



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

# YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDE

We have put together a detailed guide to help you get the best possible start to your UCAS application

# WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Top tip:** Remember that your Personal Statement is personal to you. We'll give you examples throughout this guide for inspiration, but you'll need to include your own experience which is relevant to the specific course you're applying for.

There are four main things to cover:



## 1. Your future plans

Whether you want to be a lawyer or the next Steven Spielberg, think about what you want to do in the future. It may be that the course is directly relevant to your intended career, or perhaps you have already studied the subject and found it particularly enjoyable. If the subject is completely new for you, highlight what led you to this decision.

### EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF OUR CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS:

*"My aspiration is to have a career in policing although I look forward to learning about and exploring other career opportunities this course would open up for me. I believe I have the abilities and transferrable skills to be successful in the career path as I'm honest, a problem solver and have sound judgment."*

### EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF OUR TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS:

*"In 2011 I attended a fantastic two week placement at a local digital media company, who produce animation, film and applications for both mobile and web. It was an eye-opening experience which allowed me to work with professionals and see first-hand how the industry operates."*



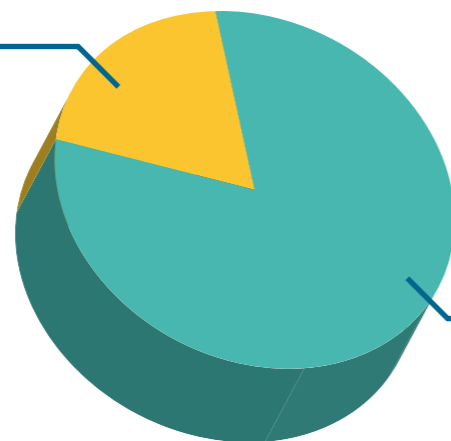
## 2. Your work experience

This could include the skills you gained through work experience placements or part-time work. Work experience shows your dedication and commitment to your future career, while part-time work proves you are disciplined and organised.

Remember, your statement should roughly consist of:

20%

Non-academic



80%

Academic



## 3. Your school and college life

At this point most of your experience may have come from your school life so make sure you include the skills you have gained whilst at school or college, as well as any sporting or extra-curricular activities, or positions of responsibility you have had (eg prefect, librarian).

### EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF OUR MEDIA STUDENTS:

*"I have recently joined the Media Team as part of my Sixth Form's Hub. I am working as part of a team with set deadlines collaborating on exciting Sixth Form projects. Using my skills and experience, I have updated and rebranded the Sixth Form magazine to a more contemporary style."*



## 4. Your interests and activities

Highlight the skills you have gained through activities you are involved in outside of school such as volunteering in the community, music, team sports, and any other hobbies or interests. You'd be surprised how much you have done!

### YOUR NOTES:

Use this section to jot down some ideas.

### CHECKLIST

- ✓ Why are you applying for your chosen course(s)?
- ✓ What are your future plans and career ambitions?
- ✓ How does the course relate to what you want to do in the future?
- ✓ What have you done in your school and college life?
- ✓ What activities and hobbies have you done in preparation for higher education?
- ✓ What work experience do you have? Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work.

Let's start writing...

