to detect when set phrases are being strung together in order to produce a final “product”. They do after all read several thousand each year!

“Being involved in a busy/professional/successful... *(state type of company e.g. accountancy firm)* allowed me the opportunity to...*(briefly describe the main tasks that relate to the skills you gained)*. These duties developed skills in...*(discuss skills)*”.

“My work experience was an enjoyable and challenging experience. Being a*(state job title)* enabled me to be involved in a range of areas such as...*(state area/task)* which developed...*(state skills)*. In addition, I was able to...*(state task which was essential in developing...)**(describe skill)*”.

Working part-time as a...*(state job)* gave me the opportunity to... *(state experience or skills eg work in a team, find out more about...)*”.

“Being a member of the cast for...*(state nature of drama production)* was extremely rewarding. Acting has improved my self-confidence and public speaking skills. I hope to be involved in more amateur dramatic productions at university”.

“Playing...*(state musical instrument)* at grade...*(state grade, if applicable)* has been extremely rewarding. I hope to continue my interest in music at university. I look forward to the opportunity to join the university orchestra”.

“Speaking in front of a large audience as part of the Debating Society has been an excellent opportunity to develop my public speaking skills. I have taken part in a number of debates including*(state titles of debates)*. This experience should prove useful on my degree course”.

“As a library assistant my duties included organising the book loan system...*(state any other duties that appear to suggest you are responsible, reliable and organised)*. This experience has shown that I am responsible and capable of dealing with a range of people”.

“Taking responsibility for...*(state responsibility)* has developed skills in ...*(state skills)*”.

“Watching foreign films such as ...*(state title of film)* is a passion of mine and it has led to a broader interest in world literature”.

“I particularly enjoy...*(state what you enjoy that is relevant to your application)* and it has provided an opportunity to...*(state what skills you have developed or what you have learned e.g. such as being more independent than you had believed yourself to be, accepting a challenge)*”.

“I hope to continue to...*(state hobby or interest)* at university because it provides me with an opportunity to...*(state opportunity e.g. meet people)*”.

“I have endeavoured to learn more about...*(state what you have learned e.g. astronomy)* despite little information being available at school”.

“As...*(state responsibility e.g. captain of the school netball team)* I have gained the opportunity to motivate others to succeed. Winning...*(state success e.g. the 2003 County Trophy)* was a major achievement for the ...*(state team e.g. school netball team)*”.

“Being a keen...*(briefly state your main individual sports e.g. squash, running, athletics, table tennis)* has helped me maintain physical fitness as well as aiding my studies. I find that my

mental concentration improves with being physically fit. I hope to make good use of the sporting facilities at university and maintain this balance”.

“Competing in the ...*(state nature of competition)* and getting...*(state position in the competition e.g. runner-up)* was a major achievement for the school second Eleven football team. It was during the competition that I learned how to motivate others to succeed”.

Concluding or Summary Statements

“My work experience at....*(state work experience)* and my school-based studies make me confident that I am suited to a degree/HND in...*(state degree/HND title)*”.

“It is because of my experience with...*(state the experience)* that I believe I will make a successful student on my...*(state degree/HND title)*”.

“Having a long term goal of being a*(state career or job title)* I believe that I am particularly suited to a ...*(state degree/HDN title)*”.

“My experiences during my post-sixteen studies have enabled me to be ...*(state main areas that have been developed e.g. independence, self-discipline)* which should prove invaluable/useful preparation for life at university”.

“My choice of degree has been carefully selected as a result of my preferred school subjects and work experience”.

“My choice of subject study and work experience make me confident that I am well prepared to study...*(state nature of course or more generally that you are able to cope with degree/HND level study)*”.

“I am looking forward to building on my existing experiences of studying...*(state a subject or topic which you are studying at present that relates to your chosen course)* and the chance to further my knowledge in...*(state nature of degree/HND)*”.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 1: Physics

My curiosity in planetary movement, constellations and our own moon was sparked during my formative years by my father's interest and many hours with our telescope. We would often stay up late to observe comets or lunar eclipses when the opportunity arose and from there my interest flourished. My natural interest in mathematics, coupled with my genuine enthusiasm for physics sees me targeting Astrophysics as the course that clearly taps into my academic strengths and passions. A program of wider reading has lead me further into the subject than A-level study alone ever could. Authors such as Brian Greene and Gordon Kane really opened my eyes to just how diverse the applications of physics can be. Brian Greene's 'The Elegant Universe' specifically, as the first book I read, captured my imagination by using everyday scenarios to convey really quite advanced topics, such as Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and super-symmetry.

For me, one of the main attractions of a career in physics, specifically astrophysics, is that there will always be discoveries to be made in new planets and both young and dying stars to study. This is an ever-changing landscape unparalleled by other fields and indeed CERN's recent results from experimentation with Muon neutrinos and the implications they may have on many modern physics theories has fascinated me. I recently gave a short presentation to my college's 'Gifted and Talented' group about the concepts of super-conductivity and super-fluidity and how they may be applied to our lives. This was well received even by those unfamiliar with the study of the sciences. Towards the end of the last academic year I was selected to attend a 'Pure Potential' maths seminar day at Cambridge University, this gave me great insight into the study of various subjects, specifically I enjoyed the short lecture on relativity from one of the university's physics lecturers.

Over the course of my A-levels I have enjoyed all of my subjects and also took the opportunity to engage in the self-teaching of AS chemistry. Discussions with friends into the concepts and experiments within the field of chemistry piqued my interest and subsequently my independent study enabled me to gain an A grade in the first unit and I plan to sit the remaining AS modules in January 2012. I have greatly enjoyed this process of independent learning and believe it will serve me well for further study at degree level.

As well as academic activities, music plays a great part in my life. I've played the guitar since I was 7 years old playing in many bands spanning multiple genres including playing the double bass in a jazz improv' band. I also frequently assist a local amateur film company as a producer and mixer, composing and recording soundtracks. The most prominent of my musical endeavours is our ukulele orchestra founded by myself and a fellow student it now runs seamlessly, rehearsing when I can co-ordinate times and venues and playing shows which have received great critical acclaim.

My part time job as a general labourer this year has fuelled my determination to follow a path in which I will be both intellectually engaged and realise my potential. I sometimes prefer to take my own angle, challenge the accepted, delve deeper if necessary and above all I am determined to stretch myself to achieve success. For me, success does not necessarily mean fame or remuneration but being able to apply myself fully whilst enjoying every minute of it and I feel that a degree in physics will provide me with the best opportunity to do this. I am already targeting a future with postgraduate study and possibly onto research, teaching or lecturing.

I am truly excited at the prospect of taking my interests to a higher level and look forward to doing this in university life.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 2: History

History is the "king of subjects". This is the view of author Simon Jenkins, and I share it with him. History encompasses all aspects of life, from social and economic to cultural and political, spanning across all time frames and geographical locations. This diversity and breadth explains my passion for the subject. My A level studies in History have been a richly rewarding experience, covering the Tudors, Stuarts, Nazis and the French Revolution, fuelling my interest and inspiring me to carry out further independent research into other facets of history. I have recently been reading Simon Jenkins' 'A Short History of England', which recounts England's history from the Saxons to the present day. Whilst reading this, I have developed a keen interest in medieval history, particularly William the Conqueror's reign, which I have never previously studied. I would love to take this interest further and investigate and debate it in more depth at university. Having only ever encountered European history, my curiosity led me to China, a country about which I knew very little. After reading 'China - From Empire to People's Republic 1900-49' and 'The People's Republic of China 1949-1976', both by Michael Lynch, I became intrigued by the country's dynamic, complex and unpredictable past. I am eager, therefore, to deepen my knowledge of this area and to discover more about societies with vastly different histories to our own.

In addition to History, I am taking A levels in Geography and Psychology. Geography shares many parallels with history, with both focusing on people, places and events, and with globalisation and civilisation being common to both. Psychology has allowed me to understand how people's minds work. This links into history and may help to explain why key individuals have come to certain decisions and taken particular actions. I can often be found reading the latest edition of History Today, and I am an avid listener of the BBC History Magazine Podcast. I enjoy visiting museums and historical sites, watching history documentaries and attending talks by historians, for example David Smith on Oliver Cromwell, Jonathan Foyle on Henry VIII and Robert Bickers on Chinese history. I can work well under pressure and to a deadline, and I have good writing and analytical skills, with the ability to present arguments fluently and effectively. Two of my articles have been published in the school's psychology magazine. I am also a creative person with one of my GCSE art pieces being put on display in a public gallery.

