

Your Personal Statement

This is your opportunity to demonstrate the thought and consideration that has gone into your choices and to give a flavour of who you are – personality, strengths, skills, hobbies and interests.

In order to make sure that you cover all aspects, construct your statement through key paragraphs – keeping each short and succinct. It will probably take several attempts to condense all that you'd like to say. Your personal statement will be seen by each of your five choices so don't make it too specific to one institution – or you could alienate the others. Remember that, although each university or college that you have applied to cannot see your other choices, they will all see your personal statement.

The paragraphs should cover:

- **Your choice of courses.**

What interests you about your chosen subject; you may wish to include details of what you have read about the subject.

Give your reasoning behind your choice of course(s) – this might include the structure and options of the course, availability of industrial placements, etc.

- **Longer-term career objectives.**

Don't worry if these are quite broad at this stage – by including them you will help set the scene for your choice of course.

Exemption from appropriate professional bodies offered by your choice of courses may have been important in your decision-making and can be highlighted in the personal statement.

Any job, work experience, placement or voluntary work you have done, particularly if it is relevant to your subject; you may want to include the skills and experience that you have gained from these activities.

- **Your university selections.**

Use this paragraph to demonstrate the thought and consideration that has gone into your choice of institutions.

Your Personal Statement

- **The person behind the form.**

Make sure to give admissions tutors a flavour of who you are, your skills, strengths, achievements and personality. Make sure that you include your key strengths in your personal statement.

Details of any non-accredited skills and achievement that you have gained through activities such as: the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Millennium Volunteers Scheme and Young Enterprise.

Include the skills and experience that you have gained from these activities.

Any subjects that you are studying that do not have a formal assessment.

Your social, sports or leisure interests.

If you are planning to take a year out, your reasons why.

The personal statement can be up to 4,000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines of text (this includes blank lines). You do not have to use all the space provided.

It is recommended that the personal statement is prepared offline using a word-processing package and then copied and pasted into the UCAS Apply system.

You can rework and resave details on your application as often as necessary, before submitting the final version to your teacher, adviser or referee as appropriate.

It may be useful to set up a folder containing your working notes as well as your final application data and statement. Refer to the statement and to your notes before any interviews that you are invited to – it will remind you of the key points you made and will give you an idea of the areas that the interviewer may want to pursue with you. Once you have been allocated a UCAS number, write it somewhere safe and keep the data in your applications folder – that way it will always be handy.

Framework 1 for Writing Your Personal Statement

- **Do** check university and college prospectuses, websites and **Entry Profiles**, as they usually tell you the criteria and qualities that they want their students to demonstrate.
- Your personal statement could be used as the basis for an interview, so be prepared to answer questions on it, and be truthful!
- This may be your only written work that the course tutor sees before making a decision: make sure it is organised and literate. Get the grammar, spelling and punctuation right. A statement filled with errors will give a negative impression of your skills and the effort you have put in to being accepted.
- It makes the statement more convincing and more personal if you give specific examples – not vague statements. You should explain why an experience or activity makes you a good candidate for the course. Include enough additional information to make it interesting and to demonstrate your own interest.
- Do not include information already known from the application form e.g. GCSE results, subjects studying etc. Instead discuss the relevant (transferable) skills you have developed in each subject studied during post 16.
- Remember that you only write one personal statement. It should be relevant to all your choices. The same statement is read by ALL the universities you apply to, so do not state specific courses or universities in it.
- If you are applying for contrasting subjects or courses, try to identify common themes, skills etc relevant to both.

Using the following headings, bullet point information you could include in your statement. Complete all those relevant to you. You can then use these points to write your unique statement. Remember, you only have 47 lines (4000 characters including spaces).

Beginning

Criteria	Evidence
Impact opening (e.g. a quote, statement, personal experience, etc.)	
Why you have chosen the course(s) - this is particularly important when you are applying for a subject that you have not studied before. What are you most looking forward to studying on the course? Why?	
Reasons why the subject area interests you. Be specific.	