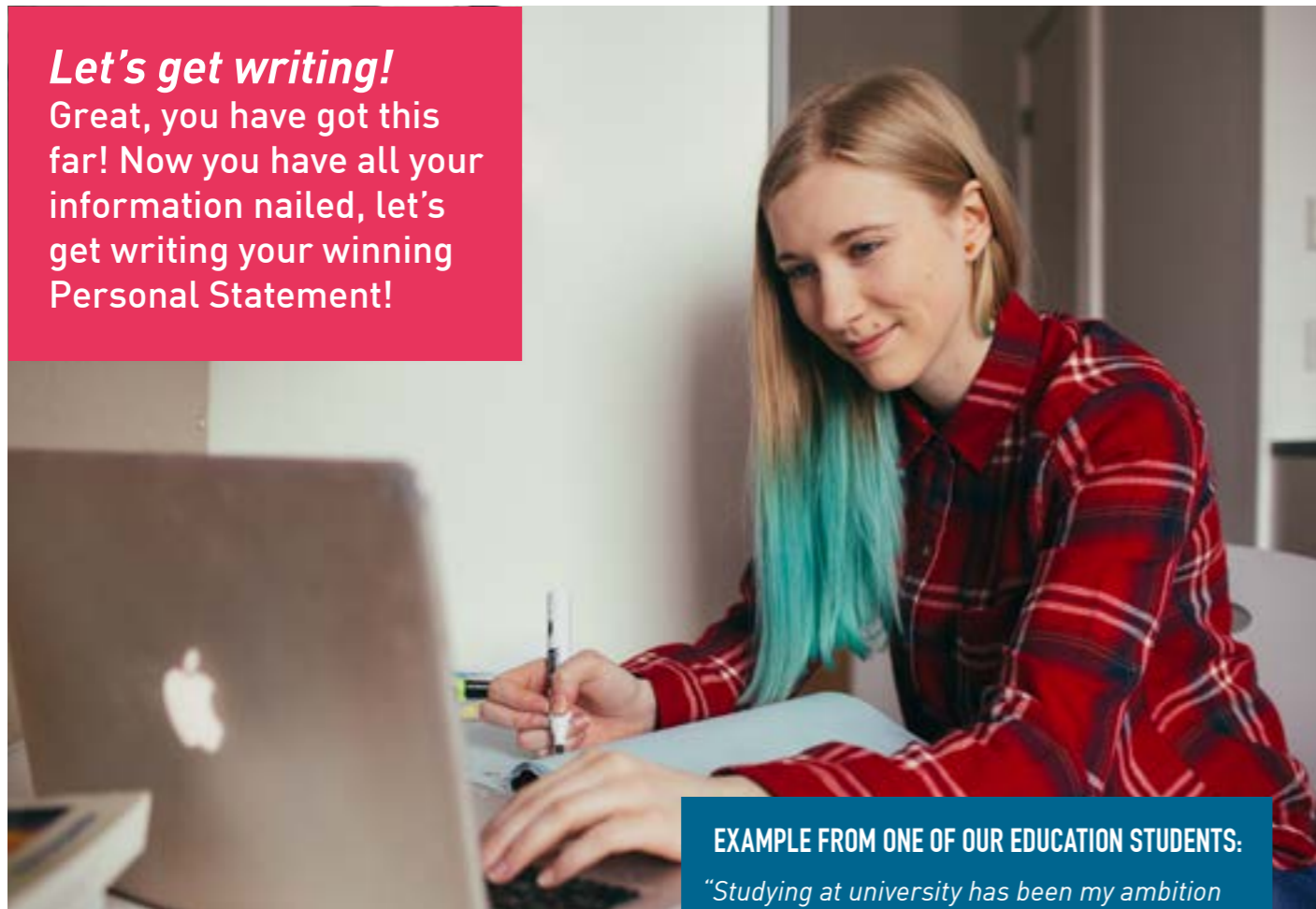
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# HOW TO START WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT.

## Let's get writing!

Great, you have got this far! Now you have all your information nailed, let's get writing your winning Personal Statement!



### EXAMPLE FROM ONE OF OUR EDUCATION STUDENTS:

*"Studying at university has been my ambition for many years. I find immense enjoyment in reading and researching history and believe that, in the future, I will be very successful in inspiring and encouraging others to study the subject."*

## DRAFT, DRAFT, DRAFT!

Write several drafts and get feedback from others. Getting this first draft down on paper is the hardest bit, so try to get advice from friends, family and your school or college. Also make sure to check the university website for advice about what they are looking for in an applicant.

## A CLEAR STRUCTURE

Keep within the character limit of 4,000 characters, including spaces. There's a line limit of 47. Like an essay, structure your information in a logical way to reflect the skills and qualities the universities and colleges value most.

## GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

Use appropriate vocabulary, spelling and grammar. Use words with precise meanings, but avoid pretentious language or giving the impression you just swallowed a dictionary! Read it back to yourself out loud to make sure it sounds like something you would say – and get parents, friends or siblings to take a look through too.

## EVIDENCE FOR SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Give evidence for all your claims — don't just say you have good organisational skills, provide an example of how you can demonstrate it.

## WRITE YOUR CONCLUSION

Try to summarise the main points of your statement then finish it off with a positive comment about why the university should think about offering you a place. You could also end with a comment about your career aspirations.

# EXAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Top tip:** Your Personal Statement is just one part of your UCAS application. Tutors will take a number of things into consideration before making you an offer, like checking you meet the entry requirements for the course. Here's an example of what one student included in their Personal Statement. Remember each student and each course is different so there is not one perfect example which suits everyone. We've even suggested some improvements here too!

✓ This shows off the student's passion for the course and industry, as well as their initiative.

✓ This highlights the student's passion, work experience and how it relates to the course.

✓ This demonstrates the student's volunteering and work experience.

✓ This shows how the student mixes their hobbies with developing skills relevant to the course.

Digital media has always been a large part of my life. From cringe-worthy creations of my early youth to near-professional publications I now create, I have always enjoyed making creative media using technology. I have always retained the motivation to return to full time education. Since I have left education I have continued to improve and study different areas in IT through my many different hobbies. I have always had a thirst for IT and digital media and a course would offer me the chance to use many different pieces of technology that I have not used before. When I was at college, I studied IT BTEC. The course was great: it mixed coursework with practical skills and I thoroughly enjoyed it, achieving a merit.