Beyond my academic studies, I am fully committed and determined, particularly in sport. I helped lead my school's Third XI hockey team to achieve an impressive season in 2011, showing my ability to lead and to work well within a team. I am also interested in the RAF: I have been part of my school's Combined Cadet Force for three years, and been lucky enough to fly a light aircraft. My biggest non-academic passion, however, is cricket. I played for the school Second XI last year and I have played for a local club, Ufford Park, since I was eight: I have captained the junior teams, played for the men's teams and have coached the younger players. In July, due to hard work, concentration, and luck, I hit a double century, and I was subsequently awarded with a trophy from the Rutland League for this performance.

I would love to continue to deepen my knowledge in history; learning and debating numerous historians' interpretations of the past and developing my own, and I could see myself taking this further in the form of a PhD. I would also continue to pursue my other interests, particularly sport. My experiences have allowed me to acquire a wide range of skills and interests. Going to university would improve these and allow me to embrace new and exciting opportunities and studies. This would be an environment in which I feel I would thrive and in which I am sure that I will make a positive contribution.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 3: Engineering

Throughout my life I have had a fascination with how things work and I have satisfied this curiosity by building models and fixing gadgets. At school my favourite subjects have always been Maths and Science and the problem solving aspects in these have held me captivated. This has stimulated my interest in innovative solutions for the world we live in and has led me to my decision to study Engineering at University.

During Year 12 I had the opportunity to complete the Young Engineers Award run by the EDT. Our project involved making a flow meter calibration rig and it helped me develop skills in team work. We had long debates about the detailed design of the rig, but as the team leader, the decision ultimately lay with me. Initially I found this situation challenging but the final result was rewarding.

Recently, I completed some work experience at two different companies. One designs and manufactures large diesel engines and I worked in a department specialising in the design and testing of turbochargers. I helped with the strain measurements on turbine wheels during operation. This demonstrated to me both the complexity and precision of the engineering, while the speeds and temperatures of the turbines were spectacular. I saw just how important every component part in a system is and how one small flaw can cause the whole system to fail. I had used CAD previously in the Young Engineers' Project and in their technical centre it was interesting to see how this was used in a commercial setting. I also did some related CFD work, looking at how the flow path of water can be changed in an engine coolant system to increase the cooling capacity; I was impressed at how computers could be used to model such complex systems to compare designs. Contrasting with this, I spent some time in a chemical engineering company, which broadened my knowledge of this branch of engineering. As I have discovered more, the possibilities for me within the field of engineering have multiplied - from building bridges to electronics and, in the future, to sustainable forms of energy. I therefore wish to pursue a general engineering course before choosing a specific discipline.

Maths has always been my strength and I feel that with Engineering I have discovered a vocational application. Throughout my time at High School, I have done well in the UKMT Maths challenges. Physics and Chemistry have enhanced my practical skills and I represented the school in the Young Analysts' Chemistry Competition, where team work helped solve practical problems. I have completed an EPQ about paper aeroplanes, looking at the different ways they fly and the best design of a paper plane. Research into some of the engineering principles and writing a technical report was a steep learning curve for me.

I feel strongly about helping others and so I became involved in organising Science Week at school, raising money for charity. I was responsible for co-ordinating fund raising and organising the schedule of events. As a Community Prefect, I am leading a project that aims to grow organic produce in school. I have also had an insight into the teaching of younger pupils through providing regular in-class support for Science lessons, gaining skills in using the appropriate level of detail in explanations.

I play the saxophone in the School Jazz Band and recently we toured around Lake Geneva. I have been a part of the Scout movement for 11 years; I am Treasurer of an Explorer unit enjoying sailing, climbing and many other outdoor activities, including working towards my Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. I have played water polo for Cheshire's under 18s team.

I am applying for deferred entry as I wish to gain personal and further practical engineering experience through the Year in Industry Scheme. My experiences this year, both in and outside school, have given me insight and now determination to pursue a career in Engineering - I believe I have much to offer to the University.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 4: English Language

Language is ubiquitous and unites us. It is humanity's largest tool and lays the foundations of society. The English Language is universal, going beyond the boundaries of its origins to form the main basis of international communication. An intonation, a gesticulation, a subtle flicker of an eye captures its nuances and a whole new meaning or interpretation is conveyed. For something that comes so naturally to us in everyday life, I feel that the power of English Language is often overlooked. It is immense and fascinating in the way it creates ideas or causes us to uphold different opinions.

This degree would enable me to further explore this concept, consolidating and extending my knowledge and awareness of the intricacies of the written and spoken word. Captivated by different language theorists such as Robin Lakoff and Brown and Levinson whose theories I observe in conversation every day, I am certain that the study of English Language and Linguistics should be the next chapter of my education. I am hungry to learn more.

Studying History has given me a strong academic foundation to analyse texts from a literary approach and expand my critical thinking. I am able to analyse written sources and see not only how the English Language has evolved over the years, but also how events in the past influence and determine the future. My love of Art and Photography has given me the initiative to be confident in the way I perceive the world at large. I enjoy a project from conception through to completion as with a piece of written prose.

I was privileged to obtain work experience with a television production company 'Indus Films', making a short film based on interviews with members of the public. I enjoyed the interface between myself, as the interviewer and the interviewee and found the spontaneous repartee particularly stimulating. The use of language is vital within the media to engage an audience. Voluntary work at 'The Children's Day Nursery' was educational and gratifying. I experienced firsthand how young children acquire their initial language skills and how they progress. It was interesting to see how children in their early years can use grammatical rules without being taught them in the first place. It is crucial that the English Language is taught accurately so that in future generations it will still be as powerful and widely used as it is today. Alongside voluntary work I maintain a part time job in retail and attend an art course in my free time. This demonstrates good time management as school studies are always my priority.

Last summer, I spent some time in South Africa, volunteering at the 'Goedgedacht Trust' - a charitable organisation working with underprivileged children. I worked alongside a team of inspiring individuals and thoroughly enjoyed helping the young develop their communication and social skills. In turn, they developed my own. I was able to observe the variations in language and dialect, the difference in taboo language and politically correct terms from a different culture. I approached my duties there with enthusiasm and the experience has enriched my outlook on life.

I enjoy music of all genres and have achieved grade five piano and music theory. I am part of a local competitive swimming team and also attended life-guard training for two years which required self discipline to train early in the mornings. In school, I am a prefect and a member of the charity, newspaper and events committee. I am proactive as a team member and have helped to organise and publicise a number of fundraisers and events and have also participated in many, for example, the annual 'Race for Life'. I look forward to being an active member of an assortment of clubs and societies in university life.

I am a dedicated, conscientious student who welcomes new challenges. I will relish the opportunity to work independently, meet and exceed the high demands of this course and embrace the university experience.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 5: Biomedicine

Whilst shadowing a pharmacist at a community pharmacy in Oldham, I met a vibrant and engaging 89 year old woman who needed a vast range of medication on a daily basis. This access to effective medical treatment was allowing her to live a comfortable and happy life, even approaching her 90s. This experience and others like it, continue to inspire me to pursue medical research with a view to helping those suffering from debilitating illness. This has led me to my choice of a degree in Biomedical Sciences, which would allow me to understand the diagnosis and treatment of disease. I have a specific interest in the pharmacology topic of the Biomedical Sciences course as I am fascinated by how different drugs can affect the body and cure diseases. Reading 'Advice to a Young Scientist' by P.B. Medawar has shown me the need for an inquiring mind and the ability to think critically in order to make a good research scientist. The book 'Life at the Extremes' by Frances Ashcroft has taught me about how the body copes with extreme physical conditions, such as high temperatures and pressures and how much the human body can really endure.

Success and enthusiasm at Biology and Chemistry A level have confirmed my interest in studying Biomedical Sciences. I have particularly enjoyed the organic side of chemistry, as this is used a lot when making medicines such as aspirin. I am currently completing an EPQ exploring current UK practice in chemotherapy and other methods of cancer treatment. I am interested in discovering why chemotherapy is so widely used in the UK today and why it is often chosen over other methods of cancer treatment such as hormone or gene therapy. This investigation will allow me to extend my knowledge beyond my A level science subjects and explore an area of real personal interest, whilst developing good organisational and research skills. My science and research work is securely underpinned by my ability and success in mathematics; I am taking the STEP maths qualification in addition to A level Maths to improve my ability to think logically.

