UCAS Personal Statement

4,000 Characters or 47 lines of text that allows you to tell universities you are applying to why they should offer you a place on the course.

Your personal statement is a key part of your UCAS application.

It is course, not university, focussed – all universities see the same personal statement so don't name a specific university.

It's your chance to sell yourself – to tell the universities you are applying to why they should offer you a place on the course.

Whilst there isn't a 'perfect' order or structure this guide will help you to get all the important information in and help it flow so your personal statement reads well.

It will take a while until you reach your final version and you've checked it through with teachers and family, so it's a good idea to start early.

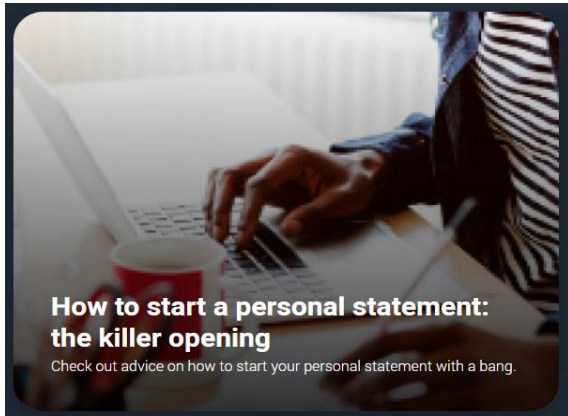Don't forget to look at the dedicated section on the UCAS website: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement

♠ / Undergraduate / Applying to university

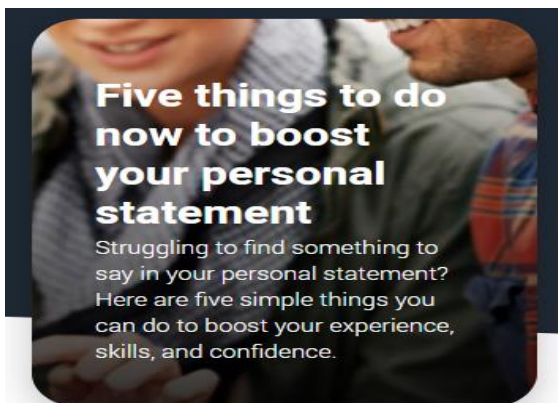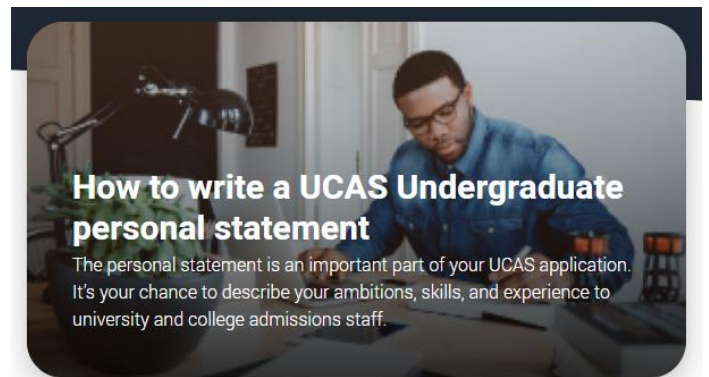# WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Here you'll find everything you need to know about writing your personal statement

Links to useful sections below

How to start a personal statement: the killer opening
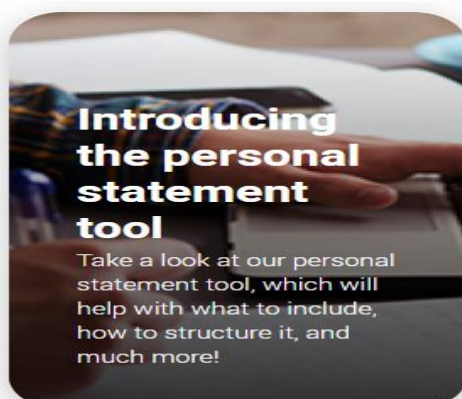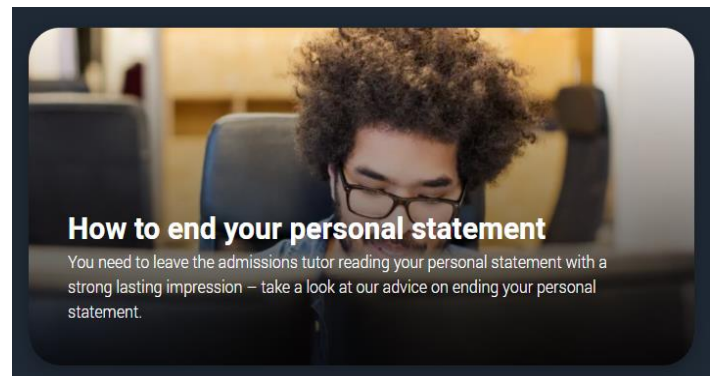Check out advice on how to start your personal statement with a bang.

