

Structure Of Your Personal Statement

TIP: Refer to the UCAS website for guidance and the Careers Moodle page for further advice

No formatting of any type is allowed in your personal statement, except using capital letters – so any bold, italic or underlined words will disappear in the preview. 4000 characters including spaces, or 47 lines.

A starting guideline is to spend half the statement talking about the course and why you want to take it, and spend the other half writing about yourself and your own abilities. A good opening will grab the reader's attention, and cause them to read the statement properly.

Focus on your strengths and enthusiasm for the course, and talk about yourself using positive language.

Personal Statement Guide/Check-List:

Paragraph 1: Introduction to the subject, the aspects you're interested in and why.

You MUST explain why YOU are interested and suitable for the degree course.

How did your interest in the subject develop?

Very Important: Discuss the subjects you are studying at the moment (your interest in them) and how they will be relevant for the degree you will be studying.

Paragraph 2: A Levels/Btecs

What courses are you studying now?

How will these subjects help you with your degree?

Paragraph 3 and 4 (Guide): Work experience/voluntary placements and relevant activities at school.

What are you doing now to pursue your interest in the degree subject?

Describe what your role/job entailed.

Explain how the work experience has influenced you.

What have you done that shows initiative?

What did you learn from doing it?

Paragraph 5: Your interests outside of school, particularly those that show you are a responsible and reliable person.

(((LOOK AT THE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS SHEET – EXPLAIN WHERE THESE HAVE BEEN MET)))

What did you learn from doing it?

What have you done that shows you are a well-rounded person?

Have you travelled? What did you learn from this?

Link your personal interests to the skills and experience required for the course.

Are you reading around the degree subject/undertaking research?

Paragraph 6: Your goal of attending university, and a memorable closing comment.

What are you planning on doing after university?

Explain your short and long term plans.

Paragraphs 1 and 2: What You Want To Study At University And Why?

Try and answer some of these questions:

What motivates me to study this course further at university level?

Why does the subject appeal to you? What are the key reasons?

What are the specific aspects of the course that interest you?

"I am particularly interested in..." "I am fascinated about..."

Are there any personal experiences that have led to your decision to take this subject?

"I first developed an interest in the subject through..."

Have you done any work experience, voluntary work, or any other practical work that has led you to want to study in this area?

How did your interest in the subject develop?

What are you doing to pursue this interest?

Have you read any books/articles, seen TV programmes etc that have inspired you, or caused you to think more deeply about the subject, and want to find out more?

"I want to develop my understanding of..." "I want to find out more about..."

How have you drawn inspiration from your current studies? For example, any coursework completed.

Paragraphs 3 and 4: Personal Statement

Your experiences outside the course and your personal skills.

Reflect on your experiences, explaining what you've learned from them, and how they have helped you develop skills relevant to the course and your chosen career.

Describe the skills that you have gained, and provide evidence by referring to actual events in real life.

Activity:

Look at the list of 'soft' skills.

Tick which ones of these might be important in your course/career goals.

Now think of a specific example where you have demonstrated this skill.

Remember, this could be work or voluntary experience, projects and assignments, positions of responsibility, what you like to do in your spare time- sport/music/drama etc, membership of clubs/societies, practical work you have enjoyed memorable personal experiences, and so on.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Paragraph 5: LIST OF SOFT/TRANSFERABLE SKILLS: CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU...

Using initiative	Relied on your own judgement
Creativity	Had a truly original idea
Problem solving	Assessed a challenging situation or event and found an effective answer
Team oriented	Worked with others to achieve a common goal
Flexibility	Were able to demonstrate competence in a variety of situations
Adaptability	Successfully tackled an unexpected change in your life
Resilience	Experienced disappointment but worked to bounce back
Ability to work under pressure	Met a deadline to complete a difficult task
Communication skills	Used verbal/written skills to convey ideas clearly and effectively
Negotiation	Were able to turn a disagreement into a successful compromise
Empathy	Made a genuine effort to see and appreciate another person's viewpoint
Active listening	Found time to try and understand another person's feelings and motivations
Leadership	Inspired others to make the best of themselves
Confidence	Were afraid but did it anyway
Composure	Were able to keep calm & manage impulses in an emotionally charged situation
Assertive	Argued your corner and stood up for your rights
Ability to work independently	Showed commitment and needed little supervision to get the job done
Decision making	Trusted your own judgement and acted upon it
Self-motivation	Believed in yourself and your abilities to achieve your aims
Emotional intelligence	Were able to understand the reasons for a person's actions
Research skills	Looked at all the available evidence in order to come to a conclusion. Selected facts and ideas and organised them to support your opinion
Dealing with disputes and conflict	Intervened to help other people resolve their differences
Positive work ethic	Consistently showed commitment to doing your best
Accept feedback/constructive criticism	Were able to admit where something had gone wrong, and take steps to improve the situation
Time management	Finished all jobs efficiently
Accepting responsibility	Took action and were prepared to answer for the consequences
Desire to learn and be trained	Showed an enthusiasm and keenness to do more than the minimum
Dedication/'Stickability'	Followed a difficult task to its completion
Coaching/Mentoring	Helped another person understand themselves better
Supervising/Managing	Were responsible for a group of people under your care
Prioritising	Made a decision on which approach would yield the best results in a specific time
Entrepreneurial thinking	Had an interesting business idea
Diversity/Disability awareness	Demonstrated sensitivity to another person's difference
Ability to relate to peers/clients	Communicated to another person on their own level
Proactive	Saw an opportunity and took it
Strategic planning	Organised something in advance
Patience	Were able to deal with a provocative situation without showing annoyance or anxiety
Perseverance	Had to work hard at something that didn't come easy
Enthusiasm	Demonstrated a willingness to accept new challenges
Energy	Were able to maintain your enthusiasm in the face of difficulties
Determination	Had to overcome obstacles to achieve an aim
Co-operation/Collaboration	Worked together with others as equal partners, contributing to a group effort and including everybody in the process
Critical/Analytical thinking skills	Constructed a coherent and convincing argument. Evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of a theory. Demonstrated an ability to interpret information. Were able to identify patterns and explain why they occur. Set up a hypothesis and objectively test it. Showed an ability to compare and contrast information. Were able to identify cause and effect relationships. Analysed a complex set of information down to its key points.
Reliable/Dependable	Were there for somebody when they needed you
Managing workload	Were able to multitask to keep everyone happy
Keeping effective records	Wrote things down in a way that others could understand them
Methodical/Logical	Employed a structured approach to solve a problem
Persuasiveness	Influenced others in a positive way
Ability to reflect and self-evaluate	Identified what is done well and learned from mistakes
Caring	Showed sympathy to a person in a vulnerable situation

Paragraph 6: Conclusion

A good conclusion will mean the reader remembers what you wrote, and hopefully recommend you.

Just as you have begun your Personal Statement with why you want to take the subject, a good place to finish would be why you want to go to university or what you want to do afterwards.

Where do you hope a Degree in this subject will take you in the future?

What are your long term plans and do you have a specific path in mind?

How will a university education benefit your personal development?