My extra-curricular activities such as volunteering at a local Cancer Research charity shop have helped to develop my interest in and understanding of oncology. I volunteer every week to help raise funds for the life saving research carried out by Cancer Research UK. This volunteering provides a rewarding and valuable experience, making me a more reliable and caring person. At a practical level, experience at Lloyds Pharmacy showed me the need for concentration, precision and accuracy when checking medicines; it was an enjoyable and eye-opening experience into the management of the many different ways of treating illness. I learned that new medicines are being developed all the time as medical research never stops and is a continuous lifelong learning process.

I am used to managing many demands at one time such as participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards where I have gained team work and problem solving skills, useful transferable skills for any science related degree. Being a keen sports person, this year I ran the Manchester 10km to raise money for The Christie Hospital in memory of my granddad. This was a very rewarding experience and my passion for the charity helped me to complete the race. Through swimming for ten years at Royton Swimming Club, I have gained determination, stamina and enthusiasm for the sport. I also have a position of responsibility at the club as swimming teacher, an experience which has enhanced my communication and confidence, valuable skills for any medicine related career.

The fact that there are so many unanswered questions in the world of science and medicine makes me curious to find answers. Ultimately, I want to be involved in ground breaking research to help develop medicines further so that the quality of life of people affected by disease and illness can be improved.

Personal Statements

Exemplar 6: Politics, Philosophy and Economics

I believe the three strands of Politics, Philosophy and Economics can combine to help to explain many of the events that take place in the world today, and it is my wish to increase my understanding of these events that has drawn me to this course. While my subject choices at A-Level are mostly scientific, I believe my interest in Mathematics and Physics comes from the same wish to fully understand the world we live in, constantly requiring the asking of questions to enable this, while my study of them also provided me with the analytical approach necessary to tackle any argument thoroughly. In the scientific subjects this process tends to result in the definite derivation of an answer, however reading and thinking about the points made in Thomas Nagel's *What does it all mean?* allowed me to consider a question knowing that there can be no definitive answer, while still striving to fully examine each argument, and trying to find ways of validating or disproving any such argument, an opportunity I relished.

One area I am particularly keen to look into more is the development of Communist regimes around the world, such as in the USSR and China. Although the Communist party is in power today in the latter, internationally there is opposition to its apparent human rights abuses. However, it is also one of the emerging BRIC economies, and it would be interesting to look into its economic policies, to see if this success can be attributed to Communism. J. S. Mill said in his *Principles of Political Economy* that he thought Communism was just as valid a concept as Capitalism, but the success of either was dependent on their "futuraity", how they developed as time went on. Economically, the USSR often stagnated, so the weakening or abandonment of Communist economic principles in China could mean that this was an aspect that needed to change in order to preserve political Communism. I would be interested in looking in depth into the original Marxist theory, to see if alleged repression in countries such as China, Laos and Vietnam is influenced by it, while also looking into how it has developed over time in its implementations across the world.

I am a regular reader of *The Economist* and *The Times*, and often try to find out more about current events in order to try and understand the background events leading up to any such developments. My natural interest in these events led me to take the Extended Project Qualification, where I looked at whether euthanasia ought to be made legal in Britain, due to the ongoing debate in the media. The work I did allowed me to study further the ethical arguments behind the issue, and decide on my own opinion. The project helped to develop my skills when it comes to research and self-motivation. Personally, I found it all the more rewarding because I was so interested in the problem of how to provide clear legislation on ethical matters, when so often each case affected has individual circumstances that may change how moral any one example is seen to be.

Outside of lessons, I am a keen helper in several voluntary schemes. I help with Year 6 Maths lessons at a local primary school, and each weekend I volunteer at a charity shop. I find this work gratifying, and would like to continue taking part in charity work at University. I am employed as a Lunchtime Supervisor in school. I also completed Grade 4 piano a few years ago, and now continue playing contemporary music.

Overall, it is during the last two years of school that my desire to take my long-standing interest in philosophy, politics and economics to a higher level became apparent. In History I have most enjoyed studying the evolution of the schools of thought of Liberalism, Socialism and Conservatism, and it is this that has increased my aspiration to look deeper into political and economic thought and its development internationally throughout the centuries.

What we're going to cover

Welcome back - it's time to crack on with your UCAS form!

Researching courses

The UCAS process – key dates

Polishing your Personal Statement

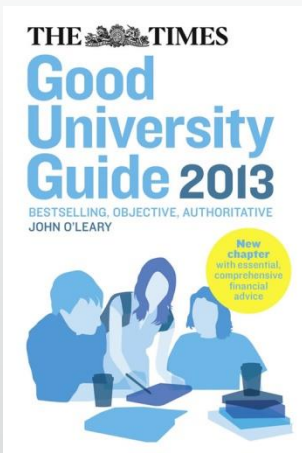
Researching courses

UCAS



The **COMPLETE**
UNIVERSITY
Guide ✓

KIS KEY
INFORMATION
SET



Which? University

theguardian

University guide 2014: University league table

All UK universities ranked by the Guardian

theguardian.com, Monday 3 June 2013 18.00 BST

University league table

More about the university guide

| Rank 2014 | 2013 | Change | University | Student/staff ratio | Capex/profit (%) |
|-----------|------|--------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 1 | | Cambridge | 16.6 | 81 |
| 2 | 2 | | Oxford | 1 | 76 |
| 3 | 3 | | London School of Economics | 1 | 82 |
| 4 | 4 | | St Andrews | | 74 |
| 5 | 5 | | Durham | | 82 |
| 6 | 6 | | Imperial College London | | 78 |
| 7 | 7 | | University College London | | 79 |
| 8 | 8 | | Bath | | 69 |
| 9 | 9 | | Warwick | | 84 |
| 10 | 10 | | Exeter | | 4 |
| 11 | 11 | | Surrey | | 7 |
| 12 | 12 | | Lancaster | | 10 |
| 13 | 13 | | York | | 17 |
| 14 | 14 | | Leicester | | 9 |
| 15 | 15 | | Loughborough | | 30 |
| 16 | 16 | | Birmingham | | 17 |
| 17 | 17 | | York | | 15 |
| 18 | 18 | | UEA | | 24 |
| 19 | 19 | | Heriot-Watt | | 27 |
| 20 | 20 | | Edinburgh | | 16 |
| 21 | 21 | | Bristol | | 25 |
| 22 | 22 | | Southampton | | 28 |

THE TIMES AND THE SUNDAY TIMES GOOD UNIVERSITY GUIDE LEAGUE TABLE 2014

The definitive university rankings measure student satisfaction, research quality, graduate prospects, entrance qualifications, degree results achieved, student/staff ratios, services and facilities spend, and dropout rates.

| Rank | 2014 | 2013 | Change | University | Location | Overall score | Change |
|------|------|------|--------|---|----------------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | | California Institute of Technology | United States | 95.5 | |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | | University of Oxford | United Kingdom | 93.7 | |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | | Stanford University | United States | 93.7 | |
| 4 | 4 | 4 | | Harvard University | United States | 93.1 | |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | United States | 92.7 | |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | | Princeton University | United States | 92.6 | |
| 7 | 7 | 7 | | University of Cambridge | United Kingdom | 90.6 | |
| 8 | 8 | 8 | | Imperial College London | United Kingdom | 90.5 | |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | | University of California, Berkeley | United States | 90.4 | |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | | University of Chicago | United States | 89.2 | |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | | Yale University | United States | 87.8 | |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | | ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich | Switzerland | 87.7 | |
| 13 | 13 | 13 | | University of California, Los Angeles | United States | 87.0 | |
| 14 | 14 | 14 | | Columbia University | United States | 86.6 | |
| 15 | 15 | 15 | | University of Pennsylvania | United States | 85.9 | |
| 16 | 16 | 16 | | Johns Hopkins University | United States | 85.5 | |
| 17 | 17 | 17 | | University College London | United Kingdom | 83.3 | |
| 18 | 18 | 18 | | Cornell University | United States | 83.1 | |
| 19 | 19 | 19 | | Northwestern University | United States | 82.6 | |
| 20 | 20 | 20 | | University of Michigan | United States | 82.2 | |

