

# UCAS Personal Statement

Kathleen Moran

Schools Recruitment Officer



# The role of the UCAS personal statement

---

- Sets you apart from other applicants
- Gives you the opportunity to show how interested you are in the course
- Shows your range of skills and abilities
- Enables you to detail relevant work experience – very important for vocational degrees.
- Helps admission tutors thin down the number of applicants for high demand courses, for example:
  - Oral Health Science - 75+ applications for 14 places
  - Marine Science - 70+ applications for 25-30 places
  - Primary Education (PGDE) - 350+ applications for 60 places



# UCAS personal statement

UCAS Contact us | [Help](#) | Print page

[<Log out](#)

## Personal statement

---

Welcome > [Personal statement](#) > preview

---

**To make changes to this section click on 'edit' below. Before leaving this section please click 'save' to avoid losing any information. When you have finished, please tick the 'section completed' box and click on 'save'.**

**You have used 8 of 47 lines based on the preview and 583 of 4000 characters.**

**Last saved date: 09 September 2008 12:58:20**

1 I have always been fascinated by the past, beginning with childhood interests in time-travel  
2 and mythology. This interest continued with student exchanges to France and Germany which gave  
3 me the opportunity to study 18th century French history and dictatorship and to widen my  
4 historical scope. A trip to France, where I studied issues relating to the World Wars,  
5 confirmed my interest in History and my decision to pursue the subject at degree level.  
6  
7 At university I look forward to analysing varied interpretations of history and the original  
8 sources upon which they are based.

[> edit](#)

Welcome	
Personal details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additional information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Statement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay/Send	<input type="checkbox"/>
View all details	
Help	
Options/Opsiynau	

Max. 47 lines of text  
Max. 4000 characters  
(approx. 600 words)



# What are universities looking for?

---

- **MACK acronym**
  - **Maturity**
    - Personal readiness for university life and study
  - **Ability**
    - Academic attainments and examples of transferrable skills relevant to the course
  - **Commitment**
    - History of sticking to the task
  - **Knowledge**
    - Evidence that you have researched the subject area
    - Your understanding of what lies ahead
    - Your career aspirations



# What should your personal statement include?

---

- **Reasons for choosing the course**
  - Why are you applying for the course?
  - How has your interest developed?
  - Do your current studies relate to the course chosen?
  - What has motivated you to consider taking the course at university level?
- **Rationale behind any differing course choices**
  - Writing a personal statement for unrelated subjects can be difficult.
  - If you do consider applying for unrelated courses, try to pick out common themes and skills, such as writing ability or problem solving skills.
- **Why you are right for the course**
  - How do you meet the selection criteria?
  - Show how you are prepared for studying the subject at university level.
  - Also show that you're a critical thinker.
    - University is about being able to think independently and analytically so being able to demonstrate that you're working like this already is a big plus point. Briefly explaining how one of your higher subjects has made you think more critically could be a way of doing this.



# What should your personal statement include?

---

- **Achievements**
  - Universities like to know the skills you have that will help you on the course, or generally with life at university, such as accredited or non-accredited achievements.
    - Are you proud of passing, for example, grade A in piano or have you been selected for a sports team?
    - Include any awards you have done, such as Duke of Edinburgh.
- **Any employment, work experience or voluntary work**
  - Admission tutors want to hear about your ability for working independently, teamwork, good time management, problem-solving, leadership, listening or organisational skills.
    - Show how this experience has developed any transferrable skills.
- **Positions of responsibility**
  - Have you taken on any extra responsibilities during voluntary or part time work?
  - Were you a prefect or have you helped young pupils during school?
    - Think about what the role entailed; what went well; and any challenges that you faced and why, and how did you overcome them?



# What should your personal statement include?

---

- **Extra curricular activities**
  - Make a list of your social, sporting and other interests and activities.
  - Think about how they show your skills and abilities.
  - Reflect on your experiences, explaining what you've learned from them or how they've helped develop your interest in the subject.
  - Try and link them to the skills and experience required for your chosen course.
- **Career aspirations**
  - Tell us about what you might like to do in the future as a career after completing your course.
  - Explain how you would like to use the course to help you reach your goal.
- **Reasons for deferred entry**
  - Most universities are happy for you to take a gap year – but will want to know how you plan to spend it.



