

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

The personal statement is your opportunity to show universities you would be a great student. This is their first impression of you. Universities will take a positive approach and look at what you have done, not what you haven't – so make sure you put your best foot forward!

The structure

- Three sections
 - 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?
- 4000 characters of text overall, with a minimum of 350 characters per section (this includes punctuation and spaces!)
- This is a hard limit – any characters after this will be cut-off

Things to think about

What are your skills? Look at:

- academic activities – formal qualifications
- super-curricular activities – directly related to your course, completed outside of school
- extra-curricular activities – showing transferable skills and character, indirectly linked to your course
- lived experiences – personal experiences that influenced you or provided essential skills.

We advise students to follow the PEEL method

- Point – introduce what you have done
- Evidence – your experience/qualification/research
- Explain – what skills or knowledge you gained
- Link – back to your course

To do or not to do

- Do NOT name a specific university
- Do back up points with relevant-real life examples – and remember your transferable skills
- Do NOT lie, plagiarise or exaggerate – you're not expected to be an expert already, so why pretend?
- Do be confident in your tone
- Do NOT be negative or down on yourself
- Do check grammar, spelling and punctuation, this is still a formal piece of writing
- Do NOT use cliches, quotes, lists or try to be funny – do not waste your character count
- Do be specific and structured

Remember

- Research your choices and their courses before writing your statement – the same course will vary between universities
- Examples may fit in multiple sections; the important part is to explain why you have included it and what you learned from it
- Don't overthink the opening, keep it simple
- That said, you probably won't be able to fit everything in
- There is still time – sign up for some volunteering, listen to a podcast, give yourself the advantage

What skills do I have that my course needs?

What skills does my course need that I do not have yet – what can I do to develop them?



Notes

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?

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