Times Higher Education Table of Tables 2013

| Rank 2014 | Rank 2013 | Change | Institution | Complete University Guide rank | Guardian Rank | Times Good University Guide rank | Total score |
|-----------|-----------|--------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 | | Cambridge | 1 | 1 | 1 | 90 |
| 2 | 2 | | Oxford | 2 | 2 | 2 | 87 |
| 3 | 3 | | London School of Economics | 3 | 3 | 3 | 84 |
| 4 | 4 | | St Andrews | 6 | 4 | 4 | 79 |
| 5 | 5 | | Durham | 5 | 6 | 6 | 76 |
| 6 | 6 | | Imperial College London | 4 | 9 | 5 | 75 |
| 7 | 7 | | University College London | 7 | 5 | 9 | 72 |
| 8 | 8 | | Bath | 9 | 7 | 7 | 70 |
| 9 | 9 | | Warwick | 8 | 10 | 10 | 65 |
| 10 | 10 | | Exeter | 10 | 12 | 8 | 63 |
| 11 | 11 | | Surrey | 13 | 8 | 12 | 59 |
| 12 | 12 | | Lancaster | 11 | 11 | 11 | 54 |
| 13 | 13 | | York | 12 | 16 | 14 | 50 |
| 14 | 14 | | Leicester | 16 | 13 | 16 | 45 |
| 15 | 15 | | Birmingham | 17 | 15 | 17 | 44 |
| 16 | 16 | | Loughborough | 14 | 21 | 21 | 44 |
| 17 | 17 | | Bristol | 15 | 23 | | |
| 18 | 18 | | East Anglia | 20 | 17 | | |
| 19 | 19 | | Edinburgh | 18 | 19 | | |
| 20 | 20 | | Southampton | 20 | 24 | | |
| 21 | 21 | | Newcastle | 22 | 27 | | |
| 22 | 22 | | Glasgow | 23 | 21 | | |
| 23 | 23 | | Nottingham | 24 | 28 | | |
| 24 | 24 | | Sheffield | 26 | 38 | | |
| 25 | 25 | | Soas | 33 | 27 | | |
| 26 | 26 | | King's College London | 19 | 3 | | |
| 27 | 27 | | Kent | 28 | | | |
| 28 | 28 | | Heriot-Watt | 40 | | | |
| 29 | 29 | | Manchester | 25 | | | |
| 30 | 30 | | Aston | 27 | | | |

How the table is set
Each year since 2008, Times Higher Education has compiled a 'Table of Tables' to offer a snapshot of how universities are viewed by national newspapers. This year, it was calculated by giving the 30 top-ranked institutions in league tables compiled by The Times and The Sunday Times, The Guardian and The Complete University Guide a score of 1 to 30, with 1 being the highest score.

QS

TOP UNIVERSITIES

Worldwide university rankings, guides & events

Postgraduate Studies

Parents

Join now

Login

Search...

UNIVERSITY

LOCATION

Search for universities...

x

MIT

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

USA

Harvard University

USA

Cambridge

UK

THE COMPLETE UNIVERSITY GUIDE INDEPENDENT • TRUSTED

| CUG Rank | 2014 | 2013 | University Name | Entry Standards | Student Satisfaction | Research Assessment | Graduate Prospects | Overall Score |
|----------|------|------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | Cambridge | 608 | 4.19 | 2.98 | 84.9 | 1000 |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | Oxford | 582 | 4.20 | 2.96 | 79.7 | 990 |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | London School of Economics | 541 | 4.00 | 2.96 | 85.1 | 975 |
| 4 | 4 | 4 | Imperial College London | 560 | 3.99 | 2.94 | 87.7 | 933 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | Durham | 507 | 4.15 | 2.72 | 79.5 | 925 |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | St Andrews | 521 | 4.15 | 2.72 | 75.4 | 891 |
| 7 | 7 | 7 | University College London | 509 | 3.95 | 2.84 | 82.9 | 859 |
| 8 | 8 | 8 | Warwick | 504 | 3.99 | 2.80 | 77.1 | 854 |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | Bath | 478 | 4.16 | 2.71 | 81.8 | 852 |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | Exeter | 468 | 4.17 | 2.62 | 74.6 | 848 |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | Lancaster | 435 | 4.12 | 2.71 | 74.4 | 842 |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | York | 454 | 4.13 | 2.78 | 69.6 | 826 |
| 13 | 13 | 13 | Surrey | 409 | 4.15 | 2.58 | 71.2 | 824 |
| 14 | 14 | 14 | Loughborough | 410 | 4.11 | 2.62 | 73.2 | 818 |
| 15 | 15 | 15 | Bristol | 485 | 4.01 | 2.72 | 80.8 | 815 |
| 16 | 16 | 16 | Leicester | 411 | 4.16 | 2.45 | 69.5 | 812 |
| 17 | 17 | 17 | Birmingham | 443 | 4.03 | 2.64 | 79.1 | 810 |
| 18 | 18 | 18 | Edinburgh | 485 | 3.84 | 2.75 | 75.0 | 802 |
| 19 | 19 | 19 | King's College London | 463 | 3.89 | 2.69 | 86.9 | 796 |
| 20 | 20 | 20 | East Anglia | 415 | 4.12 | | | |
| 21 | 21 | 21 | Southampton | | | | | |

Pointless



Pointless

Can you rank the following 7 Universities as listed in the latest 2015 Complete University Guide league table?

Bath?

Birmingham?

Cambridge?

Essex?

Loughborough?

Manchester?

Newcastle?



Pointless

Can you rank the following 7 Universities as listed in the latest 2015 Complete University Guide league table?

Bath 8

Birmingham 17

Cambridge 1

Essex 39

Loughborough 13

Manchester 28

Newcastle 20

UCAS website

The screenshot shows the UCAS website interface. At the top, a red banner reads "Extra is now open for undergraduate applications" with the UCAS logo. Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, How it all works, Apply, Providers, Data & analysis, News & events, and About us. A search bar is also present. The main heading is "Apply and track your application". Below this, a section titled "Choose the right type of application" provides instructions. A row of buttons allows users to select their application type: Undergraduate (highlighted), Performing arts, Postgraduate, Teacher training, and UCAS advisers. Below the buttons, a section titled "Apply for an undergraduate course through UCAS" lists two steps: "1 - Fill in an application" and "2 - Track your progress". A sidebar on the left lists categories: Undergraduate, Key dates, Performing arts, Postgraduate, Teacher training, and Apply for advisers. The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system clock indicating 12:21 on 22/04/2014.

Undergraduate Appl x

www.ucas.com/apply/undergraduate

OPEN

Extra is now open
for undergraduate applications

UCAS

UCAS

Home / How it all works / **Apply** / Providers / Data & analysis / News & events / About us

> Apply > Apply and track your application

Tweet Like 726
Share +1 Share this on Google+

Give us your feedback!

Apply and track your application

Choose the right type of application

Click the relevant tab below to apply for the type of course you're interested in.
If you're an adviser at a UCAS centre, use the Apply for advisers tab to manage applications.

Undergraduate Performing arts Postgraduate Teacher training UCAS advisers

Apply for an undergraduate course through UCAS

1 - Fill in an application 2 - Track your progress

UCAS website

UCAS Search tool - v x

search.ucas.com/search/providers?CountryCode=&RegionCode=&Lat=&Lng=&Feather=&Vac=1&AvailableIn=2014&Query=history&ProviderQuery=&AcId=&Locatio

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY
New courses in:

Cultural Tourism Management
Architecture

Business
Journalism

UCAS

[Home](#) / [How it all works](#) / [Apply](#) / [Members & providers](#) / [Data & analysis](#) / [News & events](#) / [About us](#)

[Back to search home page](#)

Where do you normally live?:

Search by any or all of the following

Course:

Provider:

Location:

Availability
[Courses open to new applicants](#)


Applying through Extra
[Show courses in Extra \(105\)](#)

Single/Combined subjects
[Single subject \(105\)](#)
[Joint subjects \(99\)](#)

Results [Map view](#)

116 providers found


The University of Aberdeen



Single subjects

History (V100)
Main Site
Undergraduate Degree

| Qualification | Duration | Study mode |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| MA (Hons) | 4 Years | Full-time |

EN  12:09
22/04/2014

Which University?

The screenshot shows the Which? University website in a web browser. The address bar displays 'university.which.co.uk'. The website header includes the 'Which? University' logo and navigation links: 'Find a course', 'Discover a uni', 'Get advice', and 'Compare'. A search bar with the placeholder text 'Search for courses, unis or advice' is prominently displayed. Below the search bar is a large banner image of a female student studying in a library. Overlaid on the banner is the text 'What to study, where to go and how to get there...'. A small callout box on the banner mentions 'Studying at Cardiff University' and 'Take a closer look >'. At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled 'Which? University at a glance' and a link to 'university.which.co.uk/search/course'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 12:10 on 22/04/2014.

Which? University

Find a course Discover a uni Get advice Compare

Search for courses, unis or advice

What to study, where to go and how to get there...

