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## A guide to writing your UCAS personal statement

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A personal statement is your chance to convince the admissions tutors that they should give you a place on your preferred course at their university or college.

You have 47 lines (approximately one page of A4 type) in which to **'sell yourself'**. There are no right or wrong answers and personal statements should be individual to your strengths, skills and qualities. UCAS runs all personal statements through software which detects plagiarism, so make sure that what you write is your own work.

Use plain English and be very careful to ensure your spelling and grammar is perfect. Make sure that you haven't repeated yourself and that everything you have written is appropriate and flows together coherently. Write your statement offline on a separate Word document to avoid being 'timed out' and also to enable you to make best use of tools such as spell check, and then paste the text into the online form.

Whilst you might have a number of different academic or extra-curricular achievements, your personal statement should focus on those relevant to the course or courses you are applying for. Do not just write a list of your skills or personal qualities, but link them to what you think universities and colleges look for in their students and for your chosen course.

The following are areas which you may wish to cover in your personal statement:

### Why you have chosen your course

Any relevant work/life experience you have

Your ability to study in Higher Education

What you will bring to university/college life

What your career plans are

A concluding paragraph

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### Why you have chosen your course

- For each reason you give (e.g. you enjoy the subject), give an explanation (e.g. why?) and accompany this with an example if appropriate.
- Include details of any reading or research you have done around the subject.
- If applying for one course at all your university/college choices, include specifics to show enthusiasm in certain areas by picking out particular topics which will be taught on your chosen course. (Note of caution – if applying for various courses at different institutions, it is best to talk more broadly about your academic interests).
- If applying to study for a qualification required by a professional body e.g. nursing, use examples of relevant work experience to confirm your interest.

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### Any relevant work/life experience you have

- This could include experiences from paid employment, arranged work experience, voluntary work or simply be things you've learned from life experience.
- For any examples of experience you use, describe your duties and the skills you gained as a result, e.g. 'working as a receptionist developed my interpersonal skills'. Try to link examples of work experience with your chosen course.
- Out of work experiences, e.g. looking after siblings, are just as important and can be used to demonstrate important skills e.g. time management or communication skills.
- For vocational courses, relevant experience such as paid employment, job shadowing or a work placement is especially important.
- If you don't have any relevant experience at the time of writing, explain that you are in the process of arranging some and then do it – you could be asked about it further down the line.

### Your ability to study in Higher Education

Be enthusiastic about any recent study you have undertaken. Even if there was no formal assessment, make sure you mention the course as this still demonstrates an enjoyment of learning and an ability to commit.

If you are a mature applicant you should emphasise your motivation to learn and commitment to study, and explain why you've decided to apply for a course at this particular time in your life.

### What you will bring to university/college life

Illustrate qualities that will make you a valuable student to the university/college. You can refer to your social, sports or leisure interests and link their relevance to your chosen course or to how you could contribute to university/college life. Your extra-curricular activities say a great deal about you as an individual and they can be used to considerably strengthen your application.

### What your career plans are

- A well researched career path can considerably strengthen your personal statement.
- Describe how any work experience/placements/voluntary work or life experiences have inspired you to pursue a certain career.
- Career plans can enhance an application if relevant, but it is not essential that you talk about them in your personal statement, so don't worry if you are unsure what your plans are.

### A concluding paragraph

Draw together what you've said, emphasising again that you are a suitable candidate with the skills, motivation and enthusiasm to succeed.

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