Framework 1 for Writing Your Personal Statement

Middle

Why you want to go to university or college?
 What do you hope to gain by going?
 How are you going to use your qualification?
 Creative; adaptable, etc.

Evidence that you have researched the course and understand what is required to study the course, e.g. if applying for psychology courses, show that you know how scientific the subject is.

Give details /show examples of generic skills and achievement you have gained through activities/experiences. i.e., the skills/qualities required to be successful on your chosen course(s)

Good time management / meets deadlines

Work as part of a team

Independent study / work

Motivated to succeed / hard-working

Reliable / responsible

Good self-discipline / able to self-start

Good problem solving / use initiative

Well organised

Good communication skills

Resilient – able to persevere if things do not go to plan

Enthusiastic / a willing learner

Specific skills/qualities required to be successful on chosen course(s) e.g. patient; physically fit; dexterous; creative; adaptable etc:

Framework 1 for Writing Your Personal Statement

<p>Details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's specifically relevant to your chosen course(s) or is required/essential to be successful on chosen course e.g. a school placement for teaching, or a hospital placement for medicine etc.</p>	
<p>How your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) that you have chosen e.g. particular modules etc.</p>	
<p>Any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s)</p>	
<p>Hobbies, interests and social activities that demonstrate your skills and abilities</p>	
<p>Details of accreditation achieved for any activities in preparation for higher education, for example Aim higher taster days, Med-link etc</p>	
<p>Any other achievements that you are proud of, eg reaching grade three piano or being selected for the county cricket team, etc.</p>	
<p>Positions of responsibility that you hold / have held both in and out of school, eg student leader or representative for a local charity</p>	
<p>Attributes that make you interesting, special or unique!</p>	
End	
<p>Your plans - how you want to use the knowledge and experience that you gain. How the qualification will benefit you in the future / your career.</p>	
<p>Conclusion. Not just repeating all you have said, but a 'summing up'. Must have impact.</p>	

Framework 2 for Writing Your Personal Statement

1. Why have you chosen this course?

- You may want to explain your “**personal trigger**”. What was the moment, trip, visit, event etc that led you to decide that this was the subject / course for you.
- You may also want to consider **how it relates to current affairs**.
- Another route to consider here is **what aspects / content of the course at University are you most looking forward to**. This is good as it shows you have researched the course, but remember that you will use the same statement for 5 choices, so it would have to be the same at all of them.

2. What links are there with the subjects you have studied? This may be via the theory you have learned, but it could also be more general skills such as:

- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Written style
- Critical analysis
- Applying theory to real world situations
- Independent research / study
- Time management
- Plus any others you can think of

3. What experience do you have outside the classroom that links to your subject?

You need to link this to the course, or consider what it has taught you that might be useful ...

- Reading
- Documentaries
- Courses
- Activities
- Trips abroad
- Museum Trips
- Community activities
- School clubs
- Theatre trips

4. What interest / experiences have you had and how have they developed you? This is a chance to tell them about you and show you are someone they should be interested in. This might come from **hobbies, part time work or work experience**. Make sure that you explain how these experiences have developed you.

Skills to consider including here might include:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Adaptability
- Commitment
- Initiative
- Organisation
- Time management
- Public speaking
- Leadership
- Responsibility

5. What do you plan to do when you finish your degree? You may not want to have this as a focus, but in certain degrees it can be useful (if you want to teach etc....).

6. It can be good to finish with a concluding paragraph that sums up why you want to study this at University, and why you think you will make the most of the experience, or why you deserve a place.

Framework 2 for Writing Your Personal Statement

1. Why have you chosen this course?

2. What links are there with the subjects you have studied?

3. What experience do you have outside the classroom that links to your subject?

4. What interest / experiences have you had and how have they developed you?

5. What do you plan to do when you finish your degree?

6. It can be good to finish with a concluding paragraph

