

UCAS: WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

(Advice adapted from university admissions tutors' views)

An effective personal statement should spend roughly two thirds of the space on the choice of course; varied reasons for taking it; how it links to current academic interests; your current courses; and what, *in detail*, enthuses you about them; AND only one third [max] on other aspects of your personal experience, skills, sports, hobbies and interests. Do not repeat information found elsewhere on the form unless you are using it for a purpose. Spell check before pasting it into "apply". The "apply" programme allows you to write to a maximum of 4000 characters.

You should consider the following points before beginning to write, and ensure you cover them during the course of the writing:

- 1) Why do you really want to take this course? Can you be **enthusiastic** about it? Do you genuinely **understand** what the course is about? *[If the answer to either question is "No" – think again.]*
- 2) Where did your interest in your chosen degree subject begin? (**explain in detail**)
- 3) What have you enjoyed about your current academic studies? (**give details of actual topics**)
- 4) If the application is for more than one subject (e.g.: joint English and History) ensure that you refer to both subjects, and give convincing reasons for the split interest. **Avoid** this, if possible, though.
- 5) Give relevant work experience details; what usable skills have you gained from it?
- 6) Show that you have the basic core skills (especially IT and communication skills).
- 7) Show evidence of any wider skills you have gained, including interpersonal / leadership.
- 8) What positions of responsibility have you held? (Have you organised anything?) Any prizes or awards?
- 9) Any sporting commitments (not just casual)? To what level? What have you gained from them?
- 10) Any wider interests/activities/hobbies in which you are particularly interested? What have you gained from these that might be of use to an admissions tutor in deciding whether you are worth selecting?
- 11) Career aspirations? What will you do with a degree? Are you worth investing in?
- 12) If you are taking a gap year – what are your plans? Be positive but don't exaggerate.
- 13) Beware of being flippant or over humorous – it could fall flat. But you **can** be personal.
- 14) Do not worry about trying to finish with a clever, dramatic, resounding finish. Keep it simple.
- 15) Finally – put yourself in the Admissions Tutor's shoes: make it easy for the Tutor to read and understand what is important about you. Try to give **solid evidence** of the qualities you claim.