

# Writing an Effective Personal Statement

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**The Personal Statement is your chance to be the admissions tutor's favourite pug!**

## One Statement 4,000 characters or 47 lines



Your chance to **persuade** an admissions tutor that you are the right candidate for the course

Your opportunity to **stand out** from the competition

Will form the basis of questioning at interview, **or it will be the only opportunity you have to talk about why you should be given a place**

# Getting started – How to use your 47 lines

**Academic 80-90%**

Information about your skills, knowledge and experience that is directly relevant to the course that you are making an application for

**Additional Skills, Hobbies and Interests**

**Summarise why you will be a good choice**

## Be original...

“I want you to tell me about **you** as a real, three-dimensional person.”

Dr Jon Scott, University of Leicester

“**Be yourself**; it's a pleasure (though a surprisingly rare one) to read a statement where the candidate's **own voice** comes over clearly.”

University of Southampton English Department

[http://www.southampton.ac.uk/english/undergraduate/ucas\\_application.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/english/undergraduate/ucas_application.page)

“It is important that you write it in your own style rather than **trying to conform** to what someone else thinks is right.”

University of Bristol UCAS application dos and don'ts

[www.bristol.ac.uk/study/schools/factsheets](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/schools/factsheets)

# What do admissions tutors look for in your Personal Statement?

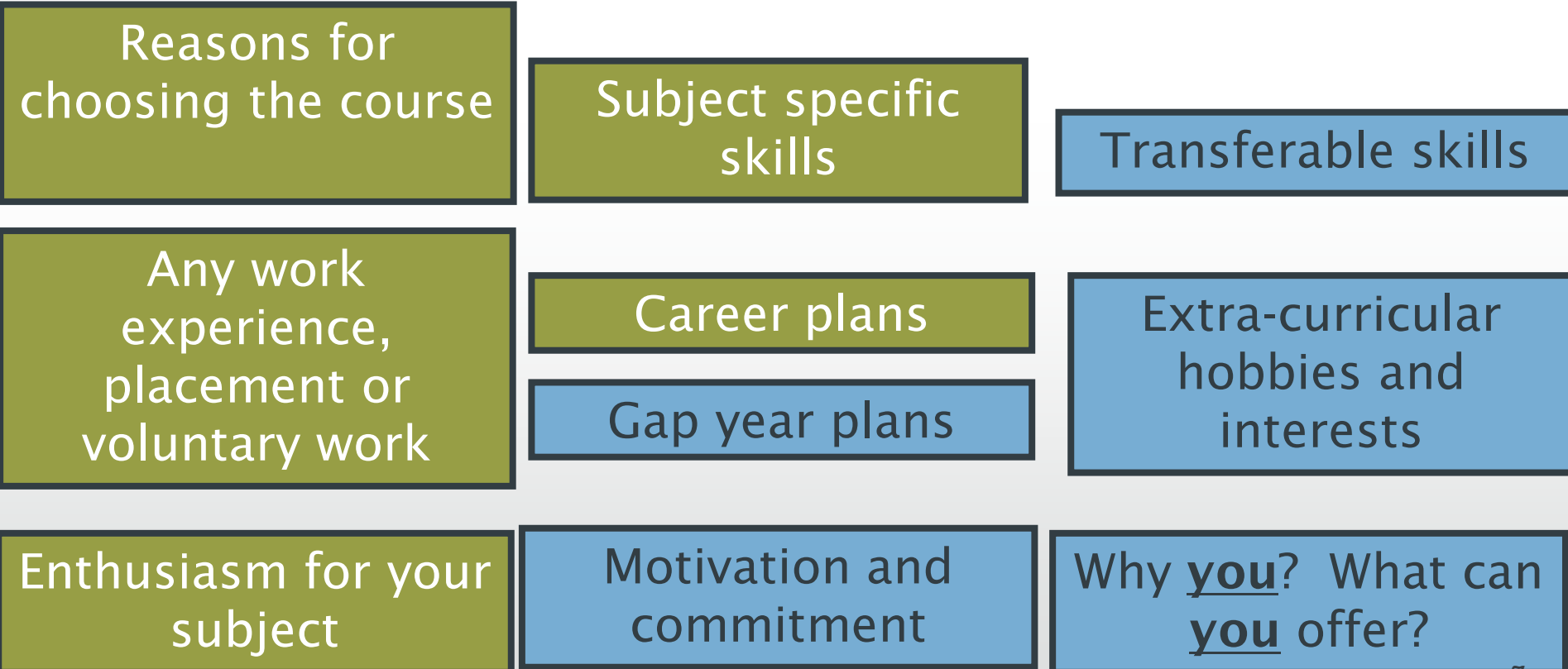
PROOF of your interest in the subject

DEMONSTRATION of your commitment

EVIDENCE that you have the skills needed for the course

# How can I show this to an admissions tutor?

A rounded picture to show that you are a suitable candidate for the university both academically and socially



