



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

UNI APPLICATION PERSONAL STATEMENT HINTS AND TIPS #1

YOUR OPENING PARAGRAPH

The first line of your personal statement is the very first impression the university gets of you, so it is key to ensure your opener is original and reflects yourself as an individual. Writing the first line can be tricky for some, so we've compiled some hints and tips to help you along the way.

- Stuck? Come back to it
- Write what comes naturally
- Reflect your personality and motivation for the subject
- Don't just state that you're interested in the subject, give evidence to show you are
- Talk about what has inspired you to study this subject
- Where has your passion come from? Was it a particular topic, a particular time period or even a place or experience you had?
- Start with a short sentence

Clichés to avoid as your opening sentence

- 'Even as a young child, I was always interested in Nursing'
- 'Physics has always been a passion of mine, ever since I was young'
- 'For as long as I can remember...'
- 'Reflecting on my educational experiences...'
- 'I have always enjoyed Musical Theatre and therefore want to study it at university'



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PERSONAL STATEMENT OVERVIEW

It's important to familiarise yourself with the basics of the personal statement to ensure that when you begin writing, you understand how and why the personal statement is used, and what universities expect from the personal statement overall.

- 4,000 characters (one side of A4)
- Covers all five choices
- Interviews (read your personal statement before an interview to help you prepare)
- Competition (your personal statement could be used to compete for a place on a course)
- Your interests (add your interests, but say how they relate to the course and career)
- Why the course? Why you?

Personal Statement Structure

Keep it simple by using a structure that flows. For example, start with 5% for your introduction, 70% focusing on your academic experiences, or relevant experience for the course, 20% on extra curricular activities and the skills you have developed that are relevant to the course, then 5% conclusion to tie everything together.

Remember to think ABC when writing your Personal Statement

Activity – What have you done?

Benefit – What skills/experience has it given you?

Course/Career – How does this relate to the course (or your future career)?



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UNI APPLICATION PERSONAL STATEMENT HINTS AND TIPS #3

WHAT EXPERIENCE DO I ALREADY HAVE?

Planning what you're going to include is the first step in writing an excellent personal statement. A key part of planning is looking over everything you have already achieved, and what experiences you have gained. Different experiences provide you with a multitude of transferable skills which you will use on your university course. Use our examples and hints to make a list of experiences you already have, and from this pull out the transferable skills you have gained. Once this is complete, you will have set yourself up to describe in your personal statement how those skills will make you an excellent candidate for their course.

Part time jobs

- Beneficial for your personal statement and securing graduate employment
- Provide you with transferable skills
- Check company websites for vacancies
- Could you transfer your job to a location near your chosen university?

Have you?

- Competed Duke of Edinburgh
- Been head boy or head girl?
- Been a prefect, mentor or student ambassador?
- Attended a taster day or academic lecture?
- Captained a sports team?
- Learned to play an instrument?

Transferable skills

- Communication – Mentoring, being a student ambassador, presentations, group work
- Teamwork – Sports, volunteering, part time work, development programmes
- Leadership and supervision – Head boy or girl, being a prefect, captain of a sports team, leading on a project
- Researching and analysing – Extended Project Qualification
- Problem solving and decision making

Part time work and volunteering

- Planning and organising
- Helping to plan an event, managing your time effectively
- Work experience (alternatives) – Volunteer, reach out to people working in a profession you're interested in, virtual work experience, Barclays Life Skills
- If your course requires compulsory work experience as part of the admissions process – get in touch with the uni for more advice.



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WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN THE COURSE?

Universities want to know what inspired you to choose this course. Within the personal statement, you will want to demonstrate that you're an excellent candidate by explaining why your skills, specific interests, work experience and enjoyment of the subject makes this degree perfectly suited to you as an individual.

Enjoyment of the subject

- What gives you that spark for your subject?

Your skills

- How do your skills, including transferable skills, relate to your course and career?

Specific interests

- How do they relate to your course and career?

Work experience

- Relevant part time job provides a platform of skills and responsibility, preparing you for university.

Examples of this being demonstrated

'I am in the process of conducting an independent research project on the environmental implications of face coverings in my local river. This has helped me expand my knowledge further and I hope my findings will provide a great base for studying a degree in Environmental Science.'

'Being a dedicated member of my local amateur dramatics society has allowed me to perform in front of large audiences many times. This has helped with my confidence and creative skills, and has helped develop my love for musical theatre even further.'



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UNI APPLICATION PERSONAL STATEMENT HINTS AND TIPS #5

SHOWING YOUR INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT AREA

If you feel that you would like more content to discuss in your personal statement, then there are plenty of activities that you can undertake in your spare time which you can include. Universities are impressed with students who have researched around their future degree course. There are plenty of resources to watch, listen to and read to build upon your knowledge. We've put together some examples to get you started.

- **Watch** – Vlogs, performances, films, world cinema, documentaries
- **Read** – Subject specific magazines, academic journals, news, around the subject, blogs
- **Listen** – Radio programmes, public lecturers, podcasts
- **Visit** – Museums, galleries, summer schools, taster days, sites of interest, your local library
- **Explore** – Free online courses, work experience, iTunes U, lab placements, academic competitions, joining a club/society, online resources
- **Online talks and lectures** – TED Talks, RSA Animate, YouTube
- **Free online courses** – Future Learn, Coursera, iTunes U, Google Digital Garage
- **Magazines, journals, newspapers and online articles** – Times Literary Supplement, British Psychological Society, Royal Geographical Society, British Medical Journal, New Scientist, The Economist
- **Podcasts and radio** – Spotify, BBC Sounds, BBC Radio 4
- **Online learning resources** – Poetry archive, the National Archive
- **Art, theatre and performance** – The MET, Tate Student Resources, National Theatre at Home, Royal Opera House, YouTube, TED, Shakespeare's Globe, Whatsonstage