An Introduction to Health Psychology

Studying at Cardiff University
Take a closer look >

Which? University at a glance

university.which.co.uk/search/course

Explore universities and

12:10
22/04/2014

Which University

Showing 10 results

university.which.co.uk/search/course?utf8=✓&c%5Bq%5D=Medicine&commit=Go&c%5Bsort_fact%5D=relevance

More from Which?

Which? University Find a course Discover a uni Get advice Compare

We found **406 courses** at 89 universities and colleges for 'Medicine'

Medicine

Narrow down your search

Type to narrow by countries and regions

Type to narrow by Unis

Filter based on the type of course

We cover full-time and part-time undergraduate courses listed on UCAS (?)

All courses

All course types

Sort by Relevance

Filter courses by entry requirements

Set a UCAS points range based on your expected grades (?)

0 - 520 Clear

Filter based on the type of uni (?)

BY THE SEA CAMPUS CITY COLLEGIATE RURAL TOWN


CREATIVE DIVERSE LOCAL NIGHTLIFE POLITICAL SPORTY

VARIED UNION ACTIVITIES

Apply changes Clear all

University of Cambridge

Medicine



COURSE MODES
MB | 6 YEARS | FULL-TIME | 2014

UCAS Points
280

Tuition fee
£9,000

% applicants
receiving offers

Add to compare

Explore our advice

NHS Student Bursary: a quick guide [England]

Applying to a degree course in a health profession? You might be eligible for the NHS Student Bursary. Here's a quick overview and what it is and what

12:12
22/04/2014

What will I study?

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the University of Southampton website. The address bar shows the URL: www.southampton.ac.uk/medicine/undergraduate/courses/bm5_a100.page?#overview. The page features a navigation menu on the left with links such as Home, Undergraduate study, Studying here, What our students think, Find a course, Order a prospectus, How to apply, Visits and open days, After you graduate, Careers & employability, Parents' & supporters' guide, Money matters, Contact us, and University Home. The main content area is titled "Medicine" and includes a sub-header "A100 BM Medicine and BMedSc (BM5) (5 yrs)". Below this, a paragraph describes the BM5 programme as an established undergraduate degree course. A red error message box on the right states: "An error has occurred. See the full details at UNISTATS." The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 12:14 on 22/04/2014.

What about the modules?

V100 History | Univer x

www.southampton.ac.uk/history/undergraduate/courses/v100_ba_history.page?#modules

Some of our courses also give you the option of taking a language module, which can count towards your degree. These modules cover ten languages and range from absolute beginner to near-native speaker level.

[View the language modules on offer for this course](#)

Year 1

| Semester One | Semester Two |
|---|---|
| <p>Compulsory:</p> <p>HIST1112 History and Historians</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>HIST1012 Who is Anne Frank?</p> <p>HIST1019 The First Crusade: Sources and Distortions</p> <p>HIST1062 Tudor Rebellions</p> <p>HIST1074 The Battle of Agincourt</p> <p>HIST1088 Murder in the Cathedral: Thomas Becket, Henry II, and the Crisis between Church and Kingdom</p> <p>HIST1089 Histories of Empire</p> <p>HIST1091 Responses to the Holocaust</p> <p>HIST1097 From King to Clerics: A History of Modern Iran</p> <p>HIST1102 The End of the World: Apocalyptic Visions of History</p> <p>HIST1109 Terrorists, Tyrants and Technology</p> | <p>Compulsory:</p> <p>HIST1110 Key Concepts in History</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>HIST1008 A Tudor Revolution in Government ?</p> <p>HIST1011 The First World War</p> <p>HIST1015 McCarthyism</p> <p>HIST1020 The French Revolution</p> <p>HIST1022 Childhood and Youth in Early Modern Society</p> <p>HIST1027 Appeasement</p> <p>HIST1058 Russia in Revolution:1905-1917</p> <p>HIST1076 God's Own Land: Exploring Pakistan's Origins and History</p> <p>HIST1083 The Northern Ireland Troubles:1964-1998</p> <p>HIST1085 German Jews in Great Britain after</p> |

