



OPEN TO WONDER

The Personal Statement and Reference

What is a Personal Statement?

- A demonstration of your passion and enthusiasm for the subject you are applying for.
- An opportunity for you to differentiate yourself from other applicants.
- Your chance to impress the Admissions Tutors.
- A documentation of your academic ability.
- Also sometimes called a Statement of Purpose.

A good Personal Statement:

- is clear, concise and structured.
- is a reflection of your interest in the course.
- reflects your personality.
- should not have any plagiarised content.
- should be no more than 4000 characters (with spaces).
- will avoid vague, generalised statements.
- can turn a borderline applicant into an offer holder.

Structure your Personal Statement to include:

- Your interest in the chosen subject and things you have done to demonstrate this interest.
- Academic: how the subjects you study at school add to your skill set for your chosen course.
- Interests: how your extra-curricular activities add to your skill base and how these skills will help you cope with university studies.
- Conclusion: what your career plans and personal ambitions are and how the course will help you achieve them.

Before you begin, ask yourself:

- **HOW** do your work experience and/or extra-curricular activities add to your skills?
- **WHAT** skills do you have?
- **WHY** have you chosen a particular course?
- **WHICH** aspects of the course do you think you will particularly enjoy?
- **WHAT** areas of the subject would you particularly like to explore further?

Things to keep in mind when writing the statement of purpose:

- Humour rarely works—don't risk it!
- Ask someone to proof read it, can they follow it?
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Don't repeat information.
- Don't forget you are writing one statement for five universities, so avoid mentioning the name of one of your choices!

The Reference

- **If you are applying through your school** they will add a reference and send your application to UCAS directly. You don't have to do anything.
- **If you are applying individually**, you will need to ask someone (probably your tutor/teacher) if they will write a reference for you. If they agree, add their email and phone number to the reference page and then click 'Ask referee to complete reference'. UCAS will then email them directly with a link and password to the reference page of your application, then we'll ask them to confirm their identity before writing it.

Key Points

- A 'self portrait' written by the applicant.
- Should be reflective, not a catalogue of activities or achievements.
- Make it personal, but get the balance right.
- Between 70 and 80% of the Personal statement should focus on why you want to study your chosen subject. You can use the rest of the space to write about extra curricular activities or experiences, but make sure these are relevant to the course you have selected.

Applying through UCAS (www.ucas.com)

What is UCAS?

- If you wish to study at a UK institution, it is necessary to apply through UCAS.
- You can apply for up to 5 programmes at any of the 300 course providers listed on their website.
- You can use the UCAS website to help you research:
 - * the subjects available.
 - * the level and the entry requirements.

How to apply

Register to apply

- Fill in your personal details to get a username and create a password.
- If appropriate, include the buzzword your school gave you, or if you're applying independently answer a few questions.
- Then log-in using your username and password and fill in some more personal details.
- **Don't forget to include a valid email address as UCAS will contact you to keep you updated.**

Enter your chosen courses

- You can choose up to five courses.
- There's no preference order.
- The universities you have applied to won't see where else you've applied at this stage.

Your qualifications

- Follow the instructions online to record any qualifications/ official tests you already have or those that you are expecting to have.

The Application Fee

- If you are applying for only one course, the fee is **£22**.
- If you are applying for more than one course, the fee is **£26.50**.
- You will need to pay this with a credit or debit card.

The Deadlines

- **15th October:** for the universities of Oxford, Cambridge or any course in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine/science.
- **26th January:** for all Warwick courses.
- **30th June:** for late applications - if there are any vacancies, any applications submitted after this date are entered into Clearing.

What happens next?

- You can follow the progress of your application online using "UCAS TRACK".
- It may take several weeks before you start receiving decisions from your chosen universities.
- You will get one of the following decisions from the universities:
 - * **Conditional:** you will need to meet certain conditions before you can enter university. This could be successfully completing high school, taking an English language test or submitting a reference, etc.
 - * **Unconditional:** you have met all your conditions and the place at the university is yours, if you want it.
 - * **Unsuccessful:** the university has decided not to offer you a place.
- If you are made an offer, respond to it as soon as possible. You are allowed to hold two offers, "firm" and "insurance".

Types of Offers

• Firm acceptance - your first choice

If it's an unconditional offer the place is yours.

If it's conditional, the place is yours if you meet the entry requirements.

• Insurance acceptance - your backup choice

Choose a university with a lower offer for your Insurance choice. You'll only go to your insurance choice if you don't achieve the conditions of your firm choice but you do meet the conditions of your insurance.

• Decline

Once you have decided on your insurance and firm choice, decline all the others.

Information is indicative. Please go to warwick.ac.uk/ug to check the latest information, and for a full list of our available courses and entry requirements.