UCAS

Personal Statement Guide

UCAS

Student Services Information Booklet

Struggling? Speak to Student Services

What is a Personal Statement?

Personal statements provide a way for universities to look at what you have to offer. This is a chance to make yourself stand out.

Writing a personal statement can take you many hours, and several drafts, before you have the finished article and you have just **4,000 characters (including spaces)** to demonstrate you are the right person for the course

Each admissions tutor will only see their own course and university on their application, not your other choices. Therefore, make sure your personal statement does not mention individual course titles or universities but refers to courses using generic terms, i.e. 'My interest in Geology started when'

Important deadlines – **References must be completed before they can be sent off and Student Services MUST have time to check the application before sending**

Closing date for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine Applications:

UCAS deadline: 15 October 2025

All other UCAS applications:
UCAS deadline: 14th January 2026

Universities and colleges **DO NOT** have to consider applications received after the deadline, although they can if they have spaces available once the on-time applications have been considered.

UCAS Conservatoires (music, art, drama, dance, musical theatre, film and production courses): Conservatoires can have different deadlines, please check the conservatoire's website: https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires.

What do University Admissions Tutors use a personal statement for?

- To check that the course is appropriate for you.
- To check that you are appropriate for the course.
- To check that you fully understand the nature of the course – particularly if you have not studied the subject at school or college.
- To get a bigger picture of you as a person.
- To help select a shortlist for interview (for some courses only).
- To develop questions for use at interview.

How do I write my personal statement?

This may differ from person to person, some may start doing a 'Mind Map' whilst others just jot down notes or make bullet points. However, when you initially approach it, remember:

- Complete as a Word document (**save regularly**)– transfer on to your application only when you have completed your personal statement.
- **Write like you**. Don't get caught up in trying to become a human thesaurus. ...
- Break it down. The whole personal statement may look like a mammoth task right now, so start off by **breaking it into more manageable chunks**. ... use the notes sections.
- Take your time – this means planning your time and **starting early.**
- Be prepared to **draft and re-draft.**
- Use examples – back yourself up and **demonstrate your strengths**!
- Make it **your own work**, voice and ideas.
- Be honest.
- Must be written in prose; with full sentences and paragraphs. Use formal, plain English, with no slang or abbreviations.
- **Check, check, and check again and get someone to proofread your statement!**

Top Tip. Always make sure you are asking yourself 'why this is being mentioned – **what does it add**?' What is the relevance to your application? If it is not relevant, remove!

Common Mistakes – Things not to add.

- Put your name on your personal statement.
- Create a heading of personal statement.
- Mention a specific university.
- List the course and place you are studying (they can see this on the form)
- End with - Thank you for reading.

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS?

" Why do you want to study this course or subject? "

" How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject? "

" What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful? "

Q1: WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

You'll want to show **evidence** of passion, curiosity and interest; this might include:

Motivations for studying this course(s):	Knowledge of this subject area and interests:	Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit:
• Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life? • Is it a subject you love and want to pursue further? • What is your drive? • How has your path led you to this course or subject area?	• Is there a particular subject area you've researched? • Something you can't wait to learn more about? • What about a book or subject expert doing great things that's sparked your interest?	• Do you already have a particular profession in mind? • How might you use your studies to launch your career? • What's important to you and your future, and how might the knowledge gained from this course(s) help you achieve this?

Remember these are just some examples, you don't need to include it all.
The key is to research the course(s) to find out what might be most relevant.
Check out the UCAS personal statement guidance.

Q2: HOW HAVE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND STUDIES HELPED YOU TO PREPARE FOR THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

Focus on what's most **recent** and **relevant** to your subject or course(s), examples could include:

How your studies or training relate to chosen course(s) or subject area:

- This could be your current or previous studies.
- This could be from any form of formal education – think school, college, training, or short online courses.

What relevant or transferable skills have you got that make you a great candidate:

- Are there a couple of subjects that helped you develop a core set of relevant skills required for your chosen course(s)?
- Maybe a particular module or project helped you understand where your interests and strengths lie.

Any relevant educational achievements

- Universities and colleges will see your grades on your application - don't waste space talking about these.
- Focus on your other accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing the school/college.

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The key is to research the course(s) to find out what might be most relevant.
Check out the UCAS personal statement guidance.

