

UCAS

WRITING PERSONAL STATEMENTS

I've always  
wanted to be a  
geologist because it's so  
much easier than  
being a doctor

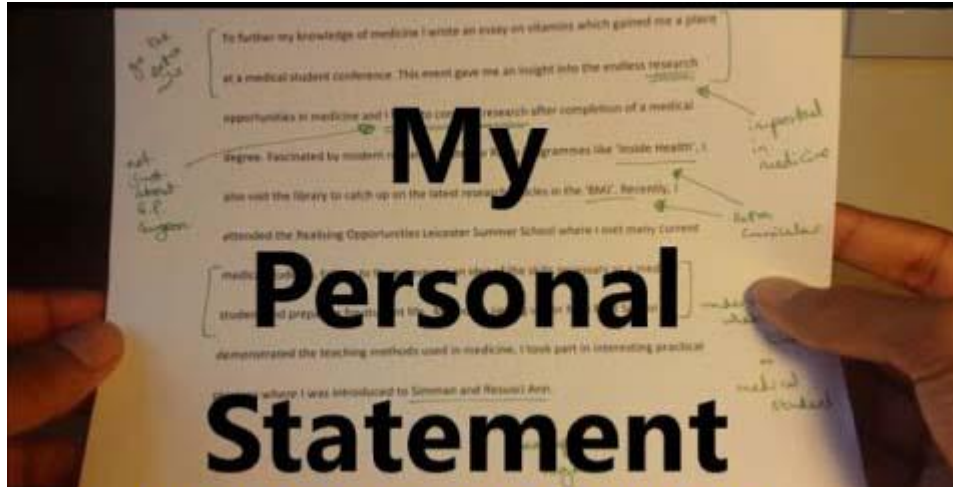
fascinating! Plate tectonics  
things shifting about us  
every few feet!

Be excited



# What is a personal statement?

A personal statement supports your application to study at a university or college. It's a chance for you to articulate why you'd like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field.



# What to write about

You!

You're telling admissions staff why you're suitable to study at their university or college.

It's important to remember you can only write one personal statement – it's the same for each course you apply for. So, avoid mentioning any universities or colleges by name.

If you've chosen similar subjects, talk about the subject in general, and try not to mention courses titles. If you've chosen a variety of subjects, just write about common themes, like problem solving or creativity.

Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Look at course descriptions and identify the qualities, skills, and experience it requires – you can use these to help you decide what to write about.
- Tell the reader why you're applying – include your ambitions, as well as what interests you about the subject, the course provider, and higher education.
- Think about what makes you suitable – this could be relevant experience, skills, or achievements you've gained from education, work, or other activities.
- Include any clubs or societies you belong to – sporting, creative, or musical.
- Mention any relevant employment experience or volunteering you've done, such as [vInspired Awards](#), [Step Together](#), or [Project Trust](#).
- If you've developed skills through [Duke of Edinburgh](#), [ASDAN](#), [National Citizen Service](#), the [Crest Awards scheme](#), or [young enterprise](#), tell them.
- If you took part in a higher education taster course, placement, or summer school, or something similar, include it.

# How to write it

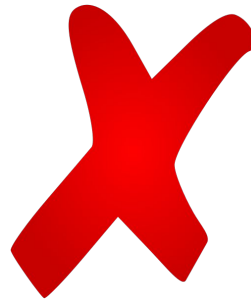
Your personal statement should be unique, so there's no definite format for you to follow here – just take your time. Here are some guidelines for you to follow, but remember your personal statement needs to be 'personal'.

- Write in an enthusiastic, concise, and natural style – nothing too complex.
- Try to stand out, but be careful with humour, quotes, or anything unusual – just in case the admissions tutor doesn't have the same sense of humour as you.
- Structure your info to reflect the skills and qualities the unis and colleges value most – use the course descriptions to help you.
- Check the character and line limit – you have 4,000 characters and 47 lines. Some word processors get different values if they don't count tabs and paragraph spacing as individual characters.
- Proofread aloud, and get your teachers, advisers, and family to check. Then redraft it until you're happy with it, and the spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct.