https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/personal-statement-the-killer-opening

https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement

How to write a UCAS Undergraduate personal statement
The personal statement is an important part of your UCAS application. It's your chance to describe your ambitions, skills, and experience to university and college admissions staff.

Five things to do now to boost your personal statement
Struggling to find something to say in your personal statement? Here are five simple things you can do to boost your experience, skills, and confidence.

https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/5-things-you-can-do-right-now-to-boost-your-personal-statement

https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-to-end-your-personal-statement

How to end your personal statement
You need to leave the admissions tutor reading your personal statement with a strong lasting impression – take a look at our advice on ending your personal statement.

Introducing the personal statement tool
Take a look at our personal statement tool, which will help with what to include, how to structure it, and much more!

https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/introducing-personal-statement-tool

Many universities provide tips on exactly what they're looking for on their website and many have subject-specific personal statement advice, so have a look before you start writing

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

1

Explain your reasons for wanting to study the course

- how your interest developed, what you've done to pursue it or just demonstrate your enthusiasm for it.

2

Explain how you're right for the course

- how you meet the selection criteria and how you've researched the course or profession and understand what's involved

3

Say what you have done outside the clasroom

- if possible outline how you've pursued your interest beyond the syllabus, e.g further reading, lectures, websites etc

4

Why its relevant to your course

-reflect on your experiences, what you've learned from them how your interest has developed - it could be work experience, volunteering, taster sessions, travel or competitions.

5

.....And how its relevant to your career choice

- reflect on experiences, don't just describe it. Mention skills the profession needs, how you have noticed this and how you've developed those skills yourself

6

Demonstrate your transferable skills

-examples are working independently, teamwork, leadership, good time-management, problem-solving, listening or organisational skills

7

Expand on the most relevant ones

- but don't just list your skills, think which relate to the course, how you have developed and improved them. Use specific examples

8

Show you're a critical thinker

- University is about thinking independently & analytically so demonstrate you do already. Explain how one of your subjects has made you think more critically

9

Long term plan?

- mention, in an interesting way, if you have a specific path in mind. If you haven't just say what you are looking forward to at university and what you want to gain from the course / university life

10

Keep it positive

- start with your strengths, focus on your enthusiasm for the course & be positive about YOU!

Do's	Don'ts
Start Strong- First impressions count. Create an engaging & original start. Make it clear why you are applying for the course – say why you want to study your chosen course.	Don't start with: "I always wanted to be a ….." & don't start with a quotation
Be Positive – Sell Yourself Use words such as: Achieved, developed, learned, discovered, enthusiasm, energy commitment.	Don't use overused clichés or rhetorical questions. Don't include negative comments or excuses
Make it easy to read Use well-structured paragraphs with short sentences in plain English. Be clear and concise.	Don't use fancy language or stilted vocabulary. Limit the use of the word 'passion'
Show – Don't Tell Use examples & evidence to support your claims, statements & qualities.	Don't use random lists. Don't name a specific university.
Plan as you would an essay Balance 75% academic & your suitability for the course & 25% extra- circular (some courses will require a different approach)	Don't waffle on irrelevant things. You don't need to include academic details.
Insert a personal touch if possible. Include Value Added skills, hobbies, and work experience.	Don't try and be funny, or exaggerate with sweeping statements or unproven claims.
Be prepared to write several drafts Ask people you trust to proof read and for feedback.	Don't leave it to the last minute – it will seem rushed or you could leave out important information
End positively	Don't be tempted to copy!

