



UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER



TOP TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This worksheet is to help you think about the sort of things you should include in your personal statement.

Try to include as much of the information we mention, this will give you the best chance of writing an **interesting and hopefully successful** personal statement.

The most important thing about a personal statement is that you convey your **enthusiasm and excitement** for your chosen course.

It is your opportunity to tell us about you and to help you **stand out from the crowd**.

For the vast majority of courses, universities do not interview. With many students applying with similar grades the personal statement, in conjunction with an academic reference, is one of the main tools universities use to make offers for their courses. There is no such thing as a perfect personal statement, just show lots of interest in the subject, prove your existing knowledge and give us some personal insight.

THE BASICS

You only have a maximum of 4,000 characters or 47 lines (whichever comes first).

Leave some white space by skipping a line between paragraphs to make it easier for Admissions Tutors to read.

This may be the only evidence of written work a university sees from you so use it as an example of what you're capable of doing at university.

Remember to make sure that this is all your own work. UCAS uses a similarity detection software to scan through your personal statement to spot anything which has been potentially copied.

Make sure that you ask other people to proofread it for you, they may spot problems or opportunities you have missed.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

(60-70% of your personal statement for most universities. For Oxbridge applications you should be aiming for 90%).

It is generally recommended that 60-70% of your personal statement should be about your academic interests; which degree you've chosen and why, and how your current subjects have encouraged you to continue on to university learning.

Suggested structure

Paragraph 1 – Opening statement to grab their attention

Sum up why you are excited to be studying this course and a sentence or two to prove your understanding.

Paragraph 2 – Evidence to prove your interest

This is likely to be the biggest paragraph. Prove to us what you know about your course or the career you're going into. Evidence what you know about it and how you know it. One or two clear and detailed examples are better than multiple comments with limited detail.

Paragraph 3 – Reflect on any relevant work experience

This could be within your subject/career area or general work experience which gives you very relevant transferrable skills.

Paragraph 4 – Other activities that show your relevant, or unique, qualities and skills

Use hobbies, volunteering, groups, or work to evidence your transferrable skills which will be relevant to your course or career or those which will make you stand out to admissions tutors.

Final paragraph – Closing statement

Reaffirm your desire to study this course or enter this career. Perhaps think about what you will gain from your study or where you hope it will lead you.

The first and last paragraphs are usually the hardest to write so start with what you find easiest and come back to the others later. Evidencing your interest can often help you summarise your interest.

NON-ACADEMIC INFORMATION

(30-40% of your personal statement or 10% for Oxbridge applications).

Think about your non-study involvements and activities or for applicants not in school or college, life experiences and previous employment. This could include sport or music activities; Duke of Edinburgh; Young Enterprise; work experience; working on a school or community magazine; school mentor or prefect; course placements; volunteering or paid work. Think about what skills you have gained from these and how the experience or your skills might link with your chosen course. You should ideally only refer to current or recent activities (during the last 2 years).

List your activity and reflect on what skills you have gained from them. Think about why they're important and tell us that in your statement. Some examples of skills are shown here but you may have others you feel are relevant to your subject. Activity or experience	Communication	Team work	Time management	Independent working	Problem solving	Commitment	Leadership	Determination	Responsibility	Other

If you are reflecting on your work experience this could be academic or personal depending on how your chosen degree links with the placement you undertook. Don't describe what you did, reflect on what it taught you – skills or career/environment understanding. How have you developed as a result of this experience?

It is important that you write your personal statement including the skills and knowledge that universities are looking for. This table may help you summarise what you need to include. List the skills and knowledge required for each university and highlight the common themes. Include these in your statement to appeal equally to every university you are applying to.

University	Knowledge required	Skills required

REMEMBER

In everything you write don't just describe but **reflect** on your experiences and skills and **relate** them to your chosen course or career.

To help you think about your skills you may want to use **ABC** –

A - ACTION

What you did whilst being part of an activity – could be sports team, voluntary work, paid work, school prefect etc.

B – BENEFITS

What skills these roles give you – teamwork, responsibility, time management etc.

C – COURSE OR CAREER

Relate these skills and experiences to the course you want to study or the career it will lead to. We only want to see limited information about your ACTION but reflect on the BENEFITS you gain and how it links to your COURSE or CAREER.

Finally, keep a copy of your statement for future reference so if you are called to interview you can refresh your mind on what you talked about as they are likely to ask you about it or want you to expand on your reflections.

This mindmap may be a good way of working for you. If it is, try to write about lots of the points highlighted and try to write about Your Chosen Course first followed by Your Experiences.

