

WRITING YOUR



PERSONAL STATEMENT

Writing your personal statement

WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Your personal statement is the most important part of your application to university. It explains who you are, why you think you are a good applicant and why you want to study the course you have chosen. It is about 4000 characters/47 lines and needs to be submitted along with the rest of your UCAS application.

WHY DOES A PERSONAL STATEMENT MATTER?

It allows you to stand out from other applicants with the same grades. Competition for university is tough; your grades alone will not get you a place. Think of it like a job application – you need to impress.

DO...

- **Answer the core questions.**
Make sure to cover all three questions with a sufficient amount of detail.
- **Remember the statement is reviewed as a whole.**
Don't worry about which section to include information in. The core questions are there to help you cover all necessary information, not to catch you out.
- **Show awareness of your subject.**
Make sure your passion shines through.
- **Make it relevant and current.**
- **Give examples to back up your points:**
don't just say "I am adaptable and have excellent time management skills" without any evidence. How does your reader know this is true? Instead, try something like this: "I've developed excellent time management skills through juggling my studies with a part-time job and babysitting my sisters twice a week. Balancing these responsibilities while still leaving time for hobbies is challenging, but I make weekly plans which enable me to organise myself well."
- **Use all the space** – just writing a few lines isn't enough.
- **Check your deadlines.**
Find out from your school or college when you have to apply by. Plan ahead so you can take your time writing a winning personal statement!

DON'T...

- **Lie.**
You will be caught out.
- **Use slang or poor English.**
This is a formal document.
- **Use bullet points.** Write in full paragraphs.
- **Get someone else to write it** – that includes personal statements found online. Admissions tutors have software which will tell them if something is stolen.
- **Try to include too much.**
It is better to mention a few skills with examples to show how you developed them.
- **Repeat information** that is elsewhere on your application.
- **Mention specific universities.**
The same personal statement goes to all your choices.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

Why do you want to study this course or subject?

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

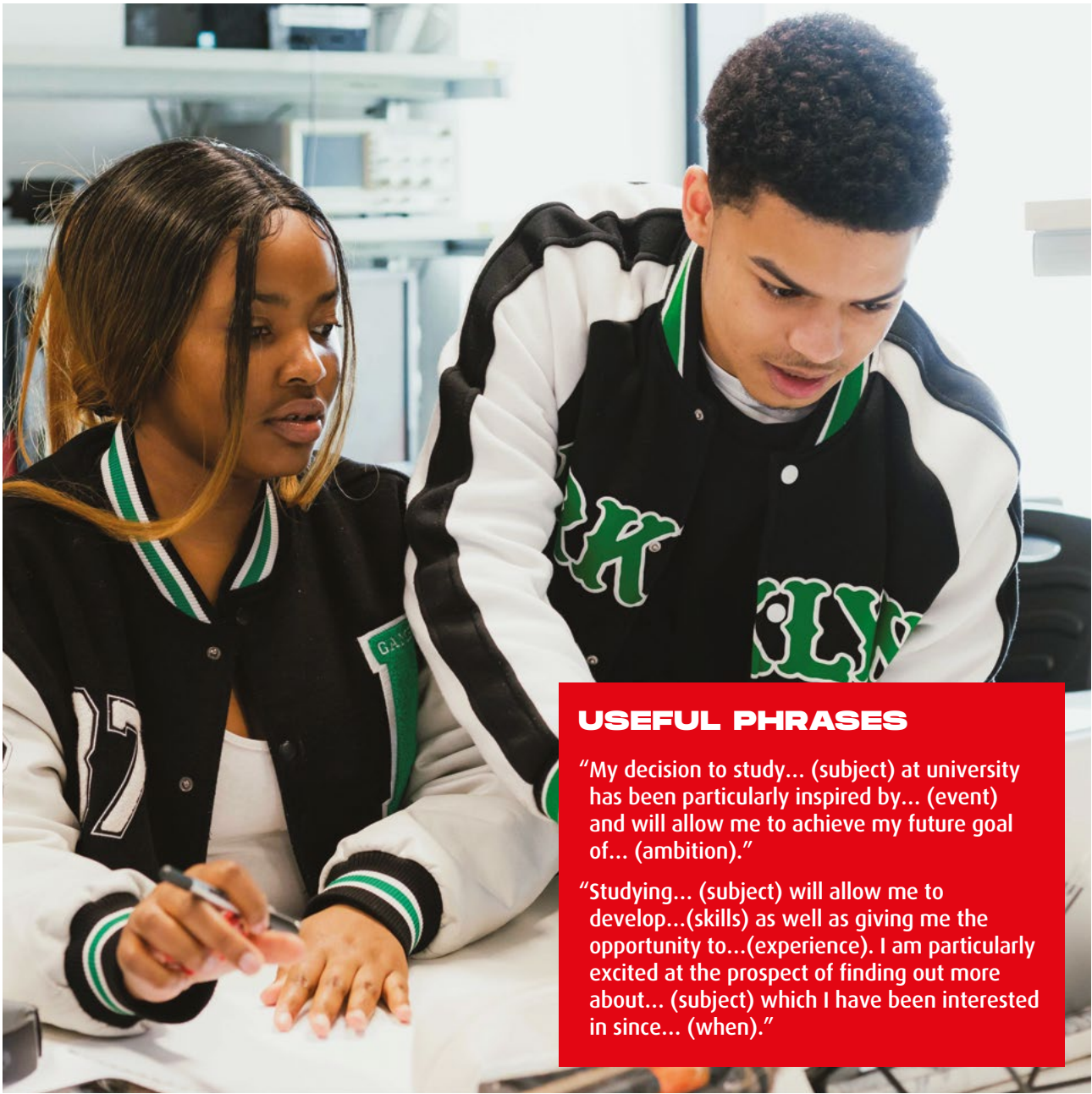
What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