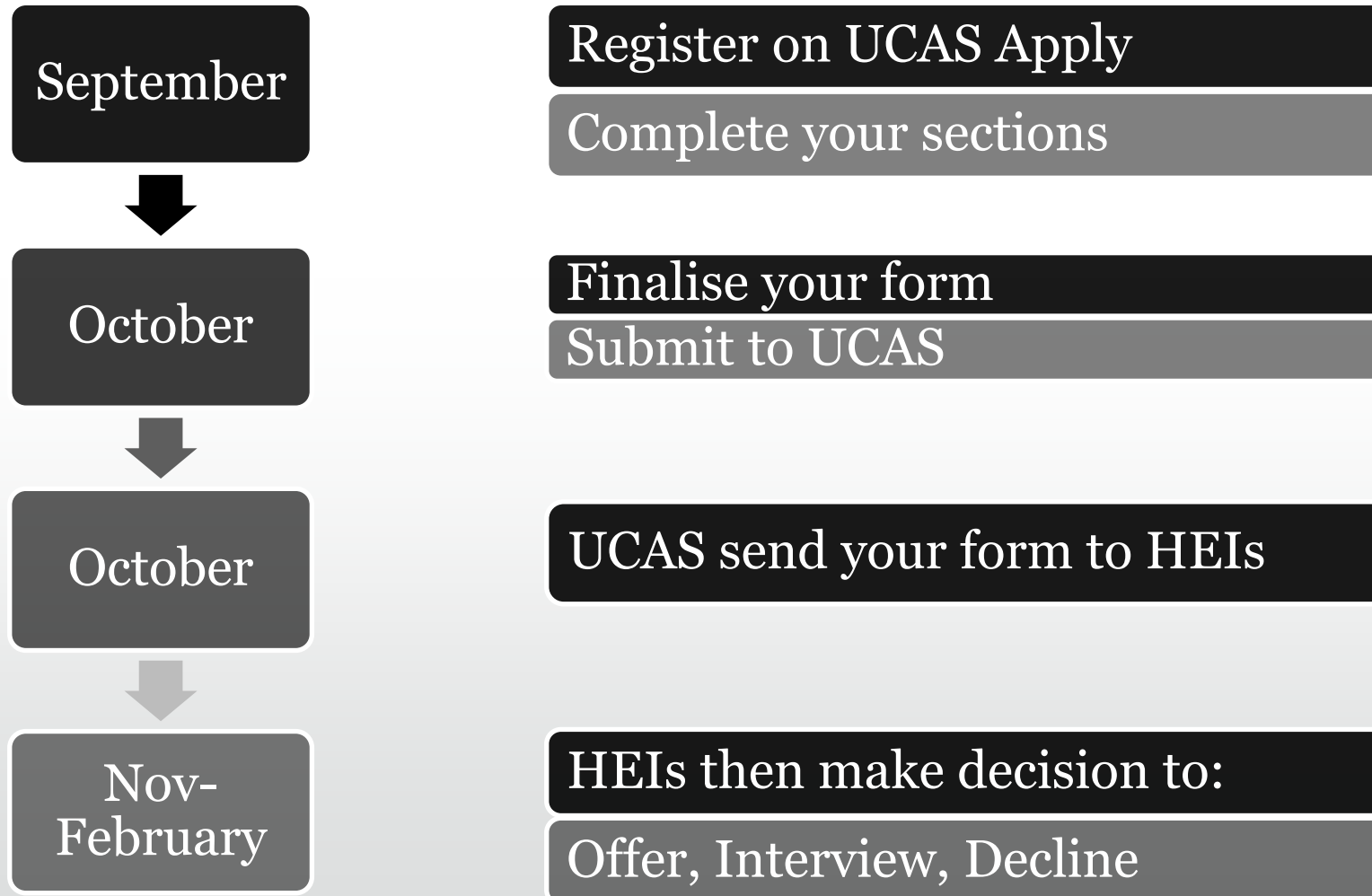
EN 14:38 22/04/2014

Key Information Sets

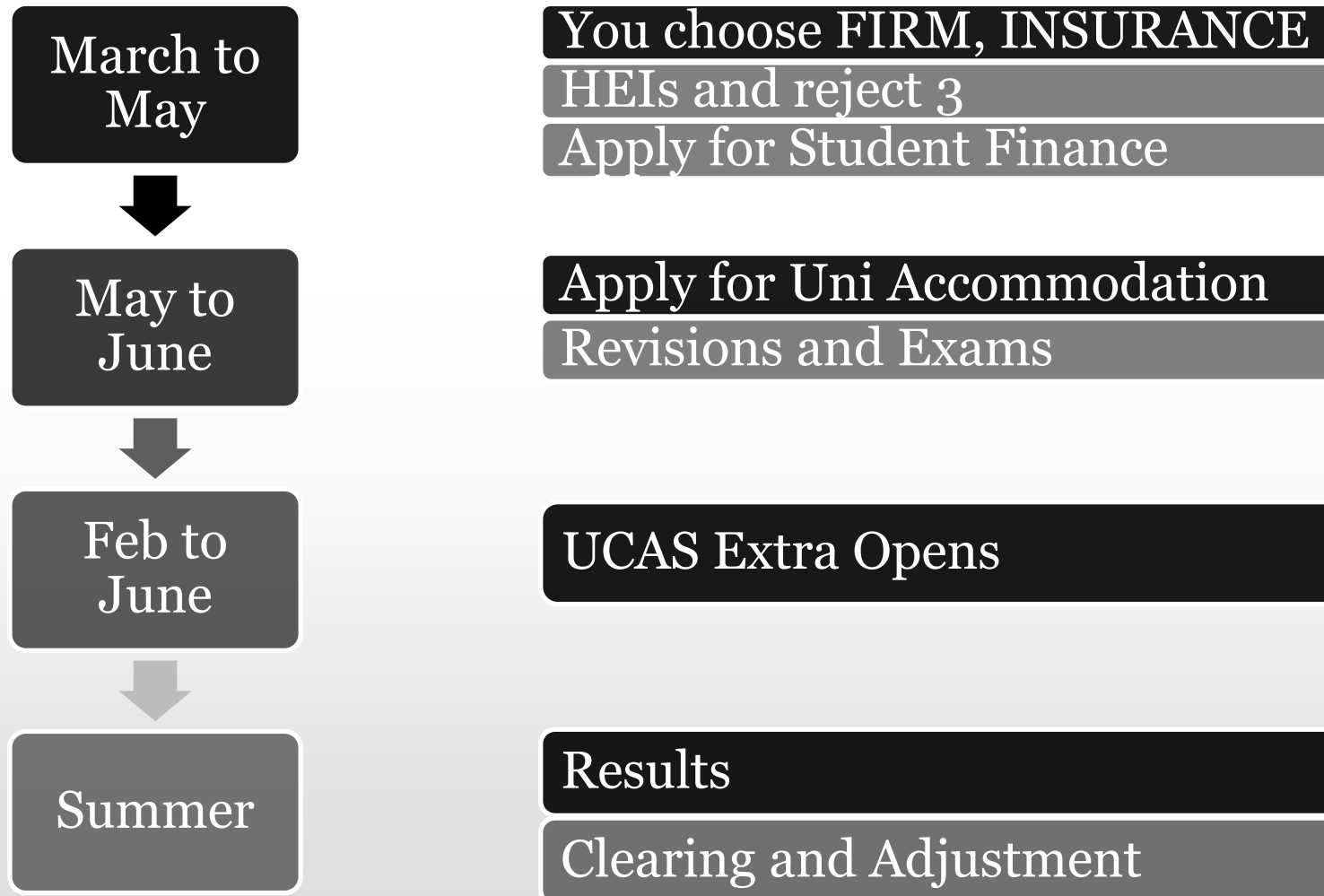


| Course | BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering Full time UCAS code: H610 | × BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering Full time, Optional sandwich year UCAS code: H610 | × BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering Full time UCAS code: H610 | × BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering Full time UCAS code: H610 | × BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering Full time UCAS code: H610 |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Location | University Of Southampton 1 location: Southampton | Birmingham City University 1 location: City Centre Campus | Queen Mary, University of London 1 location: Queen Mary University of London, Mile End campus | Southampton Solent University 1 location: East Park Terrace | University Of Exeter 1 location: Exeter Campus |
| Student satisfaction View all ▶ | | | | | |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course | 88% | 87% | 80% | 46% | 94% |
| Staff are good at explaining things | 92% | 89% | 80% | 63% | 96% |
| Staff have made the subject interesting | 83% | 89% | 69% | 33% | 88% |
| Feedback on my work has been prompt | 79% | 68% | 59% | 42% | 51% |
| Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand | 71% | 74% | 55% | 54% | 52% |
| I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies | 75% | 79% | 73% | 63% | 82% |
| The library resources and services are good enough for my needs | 75% | 92% | 96% | 63% | 92% |
| I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to | 88% | 82% | 82% | 75% | 90% |

The UCAS process:



The UCAS process:



Key deadlines

Mid Sept - **15 Jan** - Application cycle

You can still apply up until **30 June** if places available

15 Oct - Oxford and Cambridge

25 February – 2 July - UCAS Extra

24 March – Art & Design courses

31 March – HEI's decision deadline

6 May– Applicants' deadline

30 June – Application cycle officially closes

August– Alevel results Adjustment/Confirmation/Clearing

UCAS: Adjustment and Clearing

Adjustment

You may choose to trade your place for one on another course with higher entry requirements if your results exceed your offer (subject to their availability).



UCAS: Adjustment and Clearing

Clearing

You can enter Clearing if you have not met the requirements of your offer and been declined by your Institutions.

Clearing has all the remaining University places for that year after initial places have been confirmed.

Universities advertise their Clearing Hotline numbers in national press and on their websites

Play your university cards right...

Let's look at **applications** to some Russell Group Universities in 2013-14...



How many **applications** has each institution received?

How many **places** did each institution have?

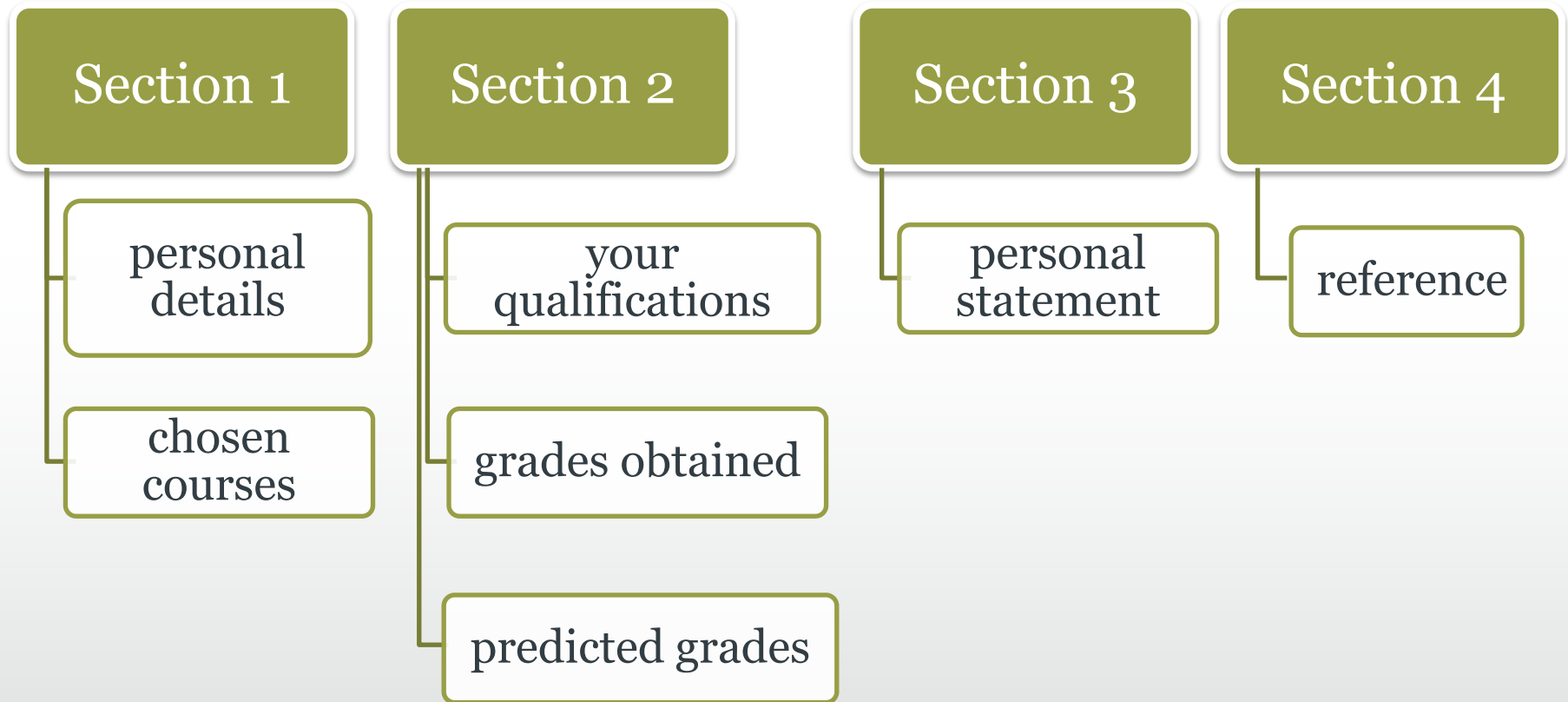
What was the **applicant to places ratio**?



