

Dos and don'ts when writing your personal statement:

- Do** create a list of your ideas before attempting to write the real thing.
- Do** expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy.
- Do** ask people you trust to read it and provide feedback.
- Do** check university and college prospectuses and websites as they usually tell you the criteria and qualities that they want their students to demonstrate.
- Do** use your best English and don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.
- Do** show enthusiasm for the course - if you show your interest, it may help you get a place.
- Don't** feel that you need to use elaborate language. If you try too hard to impress with long words that you are not confident using, the focus of your writing may be lost.
- Don't** say too much about things that are not relevant - if you think that you are starting to, take a break and come back to your statement when you feel more focused.
- Don't** lie - if you exaggerate you may get caught out at interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- Don't** rely on a spellchecker as it will not pick up everything - proof read as many times as possible.
- Don't** leave it to the last minute - your statement will seem rushed and important information could be left out.
- Don't** expect to be able to write your personal statement whilst watching TV - this is your future, so make the most of the opportunity to succeed.

Writing about the course

Two of the most important things to include are:

Why you're applying for the course you've chosen: this is particularly important when you're applying for a subject that you have not studied before. Explain why the subject interests you and include evidence that you understand what is required to study the course. For example, if you are applying for medical biology, show that you have an interest in biology.

Why you're suitable for the course: Explain why your skills and experience will help you to succeed on the course.

Also think about:

How your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) that you have chosen

Any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s)

Why you want to go to university or college.

Skills and achievements

Universities like to know the types of skills you have that will help you on the course, or generally at university. They also like to see if you've been involved in any accredited or non-accredited achievements. Including: Duke of Edinburgh Award, Progression Module, charity work and any attributes that make you interesting.

Think about how your hobbies, interests and social activities demonstrate your skills and abilities. If there's anything that relates to your course or to the skills needed to complete a higher education course, include it – the more evidence the better.

Your statement will be more convincing and personal if you write about why an experience, activity or interest makes you a good candidate for the course. Include enough additional information to make it interesting and to demonstrate your own interest.

Work experience

Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). If you are not in full-time education, you should give details of any relevant work experience, paid or unpaid, and information about your current or previous employment.

Mature students

If you are applying as a mature student, use the personal statement to explain what you have been doing since leaving education, and provide additional evidence to support your application.

International students

If you're an international student, use the personal statement to tell universities the answer to these questions: Why do you want to study in the UK? How can you show that you can successfully complete a higher education course that is taught in English? Please say if some of your studies have been taught or

examined in English. Have you taken part in any activities where you have used English outside of your studies?

Similarity detection

All personal statements sent to UCAS are tested for similarity. This system finds statements that show similarity, works out how much of the statement may have been copied, and reports the findings.

Research has shown that the majority of UCAS applicants do write their own personal statements.

However, the number making use of other people's material was high enough to justify the introduction of the Similarity Detection Service.

Your reference

References are usually written by someone who knows you academically. Most references will talk about how you work and interact with other students and teachers from a tutor's perspective.

Your reference does not have to be academic, but if you're studying or have recently left school or college, a reference from your school or college will be expected.

Further advice can be found at:

<https://www.ucas.com/>