

PERSONAL STATEMENTS



The good, the bad and the ugly

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

- To tell the university **why** you want to study the course you are applying for
- To demonstrate **how** you will be good at it
- To **stand out** from the thousands of other applications they will receive and ensure **you** get a place on the course

WHAT? WHY? HOW?

- 4000 characters, 47 lines, ONE statement for up to 5 universities
- Draft in a word document, or using Unifrog tool, and back it up somewhere
- A summary of why you want to do that course and why you are a good candidate for it – part of SELECTION process
- Used by ADMISSIONS TUTORS alongside GRADES, interview, entrance test etc
- It is not quick or easy – takes time to get it right – expect to do several drafts
- Internal deadline for completed UCAS form, including final draft of personal statement = mid-Nov – start it much sooner!!! Your tutor will expect to see a first draft before October half term
- Give to tutor/ teacher/ parents /family/ friends for comments/feedback

BEFORE YOU START WRITING



What **specific skills** do you need for your chosen course? Look on UCAS.com or Unifrog.org



Check the Entry Profiles for the courses you're interested in on Course Search at ucas.com or www.Unifrog.org



Make sure it is suitable for you, and you are suitable for it.



Spend time thinking about what you want to include – do mind maps/bullet points/interview with a friend maybe?

WHAT DO I INCLUDE IN MY PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Starting/opening paragraph:

- Why are you interested in the course/subject – why do you want to study it (Try to avoid ever since I was...)

E.g. Application for Physics.

I am a logical, hardworking individual who enjoys the problem solving and logical thinking that Mathematics and Physics offers as well as fulfilling my desire to understand more about how the universe works. My studies in these areas led to my decision to take Physics, Mathematics and Further Mathematics at college on the path towards taking Theoretical Physics at University.

WHAT DO I INCLUDE IN MY PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Academic Achievements MUST BE LINKED TO COURSE SPECIFIC SKILLS
(GCSEs/Current A levels and/or BTECs)

Studying marketing in Business Studies has given me a real insight into the world of Marketing, whether that be focused on developments in technology or how the environment impacts today's marketing techniques.

In Art and Design, I can express my creativity, through different mediums, such as paint and pen and studying Ethics, Philosophy, and Religion has not only increased my skills in essay writing but also enabled me to learn about the Ethics of Business; for example issues surrounding Globalisation

WHAT DO I INCLUDE IN MY PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Experience/Programmes you have undertaken (ALSO MUST BE RELEVANT)

- Summer school
- Open Days/seminars
- MOOCs
- Remote work experience
- Books/podcasts related to your course
- Keep what you did minimal and focus on what you gained from it and how this links to your chosen course

My interest in Biomedical Science is evident from the Mooc I have undertaken via the University of Leeds. This course titled, 'exploring cancer medicines' introduced me to the topic of cancer chemotherapy and how the various routes of treatment are still a challenge for Scientists. I also gained insight into the investigation and research skills used which are vital for this course.

WHAT DO I INCLUDE IN MY PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Skills/Qualities/Clubs/Societies/hobbies/Employment

- Include skills which will Universities want potential students to have e.g.
- Organisation skills, working within a team
- Creativity, positive, being proactive/independent
- Don't list them all – give a couple of examples of how/where they were gained

Through my part time employment, I have been able to obtain skills and qualities which are transferable to university; I have gained responsibility of working in visual merchandising which has not only improved my problem solving and creativity skills, but also increased my confidence in dealing with a range of individuals.

During my first year of college, I attended two forms of enrichment activities whilst balancing my studies. I took part in NCS which helped me to develop my verbal communication skills and allowed me to refine my leadership skills.

FOR EVERY EXAMPLE, IT'S EASY AS ABC...

- Activity – what you did/evidence?
- Benefits – what you got out of it/learned?
- Course – how does this link to the course you are applying for?
- And remember to select your evidence based on the **subject specific skills** you need to demonstrate for your chosen course

WHAT NOT TO DO

DON'T

- Use clichés - Admissions tutors read THOUSANDS of personal statements, so they want to read something original. Avoid phrases like 'from a young age', 'since I was a child', 'I've always been fascinated by', 'I've always had a passion for' etc
- Make jokes - while universities want to get to know your personality, you don't want to come across like you're not taking it seriously!
- Use quotes (or, even worse, open with a quote) - admissions tutors want to read YOUR words
- Mention any university by name - remember, your application goes to **ALL 5** universities, so naming one doesn't look great to the others!

