



ASPIRE ★ **NORTH**

Schools for Higher Education Programme

S5-6 UCAS & Personal Statement

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Please send us your personal statement drafts to read!



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

UCAS

THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ADMISSIONS SERVICE

www.ucas.com

- Research what courses you are interested in using UCAS website
- www.ucas.com – to use ‘APPLY’
- Retrieve the school’s ‘Buzzword’
- Must register to use ‘APPLY’ then log in (**Write down passwords & ID info**)
- Start updating your personal information as soon as possible
- Complete your course choices
- Draft your personal statement in ‘Word’
- Submit your personal statement

Deadlines for Applications:

- **15 October 2021** for dentistry, medicine, veterinary science and veterinary medicine and for all courses at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge.
- **26 January 2022** for all other courses except those above.

Your Personal Statement

Your personal statement is a vital part of the UCAS application process. Inevitably, pupils aiming at the same area of study will have similar qualifications; some may even have exactly the same qualifications at the same grades.

This led to the development of the Personal Statement to help admissions staff differentiate between applicants.

Therefore, our advice is that you must give it the time worthy of its importance.

Just in the same way as you should spend time researching your course and institution choices prior to starting your application, you should be considering what content should go into your personal statement.

Do not wait until you've started your UCAS application – start before the Summer break before starting 6th year!

Note: This process is also very useful for helping you prepare a CV for future employment!

Personal Statement Format

- **4000 characters or 47 lines of text. (including spaces or blank lines)**
- **The 1st 40% of your personal statement should be about and relate to, your subject choice.**
- **The next 35% should be about your academic studies and how this has informed your choice of subject.**
- **The final 25% should give admissions a flavour of who you are and what other achievements and interests you have.**

The following pages are designed to help you with the first steps in preparing for the development of your own personal statement. There is also advice about when to approach each section.

Stage 1. Plan your Timeline

- Your preparation for the completion of your Personal Statement should start about 34 months before it is due to be uploaded onto the UCAS site.
- Pupils applying to do dentistry, medicine, veterinary science and veterinary medicine and for all courses at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, will have to plan backwards from the earlier date of the 15th October 2020. For other applicants we have given an indication in the following sections when the various stages should take place.

Stage 2. Research

March to August

- Use the UCAS course search option (www.ucas.ac.uk/students/coursesearch) to start investigation course options and institution options.
- Take note of the 'Entry Profiles' for the courses you are applying to. Note down the qualifications, qualities and experiences each course is looking for.

Stage 3. List or Mind Map Creation

August

- Create a list/mind map of qualifications, qualities, skills, achievements, ideas & experiences, which link well to the 'Entry Profiles' you have now established.
- Ask family members, teachers & friends about what qualities or skills that they think you have, that perhaps you are unaware of yourself. Add these to your list.

Stage 4. Profile Questionnaire

September

- Complete your 'Profile Questionnaire' on the following pages. Use your list or mind map from Stage 3 to infill all the sections.
- Reflect on, and note your strengths.

Stage 5. 1st Draft of your Personal Statement

October

- Use your completed 'Profile Questionnaire' to start to prepare your first draft of your Personal Statement in a Word document.

Stage 6. Seek Opinions & Advice

1st-7th Nov.

- Pass your 1st draft to your parents, teacher & **ASPIRE**North contacts, to ask for their feedback and advice on what you have written so far. (They might notice errors that you are blind to)
- Give them a deadline for sending it back to you.

Stage 7. 2nd Draft of your Personal Statement

8th -15th Nov.

- Make your changes.
- Then pass your 2nd draft to your parents, teacher & **ASPIRE**North contacts, to ask for their feedback and advice on what you have written.
- Give them a deadline for sending it back to you.

Stage 8. Upload to UCAS & Press the Button!

End of Nov.

Profile Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help you gather information which should be included in your Personal Statement. It is also set out in such a way that helps fulfil the format percentages mentioned previously.

Your Subject:

What is your chosen subject area? (Remember, this will be your passion for 4 years!)

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What is it about your chosen subject area that makes you want to explore it further?

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What subjects at school relate directly to this subject and how did they influence your choice?

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What work experience has informed your decision to study this subject and how has it informed your decision?

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What research have you done which has informed your decision to study this subject? (Look up the course profiles on UCAS to find out what is involved in 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th year.)

Why do you think you are suitable to study this subject? (What skills or qualities do you bring to this course of study?)

What additional activities in school or out of school, have informed your decision to study this subject and how did they inform your decision?

Your Academic Study:

Which other subjects at school have aided your decision and what did you learn from these subjects?

What additional academic activity at school have you undertaken? (eg. Study support, buddying, newsletter, special projects)

What do you think your grades and school workload says about how hard you work and how you manage your time?

Ask your subject teacher what they think your strengths are in this subject area.(Ask them to note it down below)

Ask your teachers what they think your general strengths are. (Ask them to note it down below)

About You:

What roles of responsibility have you held in school and what did this teach you?

What roles of responsibility have you held out with school and what did this teach you?

What voluntary work have you undertaken and what did you learn from this?

What part-time work have you had and what have you learned from this experience?

What awards or achievements have you gained and what did you learn?

Make a list of any hobbies, interests or skills you have and note how these things demonstrate your personality and qualities.

Now that you have completed your questionnaire, use it to help you start to prepare your first draft of your Personal Statement in a Word document.

Please Remember:

- Be truthful and don't exaggerate (You may be interviewed!)
- Focus on and show enthusiasm for the subject
- Make it interesting and relevant to the subject
- Use clear and precise language which flows easily
- Emphasise skills
- Always highlight what you have learned
- Why this Course (future career plans)
- Emphasise achievements (DoE, Gap, Participation)
- Highlight voluntary work
- Mentoring and/or Buddying
- Interests and hobbies
- Dedication and commitment
- Get other people to read it through and give feedback
- Show the reader that you know and understand your strengths

Drafting your Personal Statement

Below are some writing and grammar tips to help you when writing your Personal Statement. Remember there's a 4000 character limit, so it's important to make the most of these.

Try to vary your language. Joining words and phrases will help your statement flow well. Your Personal Statement is all about showing off your potential, so don't be afraid to draw attention to your achievements and what you've learned from your experiences. How else will the admissions officer know how prepared for and passionate you are about the course?

In addition to.....

Additionally....

As well as.....

Furthermore.....

Having enjoyed.....

Not only.....

strengthen reinforce dedication

commitment valuable experience opportunity

offered insight allowed me to

developed built disciplined

expanded my understanding desire to learn

conscientious persistent resourceful

It's impossible to avoid completely, but try not to have too many **sentences that start with 'I...'** The more you're able to do this, the better your statement will flow, rather than reading like a list of achievements. It can also save characters for reflecting on the significance of the things you've done.

Instead of...

I am studying towards Highers in...

I have taken part in...

I have gained my black belt in karate...

I volunteer at a charity shop...

I have gained a number of skills in...

Try...

My current subjects are...

Taking part in...

Gaining my black belt in karate...

Volunteering at a charity shop...

The skills I have gained from...

Use paragraphs! When you come to enter your statement into your application, paragraphs won't be recognised by the system, but it's worthwhile using them while writing drafts to keep your writing organised.

Finally, it can't be said enough... **proof read, proof read, proof read!** Have others look over the statement in both draft form and before you submit it online. Yes, it's a bit tedious, but this statement is the first piece of writing a prospective university will see from you. Accurate spelling and grammar are part of making a big impression.