University applications and places

| | Applications (2013-14) | Places | Ratio |
|----------------|------------------------|--------|-------|
| Oxford | 18,143 | 3,281 | 5.5 |
| Cambridge | 15,831 | 3,401 | 4.7 |
| LSE | 16,221 | 1,416 | 11.5 |
| Southampton | 34,437 | 4,499 | 7.7 |
| York | 23,570 | 3,749 | 6.3 |
| Edinburgh | 46,875 | 5,474 | 8.6 |
| King's College | 33,660 | 4,331 | 7.8 |
| Warwick | 28,485 | 3,828 | 7.4 |
| Durham | 26,200 | 4,026 | 6.5 |
| Nottingham | 52,271 | 7,160 | 7.3 |

What Our Admission's Officers look for



Polishing your Personal Statement



What is a personal statement?

What should a successful personal statement be?

PERSUASIVE !

Only chance to 'talk' directly
with admissions staff?

Your 'electronic' interview?



Why the Personal Statement IS Important

Standing out from the
competition

Will form the core of
questioning if interviewed

Personal Statements

It's talking about yourself and being **persuasive**.

What do **you** really want to say?

What do **lots** of students say?

Is there a problem of sounding like everyone else...



The risk of being formulaic?

From a young age I've enjoyed studying my [subject]

My teacher told me to say this...

I liked AS and I'm doing okay in A2s

... and I can't think of anything else to say...

I enjoy socialising with my friends

Basically, I have no friends...I'm #tragic...

I sometimes go to the theatre or a concert

My teacher said I have to sound sophisticated...

I've had a part-time job for 2 years

This is really why I have no time for anything else in life...

I like reading

...I've never read a book but I promise I will if you'll just give me a place at uni...

I have an elder brother at University

I hate him. He's the real reason I have to apply, the swot!

Imagine you're being interviewed

*“So: why do **you** want to study this subject,
and what makes **you** the right person for the
course.”*

Your personal statement should answer this question.

Remember: you can't guarantee getting an interview –
your Personal Statement is your chance to say something

So say **something!**

And I quote...

*“I want you to tell me about **you** as a real, three-dimensional person.”*

Dr Jon Scott, University of Leicester

*“**Be yourself**; it's a pleasure (though a surprisingly rare one) to read a statement where the candidate's **own voice** comes over clearly.”*

Professor John McGavin, University of Southampton

*“It is important that you write it in your own style rather than **trying to conform** to what someone else thinks is right.”*

Professor Pam King, University of Bristol

I am an organised and motivated person, as evidenced by my Captaincy of the school debating, judo and hockey teams, my vacation work running a youth TV station, and the fact that I'm head of school, head chorister and senior anti-bullying counsellor as well as leader of the Sea Cadets.

During my GCSE year I passed crumhorn and viol-da-gamba at Grade 6, and headed a neighbourhood campaign against new housing which successfully preserved a habitat for the silverweed moth.

In my capacity as MD of our Young Enterprise company I made a £250,000 profit for charity and was awarded the Alan Sugar Gold Medal for Most Ruthless Management Apprentice.

I run, row, ballroom dance and cycle for my county and have gained a Royal Geographical Society grant to head an expedition to the Falklands during my gap year researching penguin droppings and soil fertility, although I hope this will also leave me time to spend six months teaching basic Facebook theory to underprivileged children in Uttar Pradesh. I would like to study Media at your university because...

The Bad...

I want to do English Lit because I enjoy it at school and I think I will be able to do it in my chosen carrerr even tho this is not yet quiet settled. Moreover, I have visited universities and think I will enjoy it as a place.

I have 7 GCSEs at grade A and B and 2 at C. I also have 2Bs C and D at AS. I am taking ICT so I'm good with Word which I know will be useful to me in English. I enjoy reading books and watching TV and sometimes go to the theatre with friends. I have worked in the holidays at the market bookstall in my local town centre.

I am finishing my Gold Award soon and play basketball and football for the school in my spare time, and for local teams.

I have an elder sister at university.

How do you sound...?

I feel I have several areas of interest that prepare me for university. I am interested in travelling and go to Tuscany most years with my family, where we have a small villa. I also enjoy sport and play football for my school and golf for pleasure.

I enjoy socialising with my friends, listening to various forms of music, and going to the cinema. I intend to take a GAP year and am hoping to combine travelling through Asia with some voluntary work.



Persuasive...?

I hope to go to university not only to continue my studies but also to gain an experience which will stay with me for the rest of my entire life. I enjoy college life and am looking forward to attending university and becoming even more independent.

With the vast investment I will be making into higher education, it is also very important to me that university lecturers are exceedingly clever people, as I want the best education I can get.

Personal Statements: a checklist

Don't repeat information -

it wastes space and suggests
you have nothing else to say...?



Don't offer an undeveloped list or use clichés

Do think about spelling, grammar, vocabulary choices

Do add comments, views, explanations where helpful

Positive phrasing

At present, I am studying A2s in English Literature, French and Media Studies. I cope with the work quite well and meet the deadlines. I have learnt a variety of skills – French language skills, and English has honed my analytical skills in analysing poetry and prose.

Positive phrasing

At present, I am studying A2s in English Literature, French and Media Studies. I **cope** with the work **quite** well and meet the deadlines. I have learnt a variety of skills – French language skills, and English has honed my analytical skills in analysing poetry and prose.

Furthermore

Use my initiative

Enhance

Participated

Furthered

Efficiently

Acquired

Passion

Enabled me

Thrive

Explored

Learnt from

Commitment

Hard work

Broadening

Developed

In addition

Strengthen

Gained

Reinforced

Taking part

Interested

Improved

Rewarding

Show wider reading/interest around your subject area of choice...

I first became interested in Philosophy when I read Sophie's World. Then I read Bertrand Russell's History of Western Philosophy, then I am very health conscious and go to the gym at least twice every week. I particularly enjoy weight lifting to improve my strength, which will be useful as a Geologist. Now, when I read the theories of Anaximander and Anaximenes, I find the philosophical theories of antiquity somewhat naïve. I cannot profess to understand or even remember half of the things I have read, but this does partly explain my love of Maths.

Personal Statements: a checklist

Don't repeat information

Don't offer undeveloped lists or use clichés

Avoid unintentional humour or ambiguity...

Do think about spelling, grammar, vocabulary

Do add comments, views, explanations

Do use your own experiences



Making connections - 432 words

On starting secondary school I discovered my perpetual passion for science. This passion has been increased furthermore by the dissection of the broad science spectrum into three more concentrated and enjoyable areas.

From the moment biology was unveiled to me I was enthralled. The new found knowledge and understanding of the tertiary structure of enzymes, the ventilation mechanisms of bony fish and other engaging life processes, has given me a new found perspective and curiosity of the biological occurrences that I had grown accustomed to.

Making connections - 432 words

On starting secondary school I discovered my **perpetual passion** for science. This passion has been increased furthermore by the dissection of the broad science spectrum into three more concentrated and enjoyable areas.

From the moment biology was unveiled to me I was **enthralled**. The new found knowledge and understanding of the **tertiary structure of enzymes, the ventilation mechanisms of bony fish** and other engaging life processes, has given me a new found perspective and curiosity of the biological occurrences that I had grown accustomed to.

This new understanding compelled me to gain further insight by indulging in my already keen interest in the written word. Wider reading of this varied and interesting subject has ranged from “Lucy’s Child” by Donald Johanson; I found this to be engrossing when concerning the evolution of man, to the 1958 Stork and Renouf’s “Fundamentals of Biology”; providing further awareness of the purely elementary concepts of the subject as a whole.

I feel that a degree in biological sciences will be highly enjoyable and both intellectually stimulating and rewarding. This will also act as a strong basis for my future career as a secondary schools science teacher, with a subject specialism in biology, after completing as Secondary Science PGCE.

As part of a volunteering programme, I committed one free lesson a week assisting Year Eight science lessons. I thoroughly enjoyed explaining some of the more basic scientific concepts to children especially developing my communication skills.

