



# Writing a Personal Statement

## What is a personal statement?

A personal statement supports the application to study at a university or college. It's a chance to articulate why you would like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field.



## What to Write about?

### You!

You are telling admissions staff why you are suitable to study at their university or college.

It's important to remember to only write one personal statement – it's the same one for each course you apply for. So, avoid mentioning any universities or colleges by name.

If you have chosen similar subjects, you'll need to talk about the subject in general, and try not to mention course titles. If you've chosen a variety of subjects, you will just write about common themes, like problem solving or creativity.

- Look at course descriptions and identify the qualities, skills, and experience it requires
- Tell the reader why you're applying – include your ambitions, as well as what interests you about the subject, the course provider, and higher education.
- Think about what makes you suitable – this could be relevant experience, skills, or achievements you've gained from education, work, or other activities.
- Include any clubs or societies you belong to – sporting, creative, or musical.
- Mention any relevant employment experience or volunteering you've done
- If you've developed skills through **Duke of Edinburgh**, **ASDAN**, **National Citizen Service**, the **Crest Awards scheme**, or **young enterprise**, tell them.
- If you took part in a higher education taster course, placement, or summer school, or something similar, include it.

### Personal circumstances

- If there are any personal circumstances which have affected your educational performance, outline them in your personal statement.
- If your personal circumstances have affected your qualification choices, you can mention this in your personal statement.
- If you have suffered financial hardship during your studies (e.g. received a bursary to cover the costs of your education), you can let the university know about that here.

If you have a question about writing your personal statement, don't worry, you're not alone! Here are some useful blogs to help:

[Aimee's blog on how to complete your personal statement](#)

[Charlotte's blog on writing your personal statement](#)

[Five of the most frequently asked questions about personal statements](#)

[Ten places to find pointers about writing your personal statement](#)

## How to write it?

A personal statement should be unique, so there's no definite format to follow – just take time. Here are some guidelines to follow, but remember a personal statement needs to be 'personal'.

- Write in an enthusiastic, concise, and natural style – nothing too complex.
- Try to stand out, but be careful with humour, quotes, or anything unusual – just in case the admissions tutor doesn't have the same sense of humour as you!
- Structure your info to reflect the skills and qualities the unis and colleges value most – use the course descriptions to help you.
- Check the character and line limit – you have 4,000 characters and 47 lines. Some word processors get different values if they don't count tabs and paragraph spacing as individual characters.
- Proofread aloud, and get your teachers, advisers, and family to check. Then redraft it until you're happy with it, and the spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct.

We recommend you write your personal statement first, then copy and paste it into your online application once you're happy with it. Make sure you save it regularly, as it times out after 35 minutes of inactivity.

Here are some useful documents to get you started:

-  [Personal statement mind map](#) (2.58 MB)
-  [Personal statement worksheet](#) (227.9 KB)

## Personal Statement – Dos and Don'ts

- **Do** show that you know your strengths, and outline your ideas clearly.
- **Do** be enthusiastic – if you show you're interested in the course, it may help you get a place.
- **Do** expect to produce several drafts of your personal statement before being totally happy with it.
- **Do** ask people you trust for their feedback
- **Don't** be tempted to buy or copy a personal statement, or share yours. All personal statements are checked for similarity – if your personal statement is flagged as similar to other applicants, it could affect your chances of being offered a place.
- **Don't** exaggerate – if you do, you may get caught out in an interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.
- **Don't** rely on a spellchecker, as it will not pick up everything – proofread as many times as possible.
- **Don't** leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed, and important information could be left out.
- **Don't** let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.

## Work Experience/Voluntary Work

Work experience is a valuable opportunity for developing employability skills for your CV and personal statement. It helps to provide some evidence of skills, and examples of how you have used them. There are many voluntary opportunities that you can get involved with and email addresses below provide information about some local opportunities. You can also become a St John Rigby College Ambassador and help at open evenings and taster days.

## **Local & National volunteering opportunities**

[www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/Volunteering/index.aspx](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/Volunteering/index.aspx)

[www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org)

[www.greenslatefarm.org.uk/volunteering/](http://www.greenslatefarm.org.uk/volunteering/)

[www.thebrick.org.uk/volunteers/](http://www.thebrick.org.uk/volunteers/)

[www.book-cycle.org/volunteer/volunteer-with-book-cycle/](http://www.book-cycle.org/volunteer/volunteer-with-book-cycle/)

<https://wearencs.com/>