

THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

The Personal Statement is a short piece of writing that tells Admissions Tutors about your interests, your suitability for their course, and your character and motivation. As well as academic achievements, Admissions Tutors want to know what you have gained from your studies, and how they relate to your other activities.

A strong Personal Statement is your main chance to show Admissions Tutors why you would be an asset to their university, and why you are more than just a list of grades. Writing a Personal Statement will also help you to prepare for your UK visa application, which may require a motivation/credibility interview as part of the process.

WHAT SHOULD A PERSONAL STATEMENT LOOK LIKE?

A Personal Statement is usually best grouped into three main sections:

- 1 Why this course and university?**

First, you need to explain why you are applying to study this subject. Why do you have enthusiasm for it? What have you particularly enjoyed about it? Why does the content of the course at this particular university appeal to you? A good answer should demonstrate understanding of what your intended subject is all about, as well as why you want to study it.
 - 2 What do I have to offer?**

This is where you describe why you are suitable for your chosen course. Comment on what you feel your strengths are, giving examples at every stage. Detail any work experience, placement or voluntary work – particularly if relevant to your subject choices – and identify what you gained from it. You may also want to mention what you have read and found important outside your studies that relates to your intended course – but make sure you have understood it well.
 - 3 Who you are (including your goals and how the course will contribute)**

Tell them about the person behind the application form. You can start with long-term career goals – even if these are broad, include an outline of the industry in which you hope to work, and explain how your chosen course fits into these future plans. Describe who you are. Write about outside achievements, and show how they indicate qualities that would be useful in your studies or in achieving your goals. Finally, why have you chosen to study in the UK? And are there any further reasons that you have chosen this specific university?

Example Personal Statements can be found at www.thestudentroom.co.uk – a useful website containing a variety of resources.
- !** Address any gap in studies of over 2 years
- If you have had a period of more than two years away from studying, explain why you want to return to formal study.

WRITING TIPS

Begin by making notes for a draft version – as long as you like – which you can condense later. A good way to start is to take a piece of A4 paper and divide it into three as below. Use this to split your statement into the three sections previously mentioned.

1 Why this course and university?

2 What do I have to offer?

3 Who you are (including your goals and how the course will contribute)

There are a few key things to remember.

First, **spelling and grammar are of real importance**. Admissions Tutors will want to be sure that you can potentially express yourself well in English even if your language skills are not that of a native speaker. Take your time to make notes, draft and rewrite – and ask others for help and feedback. Try not to repeat yourself – remember you don't have much space – and keep your language positive and sentences short and relevant.

Most importantly, **don't just list a series of points about yourself**: try to connect each point, creating a story that is easy for an Admissions Tutor to read.

Finally, **remember to submit only your own work**. If you copy text from the Internet, university staff can easily search the web for chunks of text and discover the origin. Copying from another applicant will also usually be obvious. Either will likely lead to a refusal of your application to study.

AN EXAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENT

1

Why this course
and university?

A career in management has always been my ultimate goal, and a desire to master new concepts and techniques has influenced my A Level choices of Maths, Computing and Business. The combined degree in Maths and Management at [University Name] is especially suited to the development of my interests in all three areas, as it also has a number of optional computing components that will allow me to continue my studies in the topic.

Growing up in a local convenience store, I have always been interested and involved in business, and by studying it at both GCSE and A Level, this hands-on experience has been reinforced by learning new concepts and theories.

During my summer break I travelled to Birmingham and did some voluntary work in a small but growing computer course company that used ILA (Individual Learning Accounts) as its main source of income. Although I was only there for three weeks, it was extremely useful, because it gave me an insight into the operations of a growing partnership. I was also involved in some of the development of the company's database. Working in the same office as the manager, I observed the way that decisions were made and risks taken in a business.

2

What do I have
to offer?

On commencing my AS Level course in Mathematics, I found it extremely challenging, and I was initially demoralised when certain theories weren't grasped quickly. However, with hard work and dedication my skills in mathematics have improved profoundly. An interest of mine that developed in the AS course was the variation in managing methods from different parts of the world, such as America and Japan. The Production sub-module was particularly fascinating, and techniques such as kaizen and other laws using motivation on the production line were especially intriguing. I now find Maths a very rewarding subject and look forward to studying it at an even higher level.

In my spare time I enjoy socialising and participating in sports activities. After leaving junior school I played badminton once or twice a week at the local club for four years. Being selected as captain of a team at the local football club developed my team leadership skills and was very rewarding, although education has remained my main focus.

3

Who you are
(including your goals and how
the course will contribute)

My committed nature has made me a very hard-working and conscientious student. My main strength in Business Studies is my ability to make decisions and apply appropriate strategies to certain situations, including methods of raising finance, motivation strategies and promotional techniques - all of which contribute to the qualities required to be an effective manager. Studying these topics at [University Name] will provide me with the skills to fulfil my long-term ambition of managing a business in the computing sector, drawing on a variety of knowledge covered in the different areas of the course.

I very much look forward to the challenge and rewards of university life, and I am confident that it will enable me to achieve my goals and build a rewarding career.