

## **Starting Your Personal Statement**

### PART ONE

#### **Academic Content of Personal Statement**

- Explain why you want to study that subject and give specific reasons for your interest in the course
- Show evidence of research and background reading (a good place to start is a MOOC on Unifrog)
- Why studying your current subjects and why do you enjoy them? How will they help on your university course?
- Show that you know and are prepared for studying the course – especially if it is a vocational course or a subject you haven't studied before
- What are your career plans for when you finish the course
- Any relevant job, work placement or voluntary experience – especially if it's helped develop skills and give experience that normal schoolwork would not uncover
- Mention if you've attended any summer schools or related lectures – it will bolster the impression of a motivated student
- If you are applying for different subjects on the same form, you will need to explain your decisions clearly or institutions will feel that you haven't actually made your mind up

Try and write a paragraph about why you want to study your chosen subject

## PART TWO

<u>Social Content of Personal Statement</u>
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- Academic qualifications alone are not enough for most admissions tutors, they love students who put themselves out to achieve something and enjoy a life outside their studies
- I. e., they want to see what makes you tick!
- Include any hobbies/interests you may have and, if possible, relate them to how they will make you a better student
- Any involvement with any other extracurricular groups e.g., the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- If possible, include anything which shows that you have an intelligent interest in the world
- Mention any positions of responsibility, evidence of self-motivation and any hurdles overcome
- Use these to demonstrate your character and your strengths
- If you are planning to take a gap year, explain why

### Your Strengths

### Your Weaknesses

Three interesting facts about yourself:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three of your hobbies/interests:

1.

2.

3.

Now, write down your skills, taking into consideration the three facts and hobbies and what strengths and weaknesses they might demonstrate:

Skills

Give other examples where you have demonstrated these skills:

## PART THREE

### Writing Technique

- 4000 characters (approx) 500-550 words in length, word document, size 12 font
- Your reason for wanting to study your chosen course is the first thing tutors will look for and will usually be the opening part of a statement
- BUT!!! Don't start with "I've always wanted to study..."
- It is important to hook the reader and grab the attention of the Admissions Tutor from the start. If you have a unique selling point, this is where it should be mentioned
- Be personal, positive and not bland
- Don't start every sentence with "I"
- Avoid repeating any information you have already provided
- Show it to a friend, family member, teacher or a careers advisor
- Check spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Be original – Admissions Tutors read so many that it is easy to tell if a statement has been copied
- Make a few copies to keep for reference
- Finish on a high note
- Take your time, be patient and get it right – it could make the difference between you getting an offer or not

### Typically asked questions at Interviews:

An ice breaker: How was your journey?? or Did have any trouble finding us?

Why do you want to study this subject?

Why did you choose the A-levels that you are currently studying?

What is the most valuable thing you have learnt from your current studies?

Why do you want to study on this particular course?

Why do you want to study at this university?

Have you had any practical experience in the field that you wish to study? Can you describe it for us?

Do you know of any recent developments in the field that you wish to study?

Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years' time?

What can you tell us about yourself?

What can you offer the university?

What are your hobbies/interests? Your personal statement says that you e.g. enjoy outdoor sports – can you tell me more about them?

What do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

Give me an example of when you had to plan and organise your own work.

### Questions you might like to ask:

Does the university/department/course have any links with industry?

Are there any opportunities to specialise in specific areas on the course?

What equipment/technology does the university/department have?

How is the teaching structured?

Are there any opportunities to study abroad?

Will I be expected to go on a work placement during my course?

What clubs/societies are there at the University? What does the Students Union have to offer?

Write down any other questions you would like to ask, in an interview for university or a job:

Useful websites:

[www.getintouni.com](http://www.getintouni.com)

[www.oxbridge-admissions.org.uk](http://www.oxbridge-admissions.org.uk)

[www.studential.com](http://www.studential.com)

[www.uni4me.co.uk](http://www.uni4me.co.uk)

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)