

Writing a personal statement for your UCAS application

Before you start

- Know the courses you want to do – if you change your mind you will need to change your personal statement.
- Visit the UCAS website for more information on writing a personal statement - www.ucas.ac.uk.
- Give yourself plenty of time. You should prepare a draft and re-draft until you are happy with it as you are probably competing with many other students who are doing the same thing.

Facts

- You can use up to 4,000 characters, including spaces, or 47 lines of text.
- You cannot use bold, italic, underline or foreign characters.
- UCAS recommend you write your personal statement in a Word document first, then copy and paste it into the 'Apply' system - the system times-out after 35 minutes and work can be lost.

Aims

You will need to show:

- A good image of yourself to the admissions tutors to set yourself apart from other applicants.
- That you are dedicated to the course and have researched it well.
- That you are suited to the university and will adapt well to the new environment.
- That you have the necessary qualifications and qualities.
- That you can cope with the demands of the course.
- That you will work hard and won't drop out.
- That you have a genuine interest in the subject and a desire to learn more about it.

What should you write?

You need to give good reasons to be doing this course as admission tutors will be looking for people who are enthusiastic and passionate about the subject. If they feel you are not committed enough to study in subsequent years they will not offer you a place.

- Include information that tells the college/university why they should take you.
- Be enthusiastic, passionate, truthful and accurate. Provide evidence of your commitment to the subject area and make it relevant.
- Explain why you have chosen the subject area - what interests you about it?
- List any work experience you have, especially if it's relevant to the course.
- Include details of any short courses, masterclasses or non-accredited skills you may have gained.
- List your social, sports or leisure activities, especially if linked to activities on campus.
- Include details of a gap year if you are planning to take one.
- Explain your future career plans, linked to relevant industries.

Plagiarism (passing off other people's work as your own)

- Don't copy from the internet or other people's personal statements – it could affect your chances of getting into university.
- UCAS use plagiarism detection technology to scrutinise each form. If three sentences or more - 10% of the statement - appear to have been copied, the form will be passed to UCAS staff for further scrutiny.
- A personal statement must be your own work - it gives you the chance to distinguish yourself from other students with similar qualifications.

This guide provides a quick overview - for more in depth advice go to the UCAS website - www.ucas.ac.uk.