We recommend you write your personal statement first, then copy and paste it into your online application once you're happy with it. Make sure you save it regularly, as it times out after 35 minutes of inactivity.

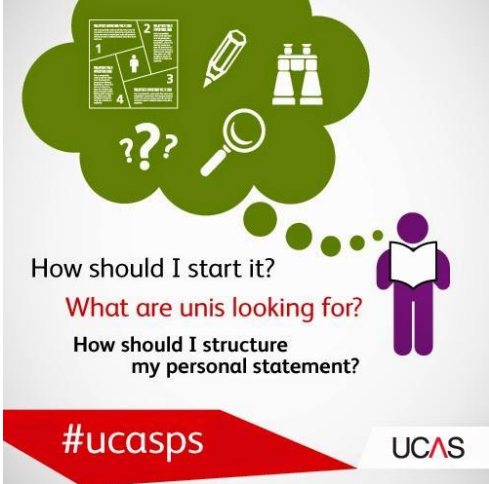
# Personal statement dos and don'ts

- Do show you know your strengths, and outline your ideas clearly.
- Do be enthusiastic – if you show you're interested in the course, it may help you get a place.
- Do expect to produce several drafts of your personal statement before being totally happy with it.
- Do ask people you trust for their feedback
- Don't be tempted to buy or copy a personal statement, or share yours. All personal statements are checked for similarity – if your personal statement is flagged as similar to other applicants, it could affect your chances of being offered a place.
- Don't exaggerate – if you do, you may get caught out in an interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- Don't rely on a spellchecker, as it will not pick up everything – proofread as many times as possible.
- Don't leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed, and important information could be left out.
- Don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.



# Personal statements: quick-fire questions answered!

Got a question about writing your [personal statement](#)? Don't worry, you're not alone. We're often asked about this section of the application, and chances are your question will be one we've heard from other students. Check out the answers to five of the most frequently asked questions below – they're all from admissions staff at universities and colleges (the people who spend their time reading personal statements!)



The infographic features a large green thought bubble containing icons for a document with numbered sections, a pencil, binoculars, and three question marks. A magnifying glass is positioned over the question marks. Below the bubble, a purple stick figure is shown reading a book. The background is light grey with a red banner at the bottom.

How should I start it?  
What are unis looking for?  
How should I structure my personal statement?

#ucasps UCAS

## 1. When should I start?

- *"As soon as you can! Give yourself time to write it properly. Your first draft alone could take you a whole day to write." Amy Smith, Nottingham Trent University.*
- *"Set yourself a schedule. It will take longer than you think to write your personal statement and it is important that you allow time to review your work several times." Louise Carr, the University of Liverpool.*

## 2. What are unis looking for?

- *"Don't forget about the obvious! Why do you want to study your chosen course? Hopefully it's something you know the answer to and have taken a lot of time to think about so make sure you include it." Emma Powell, Edge Hotel School.*
- *"Enthusiasm, motivation and focus about the subject you're applying to. Mention extra-curricular activities, transferable skills and include what your future career plans are after your degree." Maxine Charlton, the University of York.*
- *"Unis aren't looking for a dictionary definition of a subject. They know what their degrees are about; they want to know what you understand and enjoy about the subject." Louise Carr, University of Liverpool.*
- *"The best personal statements effectively link examples of the student's extra-curricular activities with the university's entry requirements." Amy Smith, Nottingham Trent University.*



### 3. How should I structure my personal statement?

- *"Put your notes in order according to what the course you're interested in is looking for. If you have any skills and experience relevant to the entry requirements, make sure you say so at the start of your personal statement."* Amy Smith, Nottingham Trent University.
- *"First impressions aren't everything – yes, a lot of personal statements start in the same way. However, don't put so much prominence on writing a witty first line – having a good overall personal statement will make a much better impression."* Emma Powell, Edge Hotel School.

### 4. What should I do when I've written it?

- *"Check it carefully! Get your teachers, friends, partner, work colleagues or someone else you trust to read it - out loud - to you. It's a great way to spot errors and make sure it makes sense."* Amy Smith, Nottingham Trent University.
- *"Don't forget to save an up-to-date copy somewhere. If you are invited for an interview your personal statement is likely to be read by the person interviewing you and may be used as a starting point for questions. Make sure you can remember what you wrote and back it all up if you are asked."* Emma Powell, Edge Hotel School.

## 5. What other advice do you have?

- *"Do not mention a specific university. Unless you reveal otherwise, we will think that you really only want to come to us!"* Louise Carr, the University of Liverpool.
- *"Remember you have a lot to offer – you just have to write about yourself in a positive way and sell all the skills and experience that you have."* Amy Smith, Nottingham Trent University.



**DMU**  
INSIGHTS

# **PERSONAL STATEMENTS**



**PERSONAL STATEMENT**

**HOW TO GET STARTED**



Thank you  
Rianna Lin

We have enrolled you all onto the Personal Statement Course this is being run by Oxbridge Masterclass. This platform will help you to gather information and start to put together your personal statement. You have been sent your login details from Oxbridge Masterclass directly to your school email account (check your junk folder) so login and get started. Below is a short video explaining the course:

[https://www.oxbridgemasterclass.com/personal-statement-orientation?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=enrolment\\_instructions\\_personal\\_statement\\_course&utm\\_term=2021-04-29](https://www.oxbridgemasterclass.com/personal-statement-orientation?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=enrolment_instructions_personal_statement_course&utm_term=2021-04-29)

# UCAS' personal statement tool

[Hub - Why should you sign-up?](#)

This tool on the UCAS Hub is designed to help you think about what to include in your personal statement, and how to structure it. It also counts how many characters you've used, so it's easy to see when you're close to the 4,000 character limit.

## Personal statement tool features:

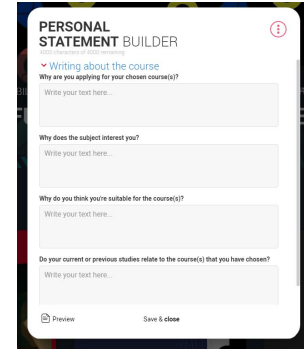
Struggling to get started, or running out of things to say on your personal statement?

As well as having a character counter to keep you on track,

it's got a whole host of questions and prompts to get you writing, including:

- Why do you think you're suitable for the course(s)?
- Do your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) that you have chosen?
- Universities like to know the skills you have that will help you on the course, or generally with life at university. List these skills here and any supporting evidence to back up why you are so excited about the courses you have chosen.
- Include any other achievements you're proud of, positions of responsibility that you hold or have held both in and out of school, and attributes that make you interesting, special, or unique.
- Include details of jobs, placements, work experience, or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). Try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course.

Once you've finished writing for now, remember to click preview to make sure you're happy with how it looks on the page, and then either export it as a PDF, or copy and paste it into a word processor to save it, using our built-in functionality.

A screenshot of the UCAS Personal Statement Builder tool. The interface is titled "PERSONAL STATEMENT BUILDER" and includes a red information icon in the top right corner. Below the title, there is a section titled "Writing about the course" with a red checkmark icon. This section contains four questions, each followed by a text input field: "Why are you applying for your chosen course(s)?", "Why does the subject interest you?", "Why do you think you're suitable for the course(s)?", and "Do your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) that you have chosen?". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Preview" and "Save & close".

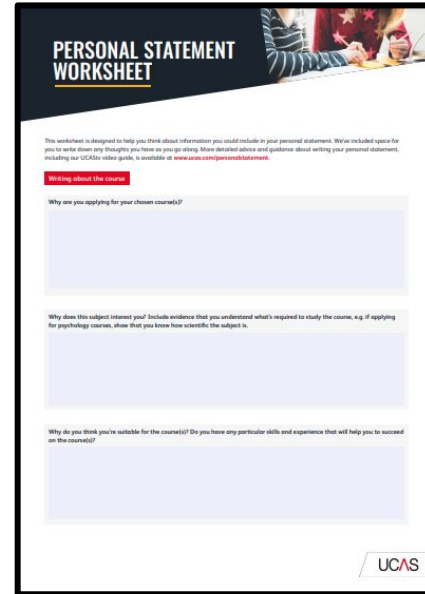
# UCAS - Use some of the great printable resources on offer at [ucas.com](https://ucas.com) to help you get started with your statement

[personal-statement-mind-map 2022.pdf](#)



**PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT** UCAS

- 1. PREPARATION**
  - > You can only write one personal statement, so don't mention a uni or college by name.
  - > Check uni and college websites to see what skills and qualities they'd like you to have.
  - > Make a list of things you want to include.
  - > Start drafting early.
- 2. WHAT TO INCLUDE**
  - > Why you're interested in the subject.
  - > Your enthusiasm for the subject.
  - > How your previous studies relate to the course(s).
  - > Relevant aspects of jobs, placements, work experience or volunteering.
  - > Activities or hobbies that show your interest in the subject.
  - > Any training or achievements that show your skills.
  - > Demonstrate you're a great candidate and you have skills and qualities they're looking for.
- 3. HOW TO WRITE IT**
  - > Introduction – start with an opening sentence that encourages the reader to read on.
  - > Structure what you want to include in an order that's most relevant to what the uni and colleges are looking for.
  - > Conclusion – reinforce your commitment, enthusiasm and skills suited to uni/college life.
  - > Check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.
  - > Leave time to get feedback and redraft.
- 4. TECHNICAL DETAILS**
  - > Length – up to 4,000 characters or A2 lines of text (including spaces and blank lines).
  - > Make sure you don't copy – our software detects any similarities and this could jeopardise your application.



**PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET**

This worksheet is designed to help you think about information you could include in your personal statement. We've included space for you to write down any thoughts you have as you go along. More detailed advice and guidance about writing your personal statement, including our UCAS's video guide, is available at [www.ucas.com/personalstatement](https://www.ucas.com/personalstatement).

**Writing about the course**

Why are you applying for your chosen course(s)?

Why does this subject interest you? Include evidence that you understand what's required to study the course, e.g. if applying for psychology courses, show that you know how scientific the subject is.

Why do you think you're suitable for the course(s)? Do you have any particular skills and experience that will help you to succeed on the course(s)?

UCAS

[ucas-personal-statement-worksheet 2022.pdf](#)



I can imagine that you are getting pretty fed up of the extremely long and boring talks you are getting from your teachers about how to write a good personal statement so I'll summarise some key points for you in a short and snappy blog post.

Firstly I'm going to emphasise the name of this 'personal statement'. Therefore make it completely and utterly personal and when doing so, make a statement - stand out

You've got to show passion. You've got to show charisma. You've got to show love. You're doing a subject that you love and/or find interesting (if you're not then seriously reconsider spending the amount you are paying on something you don't enjoy)

When I started mine, I thought about what led to my interest in the subject which, for me, was a TV program (it can literally be anything). I then opened my personal statement with a sentence along the lines of 'For years now I've been hugely interested in shows such as Law and Order SVU and one character who particularly stood out to me was B.D.Wong'. This instantly sparked interest as the reader would question what the relevance is. Under no circumstances should you begin your personal statement with 'I want to do this course because...' or 'I would be perfect for this course because...'

The key is to stay modest but sell yourself. Big up your talents, your interests, show that you are an achieving and interesting person.

Online there are so many helpful guides on how to write the perfect personal statement. One I found particularly useful was on the UCAS website. However, mix it up a bit, make it your own, make it you. Avoid generic phrases, comments and so on. Be unique!