



PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDE

What is the UCAS Personal Statement?

Your personal statement is the most important chance you will have to sell yourself to the universities and explain why they should choose you. Admissions tutors look carefully at each statement and decide who should be offered a place or invited for interview. It must reflect who you are and why you want to study your chosen subject.

Your statement is a maximum of 47 lines or 4000 characters, you will soon realise this is not a lot of space to sell yourself. It is important that you show you have the relevant knowledge and work experience for your course. As places become more competitive this is essential.

Hints and Tips

As with every essay write a plan first of what you want to include. The rest of this booklet will help you decide what should go in each section.

Competition for places can be stiff. Make sure you can demonstrate your enthusiasm for the subject.

Students may only submit one statement; make sure you choose courses that are very similar as this will make your statement easier to write and show that you have a clear idea of your chosen career paths. Some universities may not consider applications from students who have applied for several very different courses e.g. Accountancy, Sport and Animal Care.

Do not mention specific universities by name, you do not want to offend your other four choices. Always refer to 'your university' or 'your institution'.

Expect to write several drafts of your statement.

Do not copy, all statements are run through software to check for plagiarism, if you are found to have copied your statement UCAS will notify the universities.

All statements must be checked by a member of the 6th Form team before being uploaded to UCAS.

Try to make your statement reflect who you are, it should sound like the best version of you.

College deadline for application submission is Friday 1st December. This allows time to check applications and complete references before the final UCAS deadline of 15th January.

Part 1: Why

Talk about the course you have chosen and why you have chosen it. It is the first impression the tutors will have of your personality and interests. Try to explain why you have chosen that particular subject and the path that has led you to this point.

Show that you have researched the course and the subject in a wider context e.g. for Psychology show you understand it is a scientific course.

This is particularly important if it is a subject you have not studied before.

What particular aspects of the course are you interested in and why?

If you can, talk about how your course can be applied to the wider world or any current developments that you have been reading about.

- Why does your chosen subject interest you? e.g. You have an enthusiasm for computing
- What makes it exciting to you?
- Is it a growing field or area?
- Why is it important? e.g. Increased demand for nursing care due to aging population
- Has it been in the news recently? e.g. Playing sport prevents obesity
- Why do you want to part of this subject? e.g. Inquisitive mind suited to scientific study
- What topics are you looking forward to studying and why? The course descriptions will list what topics you will study throughout your degree.

Part 2: Your suitability

In this part you will emphasise your suitability for HE giving examples specific for the subject you are applying for.

Talk about the subjects you have already studied; what specific areas you have enjoyed and how do you see them relating to or supporting your studies at university? If you are applying to study a related subject which areas do you want to develop your knowledge in? Use this section to talk about how you have developed as a student.

How will your additional subjects support you at university?

What skills have you developed and why they would be an important asset at university?

- How will your 6th form subjects support you at university? e.g. An increased knowledge of organic chemistry or a wide variety of skills which can be applied to many situations.
- What topics / theorists have you studied? (be specific to your course if it is relevant)
- What skills have you developed? e.g. Planning workload, collect data, critically evaluate, give presentations, IT knowledge.
- What additional reading or study have you undertaken?

Part 3: Supporting Evidence

Many students across the country were unsuccessful last year as their statements did not strongly support a desire to study their chosen course. It is not enough to say that you find it interesting, you have to demonstrate what activities you have undertaken which have allowed you to explore the skills needed for your future career.

This section is particularly important for students applying for Nursing or Teaching. If you do not have specific experience talk about any books or newspaper articles you have read or places you have visited. Even general work experience can provide good examples of skills needed it is all about how you interpret the tasks you have been doing.

- What work experience do you have?
- What skills has this allowed you to develop? e.g. Communication, teamwork, responsibility
- Why are these desirable for your chosen career?
- If it is specific to your chosen course state what you did or observed e.g. worked with children to help develop their literacy skills

Part 4: Extra Curricular

More and more universities want you to have been involved in extra curricular activities, they are looking for people who will contribute to the wider university life such as sports clubs, music groups and societies. This is your chance to talk about your skills and achievements and those times when you have given something back to your college or community or challenged yourself to achieve a personal goal.

