

Personal Statements





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%

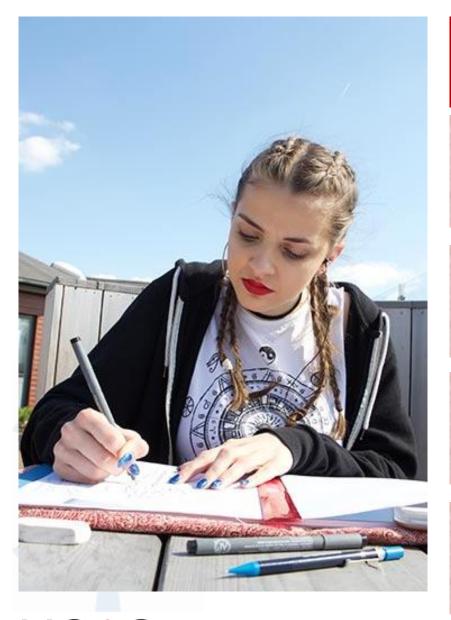


Extra-curricular activities – 20%

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



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?







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...

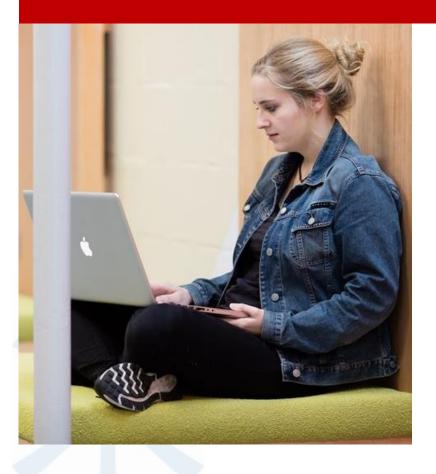
- Clichés "I have always..."
- Famous quotes use the character count for your words, not someone else's
- Complicated vocabulary
- Negativity or humour
- Copying others UCAS use plagiarism software







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

Developed skills of

The opportunity to

Enhanced

I particularly enjoyed



Facilitated