

# University Application: Personal Statement Guidelines

This is a guide for both students and counsellors.

## *What is a Personal Statement?*

The Personal Statement section of the application is your opportunity to tell universities why you want to study at undergraduate level in the UK and why you are an excellent candidate to do so. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd. As an international applicant, your English language ability will also be assessed.

## Personal Statement Tips:

- ✓ Remember that your personal statement in UCAS will be seen by all of the universities you apply to. It is important that you do not mention any university or specific course by name because this will not impress the other universities that you have applied to. It is acceptable to mention a course area you are applying for if this is applicable to all your applications.
- ✓ Start your personal statement early and think about what you would like to include.
- ✓ Research into the degree area you want to study. What would make you an ideal student? Why should the university offer you a place?
- ✓ Write your personal statement in a Word package on your computer first and then 'copy' and 'paste' it into the space provided. This way you can check your spelling or make changes without risking losing your work.
- ✓ Use paragraphs to structure your statement and make it easier to read
- ✓ Get advice and feedback from your tutor – they are there to help you.
- ✓ Remember to check your finished personal statement carefully for errors, such as typing and spelling mistakes.

## *Things to Include in your Personal Statement:*

Your personal statement needs to be thoughtful, well researched and give a good insight into your academic ability, skills, hobbies and interests and how they fit into your studies plans.

- **Explain why you want to study the course/courses you are applying for.** This is easier if you are applying to the same course at each university. If you have applied for different courses, you will need to write a carefully balanced statement. Try to focus on the themes that the courses share, and write about them in a more general way, without naming any of them.
- **Your academic ability.** What subjects do you enjoy and why? If there are subjects you have found challenging, it is good to talk about it and the steps you took to overcome this.
- **What skills you have, and how you have developed them.** It is beneficial to say how you think your skills will help you studying at university in the UK.
- **Activities you are involved in outside of your studies.** This could be a sports team you are a member of, a club or organisation you belong to or additional activities that you take part in. If you think you have gained skills or experience which has helped you with your studies, you can talk about them in your personal statement.
- **Study or career plans.** Your personal statement can contain information about what you plan to do after you have finished your undergraduate studies. You can outline your career plans which you believe your degree will help prepare you for or plans for postgraduate study.

### *Plagiarism:*

Plagiarism means copying someone else's work and pretending that it is your own. This is not acceptable in your personal statement and can lead to a university rejecting your application. You must not copy other personal statements that your friends have done or examples shown to you by your tutors. You must not copy from text books or other documentation from any source. Your personal statement must be your own work.

UCAS has software which checks every personal statement they receive to ensure they have not been plagiarised.

### *Useful Links:*

<https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/personal-statement-mind-map.pdf> - UCAS guidance on planning and writing the personal statement

<https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-personal-statement-worksheet.pdf> - UCAS Personal Statement Worksheet. This resource may help you consider what you could include in your statement. However, not everything on the worksheet will be relevant to you, and remember that this is **not** how your finished statement should look. The worksheet is just an option to help you think of ideas for your statement.