WHAT NOT TO DO

DON'T

- Make unsupported claims – don't exaggerate or lie, as you may be asked for evidence in an interview!
- Be negative – avoid mentioning things you haven't done, or courses you've dropped. Focus on the positives!
- Plagiarise – all words in your personal statement should be YOURS. Using anyone else's words as your own is plagiarism; UCAS uses similarity and plagiarism software on all applications and universities will be alerted if you're found to have copied anything from other sources.

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU INCLUDE?

- Start with **why** you chose the course
 - Why do you want to study it?
 - What inspired you to do so?
 - What do you particularly enjoy/find interesting about the subject?
- Why will you be **good** at it?
 - What skills do you have which are suitable?
 - How is your current study relevant?
 - Do you have any relevant experience (e.g. medicine)
- Related hobbies/interests
 - What do you do in your spare time that shows your interest/skills

WHAT NEXT?

- You can start planning and drafting your personal statement as soon as you're ready
 - Use the tools on Unifrog or the UCAS Hub to help you to get started
-

UNIFROG PERSONAL STATEMENT TOOL

THIS CAN HELP WITH THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT.

EXPLORE THE TOOL AND SAVE THE WORK THAT YOU PRODUCE

Drafting application materials

UK Personal Statement

- ✖ Subject added
- ✖ Started
- ✖ Character count
- ✖ Marked as finished

Go to tool >

Teacher References

- ✖ Overall Reference

CV / Resumé

- ✖ Write CVs perfectly tailored for the roles you want

Start >

Common App Essay

- ✖ Prompt chosen
- ✖ Started
- ✖ Character count
- ✖ Marked as finished

Go to tool >

US recommenders


Sorry, your school doesn't yet have this tool

Tells you what each section should be about

Tells you roughly how much to write for each section


Write
Add, edit and delete text

Preview
How it'll look to universities



Section 1
Why do you want to study this subject?
28 April 2021
....
4 of 1200 characters

Edit >



Section 2
What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?
28 April 2021
....
4 of 2400 characters

Edit >

Automatically totals the number of characters you've written so far

Section 2: What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?

This part should make up 60% of the total statement

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Examples of what you may want to write about:

1. Your academic studies related to this subject

As always, specific examples are best! Even if you aren't yet studying the subject for which you're applying, show how your current schoolwork is preparing you for it.

Criminology example: "Through my studies in my law A-Level, I developed a keen interest in criminal law and criminology. I began listening to the Once Upon a Crime podcast to explore the causes, effects, and impact of crime. This led me to exploring the sociological theory of criminal law and I used my research to achieve an A in my recent essay on criminal law theory."

2. Particular project work you've done in your studies

3. Things you have learnt online, and from books, newspapers, TV

4. Course related activities

5. Experiences in your year out (if you are having one)

6. Any relevant work experience (especially for vocational courses)

Gives examples of things you might want to talk about in each section

Gives examples of the kind of thing you might write

Write

Add, edit and delete text

Preview

How it'll look to universities

Ask a teacher for feedback:

Ms Collins

+ add a note

Send

Or email my whole statement to:

An email address

+ add a note

Email my Personal Statement

Or download it:

As a [PDF Document](#) or [Word Document \(docx\)](#)

Once you've finished your first draft, scroll to the bottom of the page to download it as a Word document so you can send it to your tutor

TO SUMMARISE

- A personal statement plays a **key** part in supporting your application to study at a university/college
- It's a chance for you to:
 - Explain **why** you'd like to study a particular course.
 - Discuss skills and experience you have that show your passion for your chosen course

IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING APPLYING TO OXBRIDGE

- Please make sure you attend Emma Walkers' session on Oxbridge personal statements
- If you aren't already on Emma's list, please email her ASAP to put your name down so you get all the important information she sends out, and the extra support you will need with your application