



Personal Statements

Make sure your personal statement **stands out**

UCAS



What is a Personal Statement..?



- Supports your UCAS application
- 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text
- An opportunity to demonstrate your skills, experience, ambitions and suitability for the course

How are Personal Statements used..?

- To provide a basis for university interviews
- To enable universities to differentiate between applicants with the same predicted grades
- To consider:
 - borderline applicants
 - applicants for Adjustment
 - during Clearing



What are admissions staff looking for..?



Evidence of your:

- ***understanding...***

...of the course content

- ***potential...***

...your motivation, enthusiasm, originality and academic preparedness

- ***independence...***

...of thought and your independent learning skills

- ***contribution...***

... to the undergraduate student body

A suggested structure...

Opening statement – 5%

Academic suitability – 70%

Extra-curricular activities – 20%

Concluding statement – 5%





Opening statement...

Short, **concise** and to the point

Outlines your **interest** in your chosen course

Consider using the '**necklace approach**' to link your opening and closing paragraphs

Consider writing **after** you have drafted the rest of your statement

Be original...

Most over-used opening sentences...

1. From a young age I have always been interested in...

1779

2. For as long as I can remember...

1451

3. I am applying for this course because...

1370

4. I have always been interested in...

927

5. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed...

310

(Number for 2016 UCAS cycle. Data provided by Lancaster University)



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Academic suitability...

How do your current studies relate to the degree course? What do you particularly enjoy?

What have you done to develop your interest in the subject outside lessons? What did you learn?

– Critically evaluate work experience, volunteering – how has this developed your understanding?

– What academic skills do you possess that will make you an ideal student? e.g. Problem-solving?

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ABC method...

Action

- What did you do?

Benefit

- What did you learn?
- What skills did you develop?

Course

- How is this relevant to the course?
- How will it benefit you as an undergraduate?

Be selective and analytical – *'enriched, expanded, improved...'*



Extra-curricular...

Outline **key roles/responsibilities** such as subject ambassador, part-time employee, team captain

Mention **key achievements** such as awards and accolades, charity events

Highlight **key transferable skills** developed. e.g. leadership, communication, adaptability

Avoid lists - 'less is more'

Concluding statement...

A brief **summary** of your personal statement

Focus should be on the course. **Why** should you be offered a place?

Consider the student experience. **What** can you offer the university?

You can mention possible future plans but remember you are **applying** for the course, not the career.



Top tips - use...



- Microsoft Word
- Clearly defined paragraphs
- Formal language and positive phrasing
- Examples to evidence your suitability
- Your 'voice'. The university wants to get a sense of 'you'

Top tips - avoid...

- Clichés – "*I have always...*"
- Famous quotes – use the character count for your words, not someone else's
- Complicated vocabulary
- Negativity or humour
- Copying others – UCAS use plagiarism software



Remember...



- Logical structure – beginning, middle and end
- "*So what..?*" - is this relevant to the course?
- Do not exaggerate
- Read your statement aloud
- Ask for feedback
- Check, re-check then check again

Positive phrasing...

I learnt from

Commitment

Taking part in

Enabled

Furthermore

Self-motivated

Through attending

Reinforced

Combining ... with ... has

This demonstrated my ability to

I aspire to

Strengthen

Participated in

Broadened my interest

The opportunity to

Developed skills of

Enhanced

I particularly enjoyed

Facilitated