Getting Started

Once you have decided where you want to study and where, it can be hard to start writing! Gathering your evidence & using a Personal Statement template/ mind map can help.

It is vital to turn your evidence into specific examples.

Remember ABC:

Activity	Explain what you have done, achieved, read or experienced
Benefit	Reflect on what have you learned or gained from it, or what you think about it
Course Relevance	Make sure it's relevant but you don't necessarily have to spell this out after each point – tutors can read between the lines).

Maybe don't begin at the start - the opening line can be the hardest one to write, so try leaving it until last. Concentrate on the main content of your statement and write the introduction last.

The best statements tend to be genuine and specific from the very start, so explain your enthusiasm for the subject or course, your understanding of it and what you want to achieve from it.

Five Cliché Beginnings to Avoid

Avoid the most obvious opening sentences. Every year UCAS publishes a list of the most common opening lines in personal statements and urges applicants to avoid using these.

1.) "From a young age I have (always) been [interested in/fascinated by

2.) "For as long as I can remember I have……"

3.) " I am applying for this course because….."

4.) " I have always been interested in…"

5.) " Throughout my life, I have always enjoyed…"

6.) " Reflecting on my educational experiences…"

7.) " [Subject] is a very challenging and demanding [career/course]..'

8.) "'Academically, I have always been…"

9.) "I have always wanted to pursue a career in…"

10.) "I have always been passionate about…"

Just outside the top ten is a quote from former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela:

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world",'ı

You could try the **'necklace approach'** – make a link between your opening sentence & closing paragraph, reinforcing and adding an extra dimension at the end to what you said at the start. For example, if you started with an interesting line about what is currently motivating to study your chosen degree course, you could link back to it in your closing paragraph, with something about why you would love to study this further at university.

Don't be tempted to copy a personal statement!

UCAS operates a dedicated Verification Team tasked with the prevention and detection of fraud in applications and similarity in personal statements.

Plagiarism software is very sophisticated and being caught out is virtually a guarantee and you won't get a place!

Personal Statement Template

This template will help you think about the information you could include in your personal statement and how to structure it into paragraphs.

Part 1 – Introduction	Remember your first statement needs to capture the reader's attention and make them want to find out more about you.
Why are you applying for this course? Why does the subject interest you? What specific areas are you looking forward to studying?	

Part 2-Expand on why you want to study this specific course	
Think about what has have sparked your interest: • wider reading • trips • documentaries • talks you have been to	

Part 3 - How have your current studies helped you prepare -	
How do they relate to the course you have chosen	
Think about your transferable skills	
Part 4 -More about you Your skills and achievements	**Remember to link your experience to skills or qualities related to the course**
Part time work	
Work experience	
Volunteering, charity work	
School events	
Positions of responsibility	
Awards	
Hobbies & social activities	

Concluding Statement	Remember to end positively
Why you are a suitable candidate What you hope to gain from the course What you can offer the university Why you are looking forward to starting the course Any career plans?	

Things to remember:

- Subjects should in Upper Case – Art, Biology, Chemistry, Drama etc.

- Write about your most relevant subject first.

- When writing numbers – anything below 10 is written in full, and above 10 written as digits.

- university should be lower case – (you only use upper case when actually naming a university, which you wouldn't do in your personal statement.)

- Year should be in upper case – e.g. in Year 11, when I was a Sport Leader

- If you write about Duke of Edinburgh Award, it needs to be in full first – you can only abbreviate it to DofE after, "……Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)………."

The list below is a starter for you when thinking about your skills. You don't need to mention every example pick your strongest and most relevant examples and use them in your personal statement

Skills	How can you demonstrate you have developed this skill?	Why might this skill be useful to have at university
Commitment		
Communication Skills		
Computer Literacy		
Confidence		
Determination		
Entrepreneurial Skills		
Flexibility		
Interpersonal Skills		
Organisational Skills		
Problem Solving		
Responsibility		
Team Work		
Time Management		

Using Initiative		
Working Independently		
Working to deadlines		