

Aspire to writing a good personal statement guide...

It's just a few general tips etc...

Structure of the personal statement: *(I have used my own personal statement structure as an example for the structure, but you don't have to follow my order of paragraphs. I have just given you themes of what to include – write your personal statement however you want as it may flow differently to mine)*

- **Paragraph 1 – Introduction and why you want to do the course:** A general introduction on why you want to do the course (Keep this to roughly 4/5 lines – but make it short and snappy, remember this is the first paragraph the admission's tutor will read so you want to engage them so they want to read more. Don't make it too long as they will get bored, remember that they have hundreds of personal statements to read!)
- **Paragraph 2 – Further mention your desire to study the course:** Relate your desire to study the course with your A-Level (and even GCSE subject) choices; in the second paragraph you begin to really depict your passion for the course and how your own academic interests relate to this.
- **Paragraph 3 – Work experience:** Work experience – mention any work experience you have here, if your work experience links directly to the course you want to study then make sure you have an emphasis on your work experience and why it further ignited your passion to study the course (E.g. if you are applying for optometry and have work experience in an opticians you can talk about sitting in on an eye test. If your work experience is unrelated to your chosen degree programme, still discuss it but mostly emphasise on how it has helped you as an individual)
- **Paragraph 4 – Academia and school life:** Academia and school life – In your 4th paragraph talk about your role at school e.g. house captain, senior students, prefect, head boy etc (even if you were only a house captain in middle school and not in high school, it is still worth mentioning these things). Talk about things like when you've helped out at school, e.g. open evenings, sports day etc.
- **Paragraph 5 – Hobbies and interests:** Your hobbies and interests: talk about things which you enjoy doing outside of school, you need to show that you are a well-rounded person and not just interested in studying all the time!! Examples of things you can include are: sports, photography, travelling, art, reading, baking etc.
- **Paragraph 6 – Closing paragraph:** Final closing paragraph: Your final paragraph is arguably just as important as the first one, this is the final thing the admission's tutor will read so make sure you end your personal statement on a good note. Talk about why you want to go to university and study your course, and why you would be a good student at university, you can mention all the good things about yourself here or extra things you have done e.g. Extended project, DofE, Summer school's, public speaking and even things like entrepreneurship e.g. if you've sold things like maybe drinks etc at a school fair or independently – talk about how you are an independent driven person. Relate all the good things you have EVER done in your life, both academic and non-academic to why you would be a good student at university.

OTHER ADDITIONAL TIPS...

- Remember your personal statement is there for you to sell yourself, so make sure you do exactly that – make sure you mention all the positive things about yourself, there are more than you think so rack your brains and give yourselves the credit you deserve😊.
- Start off by doing a mind map or a quick bullet point list on what you are going to include in each paragraph, only start constructing your personal statement once you have all your ideas gathered together.

- It seems really hard at first, and you're starting and closing paragraph can be the most difficult things to do – but once you start it, the rest of it will flow. You don't have to get your personal statement 'perfect' first time.
- But start it early, the earlier you start it means the more time you have to make improvements – also you want to send off your personal statement as early as possible. Sending it off early shows the admission's tutor you are keen, adamant and determined to study your desired course.
- Have a mixture of paragraph sizes, so some small paragraphs and other longer ones... Make sure a paragraph does not exceed a MAXIMUM of 9-12 lines, otherwise it won't really be a paragraph anymore. The shortest length of a paragraph should roughly be about 4 lines.
- Everyone's personal statement will be different, for instance I focused a lot on my 'academia' section because I had helped out a lot at school etc, whereas if you have a lot of work experience related to your course then speak about all of that and your work experience can be your main focus. Everyone has their own individual unique selling points, so focus your personal statement on yours. It doesn't matter if say your friend has 10 lines on their work experience and you only have 4, everyone has different strengths and everyone does different things. It doesn't make your personal statement any less valuable.
- If you do mention things from previous schools such as being house captain, then unless you were also house captain in high school too – don't say that you were house captain in middle school as that's retrospective and does not seem as good.
- Make sure your personal statement is written in full and proper English, use grammar and punctuation etc correctly and do not use abbreviations such as: can't, don't, etc.
- Your personal statement can only be 4000 CHARACTERS (with spaces) so make sure you stick to this, sometimes the characters may be different on Word and UCAS, so make sure you do enter it onto the UCAS website at least a week or so before you intend to submit it to ensure you are within the required character count.
- This is not a *set in stone guide*, this is just my advice and it's based on my experience. I managed to get 5/5 offers from the universities I applied to.
- Medicine/Dentistry personal statements tend to have a different structure to general ones. Also there are lots of examples of personal statement's on Google (The Student Room and www.studential.com)