
THE UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT



WHAT IS EXPECTED?

- Reasons for choosing course
 - Background of your interest in the course
 - Employment, work experience, work shadowing
 - Key skills
 - Achievements
 - Career aspirations if known
 - Hobbies and interests
 - Non-examined subjects, or courses you may be studying
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KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- **At least** half should be about the reasons for choosing the HE course/subject
 - Try to show how your interests and extra curricular activities relate to the course
 - Try to allow your personality to come through
 - Avoid a formulaic approach
 - Sell yourself without boasting and persuade the reader that you are a strong applicant
 - Most HE institutions do not interview so the paper application is crucial
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WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT THE HE COURSE ITSELF?

- Give at least four reasons for choosing your subject. Look at common elements in course syllabuses carefully
 - How have your current academic courses led you to this choice?
 - Try to show ways in which your interests or experiences have helped you to come to this decision
 - Mention any relevant work experience, voluntary work or travel
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COMMON MISTAKES

- ❑ Poor structure without clear paragraphs for each sub-topic
 - ❑ Not enough written on reasons for studying course
 - ❑ Poor grammar and spelling
 - ❑ Too much written about hobbies and outside interests which have no bearing on course being studied
 - ❑ Waffling
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ADMISSIONS TUTORS' ADVICE

- Use the Personal statement as a selling opportunity
 - Do not forget to make a convincing case for your reasons for choosing the course
 - Make it professional – no mistakes, slang terms
 - Any areas commented on should relate to relevant skills and/or academic issues not trivia
 - Make sure you have done the things you claim. You may be questioned on them
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**PERSONAL STATEMENT:
FIRST DRAFT
*CHOICE OF COURSE SECTION***

I enjoy History lessons so I have decided to pursue the subject at degree level. At university I look forward to examining a range of historical sources. I am particularly interested in French history, and trips to France have broadened my historical awareness.

Comments

This paragraph alone is not enough about choice of course.

Choice of course ought to take up at least half the statement

Try the following slide as a better example of the section dealing with choice of course

IMPROVING A PERSONAL STATEMENT: SECOND DRAFT *CHOICE OF COURSE SECTION*

Having studied the Tudors and Stuarts at A level, I have discovered that my real interest lies in European History. I look forward to broadening my knowledge beyond the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. I enjoy the challenge of evaluating different interpretations of History and the original sources on which they are based. The school exchange to France last year gave me the opportunity to develop an interest in Eighteenth Century French history. A subsequent visit to France to study the First World War battlefields during the summer holiday confirmed my enthusiasm for History and my decision to pursue the subject at degree level.

I enjoy reading and have an appetite for new ideas. I gained a great deal from reading Richard Evans' book, 'In Defence of History', which gave me a sharp insight into contrasting historical perspectives and developed my interest in historical theory. Added to this, my A Level German course has given me the opportunity to study the literature of a European society and encouraged me to develop an enthusiasm for the plays of Bertolt Brecht. I particularly enjoy their acerbic wit and political commitment and the insight which they give into contemporary European history.

PERSONAL STATEMENT:
FIRST DRAFT
ABOUT THE APPLICANT SECTION

I hold many responsibilities: organising and attending school functions, delivering speeches to the school body, being an active member of the school council, working effectively with other students. Having played in school concerts with the keyboard orchestra when I was in Year 9, I have recently taken up piano lessons. I am a keen sports player and I am a member of the school hockey team, netball team, the athletics squad and the volleyball team, earning me the ‘Sports Personality of the Year award.

Comments on previous slide

- ❑ Lots of sentences beginning with 'I'
 - ❑ Reads like a list, instead of a persuasive argument that sells the applicant
 - ❑ Does not make the experiences relevant to the skills useful on the degree programme
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IMPROVING A PERSONAL STATEMENT: SECOND DRAFT ABOUT THE APPLICANT SECTION

I have tried to use work experience as a way of deepening my understanding of history. I spent a week at the local museum finding out about the processing of artefacts. I have also arranged to work shadow a history student at Bristol University for two days.

As a member of the Sixth Form Committee, I have a number of responsibilities including the organisation of school events, delivering speeches and participating actively on the School Council. This has taught me the value of teamwork, to use my initiative and enabled me to develop public speaking and negotiation skills.

Playing in school sports teams has earned me a number of awards including Sports Personality of the Year and taught me the importance of effective communication, leadership and self reliance. The organisation of a series of plays and other events at a local residential home for the elderly was an extremely fulfilling challenge.

Make sure the statement is your own work!

- UCAS operate a 'Similarity Detection Service'
- Personal statements are checked against a library of those already in the system, and from a variety of websites and paper publications
- You are required to tick a box to state your statement is your own work

Make sure that your personal statement is your own work

We will carry out checks to verify that your personal statement is your own work. If your personal statement appears to have been copied from another source we will inform the universities and colleges to which you have applied. They will then take the action they consider appropriate. We will also contact you by email.

UCAS - Similarity Detection Service

- Universities are notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are a significant level of similarity with other personal statements and even sections of statements
 - The decision about what action to take regarding notified cases rests with the admissions tutors at individual universities
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In brief

- ❑ Write as much as you can about your choice of course
- ❑ Write about you – hobbies, achievements, interests
- ❑ Don't copy! Be unique!