I have spent a lot of time working in digital media. I followed my dreams and created a clothing line. This creation of mine grew into something much more than I ever thought it would. I had to register my business and I became a sole-trader, which meant filling out a tax return every year. I amassed a client base of over 1,000 people on my business Facebook page and shipped over 80 of my products worldwide. One of my best achievements was organising and casting a photoshoot involving products and models. It was an amazing achievement. I learnt many skills as I was the only person working within the brand. I had to cover every area of the business from customer service through to designing the actual garments on Photoshop and working alongside manufacturers. I managed and created all the marketing for the brand and published it to various social media sites. I was able to analyse customer data this way and could see which promotions worked best and which engaged the user most.

Whilst at school, I started my first job working at a local garden centre on weekends. I worked here for three years and, during that time, I was promoted to till supervisor where I had to manage a small team of till operators during the day. Alongside this job, I dedicated a lot of my Summer working with a charity. This involved me working with and supporting children with special needs, taking them out on activities. During my time at secondary school, I opted to take Certificate of Digital Applications (CiDA) as a subject. At the end of my course, I achieved a distinction. In fact, I was awarded top IT student for my year group as I achieved the highest grade the school had ever seen within the subject.

During the Summer, my friends and I became extremely passionate about music; we decided to take a road trip across Europe to visit Austria and attend one of the country's biggest music festivals. And of course, me being me, I took the opportunity to make something creative. I brought a camera along with me and recorded over three hours of footage which I then compiled into nine short, bite-sized videos of our journey, then uploading them to YouTube. For this task, I used the program Adobe Premiere. At first, the program looked extremely complicated but, thanks to my intuition, I picked the relative skills very quickly. The response to the videos was amazing, so much so that it has inspired me to continue filming, editing and publishing YouTube videos.

The student could improve this statement by adding a short conclusion, summing up why they deserve to be offered a place for the course and any future career ambitions after they've completed it.

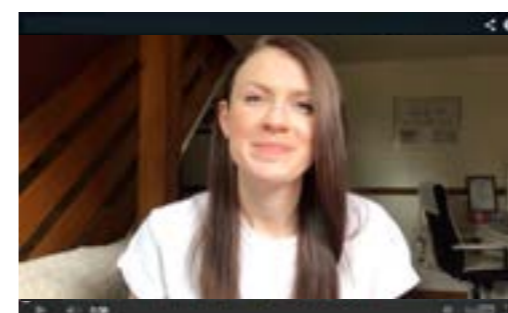
INTRO

80% EDUCATION AND SKILLS

This student could have improved their Personal Statement by including more about their academic experience

20% NON-ACADEMIC

Hobbies and interests



CHECK OUT STUDENT CLAIRE'S GUIDE WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT ON YOUTUBE.

[bcu.ac.uk/claaires-tips](https://bcu.ac.uk/claaires-tips)

# THE UCAS PROCESS

As the majority of university courses in the UK have no formal interview requirements, most decisions on whether to offer you a place will be made entirely on the strength of your UCAS application form — particularly your Personal Statement.



The form consists of seven sections — your personal details, course choices, education, employment, Personal Statement and reference.

Of those, the Personal Statement offers you the best chance to 'sell' yourself, by explaining why you are applying for that particular course and why the university should want you to join them!

At first glance, being asked to write around 500 words about yourself may seem a little daunting, and you may find it easier to break it down into sections, considering what you want to say about different aspects of your personality and experience. This guide will show you how and there is also a wealth of information on [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk).

## UCAS TIMELINE

### MID-SEPTEMBER

Opening date for UCAS applications

### 15 JANUARY

Main closing date for applications

### 31 MARCH

First deadline for universities to get decisions to UCAS

### APRIL

Deadline for applicants to accept one firm and one insurance offer UCAS Extra process for those without an offer to make an additional application

### FROM JULY

Universities start to receive exam results, most are communicated by UCAS to universities in August

### AUGUST

Clearing process commences

# BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

With around 24,500 students from 80 different countries, Birmingham City University is one of the largest universities in the UK and our popularity has grown significantly in recent years. We became a university in 1992, but our history dates back to 1843 and we have a proud record of widening access to higher education.



Our four academic faculties offer over 350 courses, from foundation level, through undergraduate degree programmes, to taught Master's courses and research doctorates. About a fifth of our students study part-time, combining employment with our professionally relevant courses, improving their career prospects.

Our courses are designed to prepare you for the world of work. Many of our lecturers have real-life experience of working in industry, our facilities match those you could experience in the workplace and you get the opportunity to go on placements with leading employers. We even employ our own students for temporary and part-time roles at the University!

Living in Birmingham offers you the chance to live in an exciting, diverse city with world-class restaurants, entertainment and shops. We rival the capital in excitement but not in cost.



# I AM BCU

We have a confident, proud and diverse community of students at BCU, who are striving to achieve their career goals and transform their lives

**FIND YOUR COURSE**



**BCU COURSES**

More advice on Personal Statements  
[bcu.ac.uk/personal-statements](https://bcu.ac.uk/personal-statements)