This new understanding compelled me to gain further insight by indulging in my already keen interest in the written word. **Wider reading** of this varied and interesting subject has ranged from **“Lucy’s Child” by Donald Johanson**; I found this to be engrossing when concerning the evolution of man, to the **1958 Stork and Renouf’s “Fundamentals of Biology”**; providing further awareness of the purely elementary concepts of the subject as a whole.

I feel that a degree in biological sciences will be highly enjoyable and both intellectually **stimulating** and **rewarding**. This will also act as a strong basis for my **future career** as a secondary schools **science teacher**, with a subject specialism in biology, after completing as Secondary Science PGCE.

As part of a **volunteering programme**, I committed one free lesson a week assisting Year Eight science lessons. I thoroughly enjoyed **explaining some of the more basic scientific concepts to children** especially developing my **communication skills**.

During the lessons, I found that expressing my more creative and generally nonsensical side enabled the students to enjoy science more, and in the process found myself living up to the iconic image of the stereotypical mad scientist!

To gain further work experience in science teaching, I am currently involved in dedicating one afternoon per week assisting in science lessons at a local secondary schools. I have gained experience in both lab and classroom situations, involving teaching groups of student how to measure blood pressure, the infinite joy of lesson plans and translating biological English words in Hungarian for a foreign student! I find that this all adds to the experience...

Aside from my passion for biological sciences, I have an overwhelming fondness for music ranging from Bach to the great David Bowie. The desire to listen to music has progressively stretched to a desire to make music: for the past three years I have been teaching myself to play piano. I find this pursuit not only enjoyable, but challenging; I love trying my hand at harder pieces so that I am able to work at them and hear the final results.

During the lessons, I found that expressing my more creative and generally nonsensical side enabled the students to enjoy science more, and in the process found myself living up to the iconic image of the **stereotypical mad scientist!**

To gain further **work experience** in science teaching, I am currently involved in dedicating one afternoon per week assisting in science lessons at a local secondary schools. I have gained experience in both lab and classroom situations, involving teaching groups of student how to measure blood pressure, the infinite joy of lesson plans and translating biological English words in Hungarian for a foreign student! I find that this all adds to the experience...

Aside from my passion for biological sciences, I have an overwhelming fondness for music ranging from Bach to David Bowie. For the past three years I have been teaching myself to play piano. I find this pursuit not only **enjoyable**, but **challenging**; I love trying my hand at harder pieces so that I am able to work at them and hear the final results.

Overall, I am a hardworking active person and I am enthusiastic about achieving my goals and becoming a science secondary school teacher. I am looking forward to university life both academically and socially.

Overall, I am a **hardworking** active person and I am **enthusiastic** about achieving my goals and becoming a science secondary school teacher. I am **looking forward to university life** both academically and socially.

Writing your Personal Statement takes time...

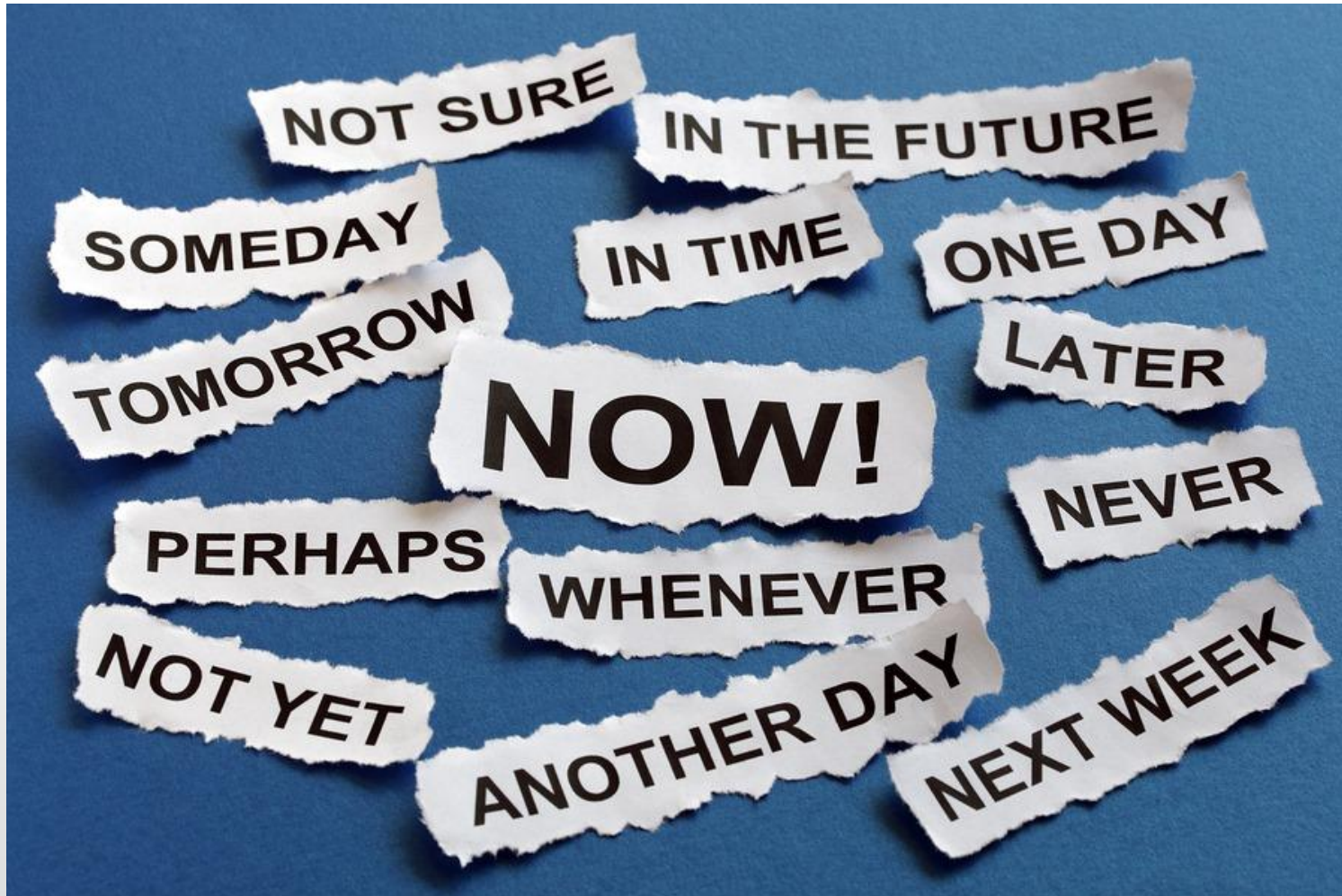
Rule One: draft and redraft. Then...

redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft,
redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft,
redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft,
redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft,
redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft, redraft ...

Keep editing until it is as **good** as it possibly can be.

Remember : you can't rely on being interviewed – the
Personal Statement is your only chance to say
something!

So stop procrastinating - get started!



Getting started - 47 lines, approx. 600 words

80 – 90% Academic

Additional Experience and Skills

Hobbies and Interests

Summarise why you will be a good choice

What about the structure?

Paragraph 1: **Introduction**

What was your personal trigger?

How does your subject relate to society or current affairs?

Which aspects of the course are you really looking forward to studying in more detail and why?

What about the structure?

Paragraph 2: **Your interest in the subject**

What have you done in school/college to develop your interest in the subject? (trips/books/wider reading documentaries...)

What have you done outside school or college you can link to your subject? (work experience, volunteering, part-time job...)

Do you have a career aspiration?

What about the structure?

Paragraph 3: **Wider skills**

Give an account of your non-academic achievements

Talk about what skills you've gained (team building, leadership, MOOC, EPQ, research skills, confidence)

Gap Year – are you taking a year out? If so, why – what are the Benefits?

What about the structure?

Paragraph 4: Summary

Finish with a one or two line summary recapping:

Why you want to go to university and study the course?

Why you deserve to be offered a place?

Summary statements

‘I am mature, confident and self-motivated, all qualities that I believe are critical; to a successful university experience. I relish the opportunity to study accounting and finance to degree level and hopefully beyond.’

‘I feel certain that this subject will provide me with the intellectual challenge best suited to my personality and ambition of pursuing an academic career in the social sciences.’

Some final advice...

Start early

Make use of the resources : UCAS website/Student Room

Plan out the structure with bullet points and headings, then turn these into full sentences and paragraphs

Draft in Microsoft Word, spell checking AND proof reading it before you paste it into UCAS

Keep a copy in case you are called to interview

DON'T plagiarise

Email me!



Fred Binley:

f.a.binley@southampton.ac.uk

Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer