

Advice on writing a successful personal statement

The personal statement is your opportunity to demonstrate your desire and passion to study the course you are applying to. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Things to consider when writing your personal statement:

- It's one statement for up to five UCAS choices, so make sure you don't mention a specific university or college by name.
- You're limited to 4,000 characters (47 lines) so keep your statement concise and to the point.
- We suggest that 70 to 80 percent of your personal statement is focused on the subject(s) you are applying for.
- Try to use recent examples of achievements and accomplishments and tell us what you gained/learned from doing them.
- Some higher education providers may use your personal statement as the basis for an interview, so be prepared to answer questions on it.

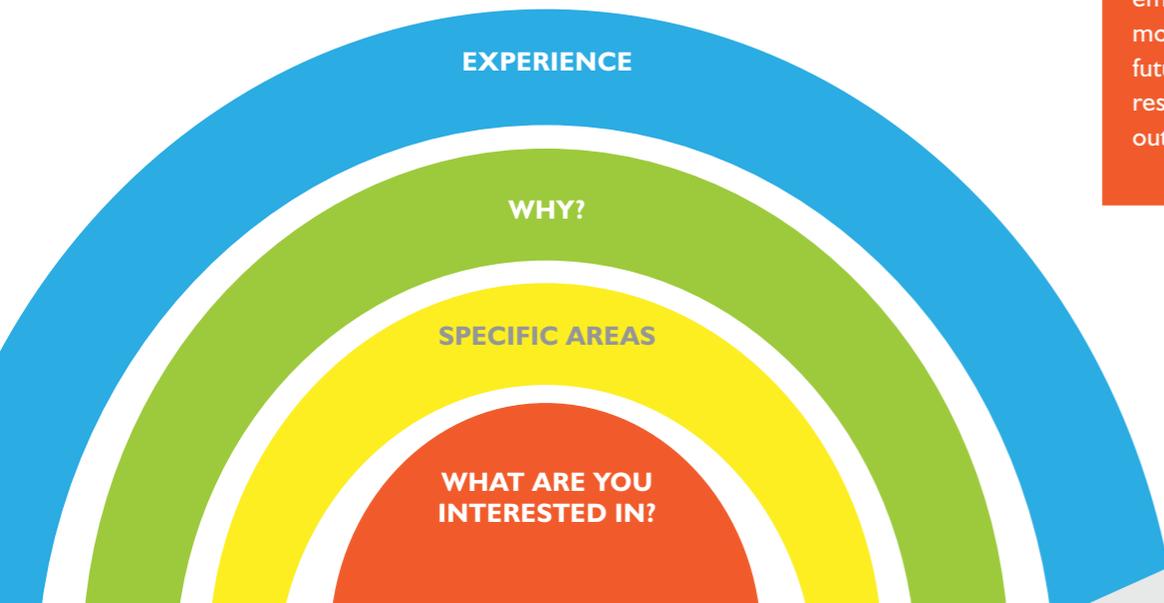
PRO TIP!

Some universities and colleges may accept supporting information as part of the application process, so it's worth doing your research and finding out about the admissions policies for each provider you are considering applying to.

Your motivation

When writing your statement you need to consider your reasons behind applying. Your chosen universities will want to know why you've chosen the particular subject you wish to study with them. Only you will know your motivation, whether it's for future career prospects or your passion for the subject.

A good exercise to get you thinking about your subject choice is to complete the diagram shown below. Think about your chosen subject, the specific areas within it you are interested in, your reasons why you have chosen that subject and finally any experiences you have which relate to it.



PRO TIP!

If you're struggling to think of a subject, or a reason for applying for Higher Education take a reflective step back and ask yourself the question "Is now the right time for me to go?". Don't feel pressured into applying if it doesn't feel right. Why not consider taking a gap year, or go into employment so you have more time to look at your future options, do your research and find out what's out there.

Thinking about your skills

Applicants often find it a challenge identifying the transferable skills they have learned. This is because they often don't recognise the skills they are gaining as they progress. Everything you do, or have done will have taught you a skill and both universities and employers will seek evidence of these skills when applying to them.

The table below is a good tool for making you think about the accomplishments you have achieved and the skills you attained from doing them. We have included an example of how to complete this table.

Accomplishment	Skills attained	Links with you subject
<i>Summer job as a waitress in a café.</i>	<i>Communication, teamwork, time management, confidence, numeracy.</i>	<i>Communication - needed to speak with participants. Numeracy - needed for recording and analysing stats.</i>

Examples of transferable skills include...

Budgeting, verbal/written communication, problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, listening, empathy, organisational, time management, leadership, numeric, teamwork, confidence, independence.

DOs and DON'Ts of writing a personal statement

DO

- Research your subject(s) and chosen providers
- Write what comes naturally
- Ensure it flows and has a good structure
- Check that it's free of grammar and spelling mistakes
- Get it proof read

DON'T

- Include misleading information
- Take risks with what you include
- Plagiarise
- Use bullet points or lists
- Leave it to the last minute
- Submit it without checking it

Powerful verbs

When writing your statement think about what you have actually done. What role did you play and what did you achieve? Use phrases other than “like”, “enjoy”, “took part in”. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Accelerated	Accomplished	Achieved	Acted	Activated	Adapted
Advocated	Appraised	Approved	Captured	Chaired	Clarified
Compiled	Composed	Consolidated	Contributed	Customised	Decided
Delegated	Designated	Emphasised	Encouraged	Enforced	Engineered
Enhanced	Enlisted	Evaluated	Explained	Expressed	Facilitated
Forecasted	Formulated	Fostered	Fulfilled	Hosted	Hypothesised
Identified	Illustrated	Implemented	Improved	Incorporated	Increased
Informed	Initiated	Innovated	Inspired	Interpreted	Launched
Led	Manipulated	Maximised	Mediated	Merged	Mobilised
Motivated	Navigated	Negotiated	Operated	Ordered	Orchestrated
Organised	Overhauled	Participated	Persuaded	Piloted	Pioneered
Predicted	Prepared	Prescribed	Prevented	Projected	Promoted
Proposed	Questioned	Realised	Reconciled	Recruited	Regulated
Resolved	Secured	Specialised	Streamlined	Summarised	Sustained
Tracked	Transformed	Translated	Uncovered	Undertook	Upgraded
Utilised	Validated	Verbalised	Verified	Vitalised	Weighed



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Information is correct at time of going to print.



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This advice is not exhaustive and there is lots more advice and tips on how to write a successful statement on the **UCAS website – www.ucas.com**