

UCAS Personal Statement 2013 Applications

What do Admissions Tutors think about your personal statement?

“Sound reasons for choosing the subject are normally the most important aspect of the statement.”

(Manchester University)

“How is your interest in the subject expressed outside the classroom?”

(University of Cambridge)

“Your personal statement is primarily an academic statement, and you must target it very directly towards the subject in which you are interested.”

(University of Durham)

“Admissions tutors are always impressed by applicants who have 'breadth'. Try to

show that you have an appreciation of current affairs in your chosen field of study.”

(Queen Mary, University of London)

How long is the Personal Statement?

The UCAS application gives you **4000 characters including spaces**.

If you want to irritate hard-pressed admissions tutors by wasting their time, you will waffle & repeat yourself.

On the other hand, you must not squander this chance to impress them by displaying your enthusiasm and knowledge in as much detail as you can.

How to start composing the Personal Statement

As there is no spell check on the UCAS application, you are strongly advised to write your personal statement in 'Word', save a copy, as you will undoubtedly have to redraft several times and then paste this in to the UCAS application to see how it fits and how much room you have to play around with.

The 'opening section' ideally should be interesting and original (easier said than done!). You should consider the first time you realised that the subject was fascinating or use a relevant quotation.

“It is often recommended that you try to make your opening sentence stand out.

This can be effective - it is certainly better to be original than open with a Cliché - but you need to be careful: you could come across as an oddball.”
(University of Cambridge)

10 Golden Rules:

To stand out from the crowd:

1. Research courses thoroughly - to show your enthusiasm for and understanding of the subject
2. Be specific - and display precise knowledge; don't be vague
3. Be honest - only include what you know about so that you can't be caught out
4. Sound interesting & interested - but don't overdo it & gush!
5. Express your ideas and information clearly
6. Don't be negative - see failures as learning experiences
7. Organise your material
8. Don't state the obvious & don't repeat yourself
9. Consider spelling, punctuation & grammar - it matters!
10. Do not plagiarise - universities use software that can identify material taken from internet sites & admissions tutors do this job full time & recognise statements (believe it or not!)

“Don't lie, embroider or stretch the truth.”
(University of Cambridge)

The Personal Statement Structure

The easiest way is to use the following 5 section structure to put your personal statement together - a blank template is available to download with this guidance booklet.

Section 1: Why

As already highlighted, the opening statement/sentence may well be one of your shortest, but it will certainly be one of the most important on your statement.

You must demonstrate that you have thought thoroughly about the suitability of the course and that you understand what particular courses are offering. Show the admissions tutor that this is the course for you.

Section 2: What

What have you done to demonstrate your passionate interest in the course subject? (You may find it appropriate to refer to specific work experiences, courses etc. you may have done/been on here).

Section 3: Academic

How do your AS and A2 or other academic subjects relate to your chosen course?

What skills have you developed as a result of studying these that will be key skills in your chosen area of study?

Examples: Analysis, evaluating conflicting evidence, distinguishing between the pertinent & the peripheral, quantitative or qualitative skills

Section 4: Work Experience/Interests & Sports

What have you learned from your work experience or activities you have been involved in that are relevant to your chosen course and university life in general?

Section 5: Conclusion/Summation

What statement can you make to sum-up or evaluate all of the information you have presented that gives your personal statement a sense of completion?

Remember that the conclusion is the last impression you make on the admissions tutor and therefore psychologically is very powerful.

What next?

- Use the 5 section template & these notes to start organising your information for your personal statement to complete this over the summer holiday.
- Ideally, you should register on UCAS Apply 13 over the summer holidays (LHS will supply the buzzword needed on the pupil intranet & the VLE by the end of June) and start drafting your personal statement.

- When you return to school in September, you should pass your personal statement to your tutor to go through. You will then need to redraft, taking into account the advice you have been given by your tutor. When your tutor signs your personal statement to say it is complete, you show it to me. It can then when complete, be pasted in to Apply 13 & saved.
- You should ideally have all or as much of your information in your application on 'Apply 12' when you return in September.

Remember:

- Oxbridge, Medics & Dentists/Vets must have their UCAS all complete to send off by October 15th (it needs to be complete by the beginning of October to make sure tutors, HMMs & LHS & DAL have time to check etc.)
- Choral Scholarship Applicants have a September 5th 2013 deadline (that is all your UCAS complete & sent off by that date).
- Please be aware of the deadlines stipulated in the Higher Education Guidance booklet for submission of applications to ensure they are ready to be sent off to UCAS by either half term in October or Christmas 2013.