- What activities have you been involved in?
- What skills have you gained? e.g. DofE requires planning and organisation and the ability to take on challenges.
- Have they helped you to develop as a person / student?
- What positions of responsibility have you held?
- Any other experiences? Volunteer work, helping out in school, DofE, Music
- How do they reflect who you are?
- Do they demonstrate your commitment to tasks you undertake?
- Strong candidates need to be able to link their experiences to their application e.g. Volunteering at the youth centre greatly improved my communication skills. I believe this is vital to maintaining excellent relationships in the world of Business.

Part 5: Hobbies

This section is an opportunity for the tutor to get to know you as a person, how you spend your spare time and what are you interested in. As always it is a good idea to relate it back to your chosen subject or a life skills that will be useful but it is always good to show that you can manage your studies with a personal life.

- What are your hobbies and interests?
- What skills have you gained? e.g. Playing sport from a young age has taught be perseverance and commitment
- Do they give you skills that you can use in life?
- Are you interested in particular style of music or film?
- Do you enjoy photography or Dance?
- Do you play a musical instrument?
- Do you go to the gym?

Part 6: Future Plans

Universities like to know that you have clear goals and aspirations, you must explain how studying your chosen course will enable you to achieve your goals. At this point you do not have to know what specific job you want but a general acknowledgement of the field you hope to work in makes it clear to the universities that you have spent time investigating and considering your choices.

- What are plans after finishing university?
- What job / sector would you like to work in?
- How will studying at university help you achieve this?

Part 7: Summary

The final chance you sell yourself to the university. Make sure you have a strong closing which restates your enthusiasm for the subject and leaves a positive impression of the type of student you will be and what you can offer the university as a whole. Acknowledge the challenges that are to come and reassure tutors that you are ready for them.

- Why should the university offer you a place?
- Have you successfully demonstrated your desire to study your chosen subject?
- What can you offer to the university?
- Are you realistic about what you will be undertaking?

Help and Guidance

The 6th form Team have considerable experience in helping students to write personal statements which appeal to admissions tutors and reflect the interests of the students. Use your teachers and tutors for advice if you feel you need it, we are always happy to help.

If you are applying for a subject specific course e.g. Maths, speak to your subject teachers. They will know best where your strengths lie and will help you to identify what topics you have studied while in 6th Form.

It can be hard to write about yourself; ask your friends and family what they think your skills and qualities are.

A copy of this guide along with examples of good personal statements can be found on the common drive at s:/Sixthform/UCAS along with any information you may need to complete your application.

Look at the web sites of the institutions you are applying to; they will have information about what they expect to see in a statement along with the contact details for student recruitment to answer any specific questions you have.

www.ucas.ac.uk contains videos and guides to help you write your statement.

Several web sites contain examples of personal statements.

<http://www.studential.com/personalstatements> has many examples and will show you which universities those students received offers from, however be careful not to plagiarise they are intended as a guide only.

Important Deadlines

24th May 2017 - Registration Opens

3rd May 2018 - You must reply offers by this date

6th September 2017- Applications can be sent

4th July 2018 - Last date for extra choices

15th October 2017 - Deadline for applications to Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science

16th August 2018 - Results day. UCAS open for Clearing and Adjustment

1st December 2017 - College Deadline for applications

15th January 2018 - Final UCAS deadline

25th February 2018 - Extra opens

Most Common Openings

The ten most common opening lines used in personal statements during the 2015-16 UCAS application cycle were:

1. From a young age I have (always) been [interested in/fascinated by]... [1,779]
2. For as long as I can remember I have... [1,451]
3. I am applying for this course because... [1,370]
4. I have always been interested in... [927]
5. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed... [310]
6. Reflecting on my educational experiences... [257]
7. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding [career/profession/course]... [211]
8. Academically, I have always been... [168]
9. I have always wanted to pursue a career in... [160]
10. I have always been passionate about... [160]

Think carefully about how you start your statements!