TOP TIP...

You can use the 4000 character count limit across all answers in any way you choose. The amount you write for each question can vary depending on your chosen course and experience.

Over the next four pages you will find prompts which will help you to answer the three questions. You don't have to answer every prompt, they are just there to help you.

Why do you want to study this course or subject?



USEFUL PHRASES

"My decision to study... (subject) at university has been particularly inspired by... (event) and will allow me to achieve my future goal of... (ambition)."

"Studying... (subject) will allow me to develop...(skills) as well as giving me the opportunity to...(experience). I am particularly excited at the prospect of finding out more about... (subject) which I have been interested in since... (when)."

Think about the following prompts to help you answer the question:

- 1 Which course would you like to study?
- 2 What are your motivations for studying this course?
- 3 Is there anything in particular that has inspired you?
- 4 What knowledge and interests do you have within this subject area?
- 5 What are your future aims and ambitions – do you have a particular career in mind?

DO... give specific reasons for your choice.

DON'T... just say "I want to study this subject because I'm passionate about it and it's interesting"; this doesn't say anything about you.

ALWAYS... avoid mentioning specific universities.

Practise your answers here

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?



USEFUL PHRASES

"While at college I have particularly enjoyed... (state subject) because it has allowed me to... (state reason). I was especially proud of my work during the module on... (state module), during which I had to... (state what you did)."

"My school experience will really help me at university because it has given me the ability to... (state skill/ability) which will help me to prepare for my (state activity/course at university)."

Think about the following prompts to help you answer the question:

- 1 How do you feel your studies will help you to progress onto higher education?
- 2 Is there a particular project you enjoyed, excelled at or really inspired you?
- 3 What relevant educational achievements have you made?
- 4 What transferrable skills do you feel you have developed during the course of your studies?
- 5 Have you balanced your academic life with aspects of your social life?
- 6 Have you gained any skills when studying independently/virtually?

DO... focus on the subjects you've most enjoyed/have more to say about.

DON'T... waste characters on listing your courses, subjects and qualifications – this is stated elsewhere on your application.

ALWAYS... be positive. Saying negative things about education doesn't look good on an application to university.

Practise your answers here

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?



USEFUL PHRASES

“Attending matches as part of my college’s football team has not only enabled me to.... (state what you’ve done) but also... (state what else you’ve done) which I really value because I have gained the ability to... (state ability).”

“An experience which I feel has had a real positive impact on me was when I... (state experience). This really inspired me and opened my eyes to... (state what you learned...).”

Think about the following prompts to help you answer the question:

- 1 What skills have you gained from part-time employment/ work experience/ volunteering?
- 2 Do you have any personal life experiences or responsibilities?
- 3 Do you have any hobbies and interests, or take part in any extracurricular activities?
- 4 What positions of responsibility or achievements do you hold outside of school or college?
- 5 What did each experience involve and what did you learn?

DO talk about the skills you gained from your work experience. Skills could include: time management, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, communication, diplomacy, numeracy, analytical skills, presentation skills, confidence, increased responsibility and awareness.

DON’T be dishonest about your experiences. You only need to mention the most relevant experiences to show you’re a well-rounded individual – you don’t need to cover all the prompt questions.

ALWAYS include at least a few lines on your hobbies. Universities do want to know about you as a well-rounded individual.

Practise your answers here



PERSONAL STATEMENT Online Review Service

This free service aims to help students write a personal statement that stands out.

All you need to do is upload your draft statement as a Word document to the form below and you'll receive expert feedback from our team.

Once we've put together our feedback, we'll email the statement back within 14 days, so you can get started on a final draft straight away.

www.mdx.ac.uk/study/personal-statement-review



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