Q3: WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION, AND WHY ARE THESE EXPERIENCES USEFUL?

Examples should be **reflective** and **demonstrate** further **suitability** for your subject or course(s), this could include:

Work experience, employment, or volunteering	Personal life experiences or responsibilities	Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities:	Achievements outside of school or college
• In-person or virtual work experience. • Paid for work or volunteering. • The key thing is reflection on the experiences and the skills gained relevant to your chosen course(s).	• Is there a situation you've personally overcome that has influenced your decision? • Are there personal experiences that have helped you develop essential qualities for the course?	• Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools. • Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase why you'd make a great student.	• This could be a position of responsibility for local clubs or groups, competitions, or qualifications you've attained outside of the classroom.

Remember these are just some examples, you don't need to include it all.
The key is to research the course(s) to find out what might be most relevant.
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FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

Three sections with question prompts

4,000-total character count split across sections

Minimum character count 350 characters per section

Don't waste characters listing grades and subjects

Don't repeat information across sections

WHAT CAN I USE TO HELP ME?

There are lots of ways you can research the details of the course(s) / subject you're looking to apply to:

- The course description is key as this'll help you with what to include and give you a good idea of what they are looking for.
- Did you attend an open day? What did you learn about the course there?
- What can you find on the university or college website?

Remember requirements may differ for each university or college, as well as depending heavily on the course.

It is important to look in detail at the course, modules, and assessment details as this will give you clues as to what exactly is being looked for in a potential student for that course.

So, this research on your chosen area of study is vital before you start writing your personal statement.

YOUR COMPARISON CHART

UCAS CHOICE (COURSE)	KEY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	SUBJECT SPECIFIC SKILLS (OR KNOWLEDGE)	PERSONAL EVIDENCE OR EXAMPLES

YOUR COMPARISON CHART — EXAMPLE ONLY

UCAS CHOICE (COURSE)	KEY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	SUBJECT SPECIFIC KEY SKILLS (OR KNOWLEDGE)	PERSONAL EVIDENCE OR EXAMPLES
Business XXX University	Research strengths, analytical skills, quantitative skill, communication, leadership.	Corporate governance, marketing, new technologies.	What examples and evidence do you have to demonstrate these skills e.g.
Business management The University of xxx	Leadership, teamwork, communication.	The global environment, new technologies, entrepreneurial innovation, marketing	• Online course: Society & Environment: What Are The Ethical Responsibilities Of A Business?
Business management with marketing XXX College	Presenting, budgeting and evaluation.	Legal, ethical and efficient practices, supporting innovation. Environmental and technological influences.	• Personal project written about What responsibility do businesses have to their consumers?
Business management XXX University	Problem solving, communication with others, project management, analytics.	Agile delivery, digital marketing principles, suitability in business management.	• Budgeting my money from part time job salary.
Business management with marketing XXX University	Group work and problem solving., teamwork. Independence.	Marketing data analysis, digital software usage, and creative content strategies.	• Delivering a presentation in final unit studies.

USING AI IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

AI features can support in researching and reviewing your personal statement document. Make sure you read UCAS guidance on using AI when writing your personal statement.

There are a few ways AI tools can assist you.

- **Brainstorm some ideas** about topics that are relevant to your chosen subject, which you can then relate to your own experiences and opinions. Or you could ask it to list skills that are relevant to the course you're applying for, allowing you to think about your own talents and how to convey them.

- **Help with structure** you may want some suggestions of structuring your personal statement.

- **Checking readability** for example ways to rephrase certain sentences to make them more concise, while maintaining their meaning.

