

How do I write a personal statement?

Make a list of ...

- Your achievements
- Your goals
- Hobbies

Personal statement – practicalities

- 4000 characters (not words, so includes spaces) or 47 lines of text, whichever comes first.
- No formatting such as bold, underline or italics.
- Avoid using any non-standard characters (standard characters in this context . , ; #) £ signs will be replaced by GBP and this can impact the character count.
- No inbuilt spelling and grammar, any issues flagged will have been flagged by, and in line with, the internet browser settings of the computer you are using.
- Character counts could be different on UCAS compared to the software/computer you are using, needs to match UCAS settings.

Before you begin, note down answers to the following:

- Why have you chosen this course?
- What excites you about the subject?
- Is your previous or current study relevant to the course?
- Have you got any work experience that might help you?
- What life experiences have you had that you could talk about?
- What achievements are you proud of?
- What skills do you have that make you perfect for the course?
- What plans and ambitions do you have for your future career?

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Encourage preparation

Encourage note taking on the following categories to get them started:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
| Why that course | Why it's exciting | Study experience | Work experience |
|  |  |  |  |
| Life Experience | Relevant skills | Their achievements | Career ambitions |

What do you think a university admissions tutor is looking for in a prospective student?

- Hardworking
- Committed
- Diligent
- Motivated
- Interested
- Passionate
- Well-rounded

Provide an example of how you demonstrate each attribute.

Opening a Personal Statement:

- 1. Don't overthink the opening.** It's simply about showing enthusiasm for the subject, showcasing knowledge and sharing ambitions.
- 2. Avoid cliches.** Remember, this opening part is just an introduction so the admissions tutor reading the personal statement can get to know the applicant.
- 3. Keep it relevant and simple.** There's a limit on what can be included so no room for long-winded explanations. Why use 20 words when ten can make the same point?

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Tutors said: 'The opening is your chance to introduce yourself, to explain your motivation for studying the course and to demonstrate your understanding of it. The best personal statements get to the point quickly. Go straight in. What excites you about the course and why do you want to learn about it more?'

Opening a Personal Statement:

'Your interest in the course is the biggest thing. Start with a short sentence that captures the reason why you're interested in studying the area you're applying for and that communicates your enthusiasm for it. Don't waffle or say you want to study something just because it's interesting. Explain what you find interesting about it.'

'It's much better to engage us with something interesting, relevant, specific and current in your opening line... Start with what's inspiring you now, not what inspired you when you were six.'
Admissions tutor

Now attempt to write the opening of your personal statement.

Avoid Cliches

Try to avoid cliches and the most obvious opening sentences so you stand out from the very first line. UCAS publishes a list of common opening lines each year. Here are just some overused phrases to avoid using in your personal statement:

- From a young age...
- For as long as I can remember...
- I am applying for this course because...
- I have always been interested in...
- Throughout my life I have always enjoyed...

And try not to use quotes. Quotations are top of the list of admissions tutors' pet hates.

Now get drafting your ideas to the questions below.

Talking About the Course

- 1. Why are you applying for this course?** Your commitment to study and where you want the course to take you. Do you have career aspirations this course will help you achieve?
- 2. Why does the subject interest you?** This is your chance to show your passion and really demonstrate who you are. Your hobbies or volunteering experiences related to the subject and anything relevant.
- 3. Why do you think you'll be great on the course?** Your personal and practical skills combined will create a unique picture of who you are and why you'll be a successful student on the course.
- 4. Do your current or previous studies relate to the course?** Why do you enjoy your current study and how can the skills and knowledge you have now be built on with the course?

Writing About Personal Achievements and

- You should be bold and talk about the achievements you're proud of.
- If you have a position of responsibility either in or out of school, include it.
- What makes you interesting, special, or unique?

Now get drafting your ideas to the questions.

Writing About Work Experience and the Future:

Share details of jobs, placements, work experience, or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your course.

- How can you link any experience to skills or qualities that will make you successful on the course?
- If you know what you'd like to do as a career, explain how you'll use the knowledge and experience you'll gain from the course.

Now get drafting your ideas to the questions.

Closing your Personal Statement:

It's always good to connect the beginning of a statement to the end, as it reinforces what you said at the start. The ending should make an admissions tutor remember the applicant.

This final part of a personal statement should emphasise the great points already made and answer the question of why this applicant should be offered a place on the course.

Concluding your Personal Statement

You don't want a conclusion in the same way as you would for an essay, as that's just taking away from your word count. Don't draw it out.' In other words, keep it to the point and punchy.

There's no set way to end your statement. Instead, think about the following and how it might help you to stand out:

Tie it back to what you've written earlier

Talk about the future

Think about your university experience (Would you like to build your confidence meeting people from a variety of backgrounds? Are you hoping to engage with a local community through a mutual passion or vocation?)

Now get drafting your ideas to the questions.

Final Tip:

Remember, **all of your UCAS choices will see your personal statement**, so it may be best to keep it general, rather than being specific about one university.

Example Personal Statement

What do you think made this a good personal statement?

What would you change about this?