

How to write a personal statement

Your personal statement will probably be the only opportunity you get to “talk” directly to the admissions tutor on the programme you want to study. It is therefore **really** important that you make this statement as effective as possible; particularly as this may also form the basis of your interview questions if your university course requires this.

You need to demonstrate why you think you would be a good student for the course you are applying to and why the University should select you over other candidates. As it is an academic statement and you must focus it towards the subject in which you are interested, though a University will also want to know something about your more general interests.

You should cover three main areas in your personal statement in the following order:

1. Why this subject?

This could be a short sentence and needs to explain the reason why you are interested in studying the course that you are applying for. With this opening statement you are trying to communicate to the admissions tutor your enthusiasm for the course. You might want to think about the following points in your first paragraph:

- **Your knowledge of the subject area-what do you want to explore further? What do you already enjoy?**
- **What does the programme entail? Why does it interest you?**
- **What interests you the most?**
- **Where could studying the programme lead? Jobs? Further study?**

2. Why You?

Once you have outlined your reasons for being interested in the course you are applying to, you need to demonstrate why you would be a good student. In this section you are trying to convey your desire and ability to study on the course. You need to be able to show the admissions tutor that you have the right background in terms of academic ability and the right interest or understanding of the course- that is that you know what the course you want to study involves. For example, if you want to be a primary school teacher but have never worked with children of that age the admissions tutor will wonder what your inclination to study to be a teacher is! When writing this section you’ll need to think about and quote evidence from; your academic studies, any voluntary work and your hobbies and interests. Key questions to consider:

- **Why do you want to study this subject?**
- **What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?**
- **What else have you done that would contribute to the course and the university community and makes you an interesting and unique individual?**

You should also include things you have learned from books, newspapers, TV programmes and so on that are relevant to your application e.g. has a scientific documentary inspired you to want to research a certain area? If you are planning a year out maybe include how you think the skills and experiences obtained here will benefit you on your course. Make sure you mention any relevant work experience (e.g. medicine, physiotherapy) and any particular project work in your studies e.g. EPQ which may equip you for further education.

3. Are you interesting and unique?

Finally, you should write about what makes you an interesting and unique person; all those extra things you have done or experienced which will bring something extra to the community of the University you want to join. It doesn't matter what you've done, you need to reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned and write about that. You may want to cover:

- **What do you enjoy doing outside of school**
- **Your hobbies, leisure activities**
- **Sports you participate in**
- **Other sorts of extra-curricular activities**
- **Significant responsibilities you hold, at home or in clubs or societies**
- **Special achievements**
- **What you have learned if you have had a job**

Remember to link this paragraph back to the skills that they have enabled you to develop which will help you with the course.

In summary

Paragraph 1: Why this subject?

Paragraph 2: Why you (explain the skills you have developed in your A level studies)?

Paragraph 3: What can you bring to the university?

FINAL PARAGRAPH-last opportunity to sell yourself-give a brief synopsis of your personal statement-this only needs to be brief, 3-4 lines maximum!

Personal statement planning sheet

Paragraph 1-Why this subject

Your knowledge of the subject area-what do you want to explore further? What do you already enjoy?	
What does the programme entail? Why does it interest you?	
What interests you the most?	
Where could studying the programme lead? Jobs? Further study?	

Paragraph 2-Why you?

Why do you want to study this subject?	
What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?	
What else have you done that would contribute to the course and the university community and makes you an interesting and unique individual?	

Are you interesting and unique?

What do you enjoy doing outside of school	
What you have learned if you have had a job?	
Special achievements	
Significant responsibilities you hold, at home or in clubs or societies	
Other sorts of extra-curricular activities	
Sports you participate in	
Your hobbies, leisure activities	

What would you like to finish your personal statement with (your last chance to sell yourself!)

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