AI DOS AND DON'TS

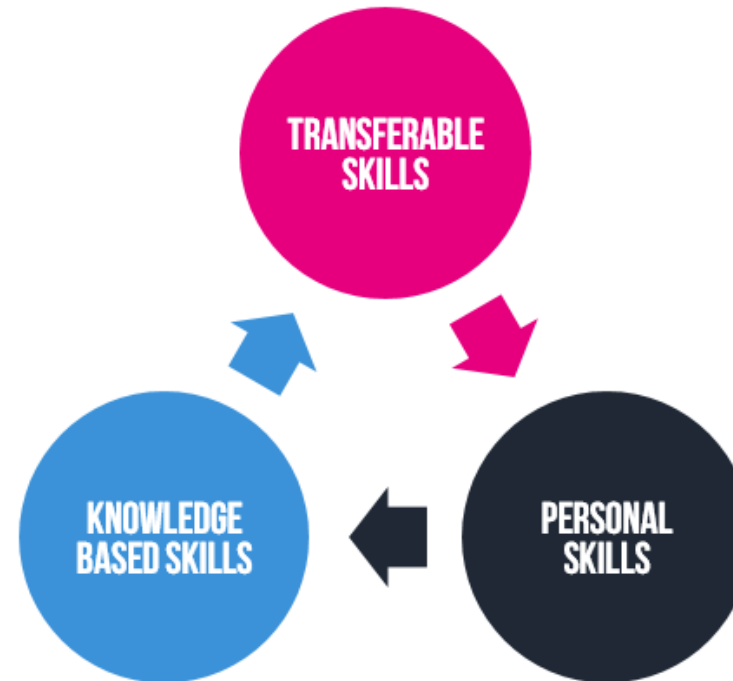| DO	DON'T
Do use AI carefully and make sure you understand how the data you input is being used. Read our [guidance](#).	Don't copy and paste from AI tools and use as your final text.
Do fact check everything that AI tools suggest. They do get things wrong!	Don't forget that AI can only state facts but cannot reflect your own skills, experiences and thoughts in your voice, which is what universities are looking for!
Do double check if the universities or colleges you are applying to have specific guidance around using AI tools.	Don't forget to [check](#) how AI tools might use your data!

Remember UCAS run checks to
[detect similarity](#) in personal statements.

Make sure you consider what skills you have and add these into your Personal statement with examples-

SKILLS EXAMPLES

Personal skills	Transferable skills	Knowledge based
Independence	Communication	Computer programming
Leadership	Teamwork	Playing a musical instrument
Integrity	Organisation	Driving
Patience	Numeracy	Playing a sport
Flexibility	Literacy	Chemical analysis
Compassion	Critical thinking	Speaking a language
Loyalty	Reflection	Graphic design tools
Resilience	Problem solving	First aid
Initiative	Computer literacy	Statistical analysis
Motivation	Attention to detail	Budgeting

Plagiarism

Make sure that your personal statement is your own work: UCAS puts all applications through their **Copycatch similarity detection** system, which identifies statements that have been copied from another source. Don't be tempted to copy another person's application materials or download your personal statement from a website. If any part of your personal statement appears to have been copied, UCAS will inform all the universities and colleges that you have applied to. They will then take the action they consider to be appropriate. UCAS will also contact you by email.

What the Similarity Detention Service does: It checks each personal statement against:

- a library of personal statements previously submitted to UCAS.
- sample statements collected from a variety of websites, and
- other sources including paper publications.

Each personal statement received by UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.

What if there are similarities?

- Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or more are reviewed by members of UCAS similarity Detention Service Team.

- Applicants, universities and colleges are notified at the same time by email when an application has similarities confirmed.

- Admissions tutors at individual universities and colleges decide what action, if any, to take regarding reported cases.

Where can I get further advice and support?

Your Academic Tutor, Learning Mentor or Student Services.

You can book a 1:1 with Student Services by calling 01536 413232 or emailing studentservices@tresham.ac.uk, attach your personal statement and ask for it to be reviewed. However, please don't leave this until the last minute. The earlier you book the more support Student Services can provide.

Note: Whilst Student Services are happy to review personal statements, make comments and suggest amendments the decision as to whether you accept any or all of their comments or suggestions is yours and yours alone.

External Support

How and what to write
Personal statement FAQs
Preparing your Personal Statement
Personal Statement worksheet
Top Universities: How to write a UCAS Personal Statement
How to structure your Personal Statement
2026 personal statement guides | UCAS

READY, SET, DRAFT — YOUR SUPPORT

PERSONAL STATEMENT BUILDER
4000 characters of 4000 remaining

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CONTINUE WRITING

What to include in your achitecture, planning or building personal statement

What to include in your animal science personal statement

What to include in your art and design personal statement

What to include in your biology personal statement

What to include in your business management personal statement

What to include in your chemistry personal statement

What to include in your computer science personal statement

What to include in your dance personal statement

www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/writing-your-personal-statement/2026-personal-statement-guides

Need Help- Email: Studentservices@tresham.ac.uk Phone: 01536 413232