# Dos and don'ts when writing a personal statement

---

- **Do** use positive language and check for spelling and grammar to make sure it is right.
- **Do** be enthusiastic – if you show your interest in the course it will help you.
- **Do** remember that everything you say should link to studying at university. This allows the course team to see why it is relevant and assess your suitability for the course.
- **Do** ask people that you trust, like your teacher/adviser or parent/carer to read through what you have written and give you feedback.
- **Do** develop your statement over several drafts.
- **Do** remember that there is only one personal statement regardless of whether you have applied for one or five choices.





# Dos and don'ts when writing a personal statement

---

- **Don't** name universities – you can only write one personal statement, so avoid mentioning a university by name unless you are applying to only one.
- **Don't** use quotes in your personal statement – it's your voice they want to hear.
- **Don't** write irrelevant facts – if it doesn't make a useful contribution and help explain why you should be given a place on the course, don't write it.
- **Don't** exaggerate – you might be asked about what you have written if you attend an interview.
- **Don't** try to be funny – an admission tutor is not guaranteed to have your sense of humour.
- **Don't** leave it until the last minute – give yourself time to think about what you want to write to make sure that you don't forget something important.
- **Don't** be tempted to copy a personal statement, UCAS has software that detects similarities which could jeopardise your application.



# Admission tutor quotes

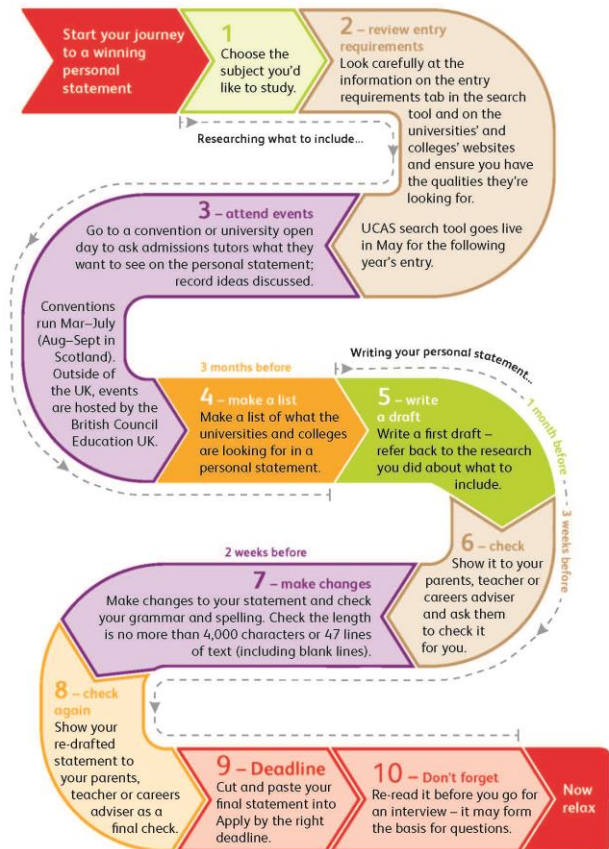
---

- **When should you start?**
  - *“Set yourself a schedule. It will take longer than you think to write your personal statement and it is important that you allow time to review your work several times”.*
- **What are universities looking for?**
  - *“Enthusiasm, motivation and focus about the subject you’re applying to. Mention extra-curricular activities, transferrable skills and include what your future career plans are after your degree”.*
- **What should you do once you’ve written it?**
  - *“Don’t forget to save an up-to-date copy somewhere. If you are invited for an interview your personal statement is likely to be read by the person interviewing you and may be used as a starting point for questions. Make sure you can remember what you wrote and back it all up if you are asked”.*
- **What other advice do we have?**
  - *“Don’t mention a specific university. Unless you reveal otherwise, we will think that you really only want to come to us!”*
  - *“Remember you have a lot to offer – you just have to write about yourself in a positive way and sell all the skills and experience that you have”.*



# UCAS personal statement timeline

## My personal statement timeline



1. Choose the subject you'd like to study.
2. Review entry requirements.
3. Attend university open days / UCAS higher education conventions.
4. Make a list of what institutions are looking for.
5. Write a first draft – refer back to your research about what to include.
6. Check – show it to someone you trust for feedback.
7. Make changes – check length, grammar and spell check.
8. Check again – show your redrafted statement to someone you trust for a final check.
9. Deadline – cut and paste your final statement into Apply by the final deadline.
10. Don't forget – re-read before an interview – it may form the basis for questions.



# Make your personal statement stand out from the crowd!

---



**At some universities lecturers can receive up to 200 personal statements per week.**



# Thank you for listening

---

