

Size and Structure

A maximum of 4,000 characters (or 47 lines of text) is to be used in the personal statement so you must ensure that you structure your personal statement sensibly to include all of the key areas. As your word count is limited, everything you write should be relevant and add value to your statement. Remember to include both an introduction and conclusion. Remember also that Admissions Tutors want to see that you can sum up your reasons for application in a clear and succinct way. You cannot use bold, italics, underlined text and you do not need to use all the space available.

What should I include?

A personal statement should be just that- 'personal'. Each one should be different so that we can see your own individual style of writing and evidence of your enthusiasm and commitment to the subject.

A 'personal' statement

There are many guide books and websites that can give guidance on writing a personal statement. However, you must ensure that your personal statement is your own work. UCAS uses a Similarity Detection Service which checks every personal statement submitted against a 'bank' of personal statements gained from websites, printed publications and previous UCAS application forms. UCAS will notify you and your chosen universities if a similarity level of 10% or more is detected.

Although you can apply for up to five courses, you only write one personal statement. Therefore, the Admissions Tutors for all of the courses to which you apply will read the same testimony. Consequently, you need to be sure which degree path you wish to follow before writing your personal statement so that you can show commitment and enthusiasm for the subject(s) in the same personal statement. In the case of Joint Honours programmes, you should try to think about what is common to both courses and demonstrate your interest and relevant skills in both areas.

Remember that for some courses, you may be competing against 6, 8 or even 10 other applicants for a place so take time over your application.

What to include – the guidelines below are suggestions:

- **Your reasons for applying** to study the subject - is this a subject that you enjoy studying at school/college? How can your current studies relate to the course you have chosen? Refer to the content of your chosen course as detailed in the prospectus and note what is specifically of interest to you.
- Show **breadth of knowledge** in the subject, particularly if this is a new subject that you have not studied before. Why are you interested in this area and what relevant background reading have you done in this field/profession? Discuss the work of some key 'thinkers'/academics who have made an impression on you.

- **Work experience/voluntary work** can be useful for most subjects as it helps to develop and demonstrate personal skills that are relevant to the course. However, it is considered essential for most health-related and teaching courses i.e. professions that require interaction with the public. Make sure that you can talk confidently about your work experience placements, what you did and, most importantly, what skills you developed as a result and how they can apply to your chosen studies. For example, if you were applying to study medicine, it would be relevant to undertake work experience in a care home and detail how your experience shows your patient and kind nature, your ability to take responsibility and to work as a member of a team etc.
- If you have any **hobbies or extra-curricular interests/achievements** that would highlight your personal strengths that are relevant to the course, you should also discuss them in your personal statement.
- **Gap year intentions** - it is advisable to include a short paragraph detailing your intentions for your gap year and what you hope to achieve/what skills you hope to develop - whether it is undertaking work experience relevant to your chosen degree course or saving up money to cope with the financial demands of student life.
- **Career aspirations** - you may wish to mention your career ambitions towards the end of your application. However, don't worry if you are undecided on your future plans at this stage!