# What about the structure?

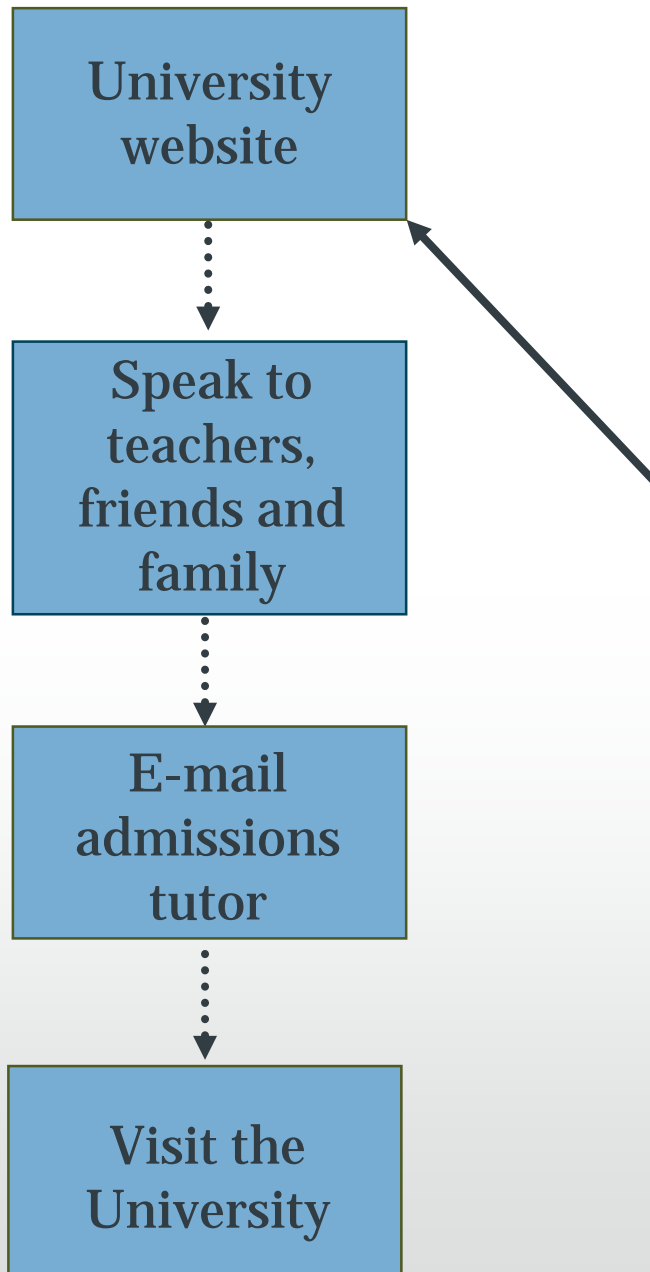
## Paragraph 1: Introduction

What was your personal trigger?

How does your subject relate to society or current affairs?

Which aspects of the course are you really looking forward to studying in more detail and why?





## An Example

For as long as I can remember I have always had an interest in Law. When I was little I used to get home from nursery and Mom would make lunch and put on Judge Judy. This is when I realised that being a Layer was a profession I want to be part of. As I have got my interest in Law hasn't subsided, in fact it's blossomed. I have closely followed shows such as the BBC's Watchdog and I watched the trail of Oscar Pistorius to gain an insight in to what I will need to do when I qualify.

(LLB Law Degree)

## **A Slightly Better Example**

My interest in business sprang from my personal experiences with my father's company. The complexity of managing people, the production process, distribution and manufacturing of a product fascinate me and my choice of Business Management at degree level is a natural one.

(BSc Business Management)

# What about the structure?

## Paragraph 2: Your interest in the subject

What have you done in school/college to develop your interest in the subject? (trips/books/wider reading documentaries...)

What have you done outside school or college you can **link** to your subject? (work experience, volunteering, part-time job...)

Do you have a particular career aspiration?

# Skills and Experience in 3 Sheets

## Sheet 3

Combine sheets 1 and 2.

Which elements of the skills, knowledge and experience that you've already got will make great material for your Personal Statement?

Where are the gaps that you feel you could work towards developing?



Activity (what have you done)



Benefit (skills its given you)



Course (how it relates to the course)



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Preparing for University

# Hobbies and Interests

Avoid a boring list of hobbies, e.g. *'reading'*, *'socialising with friends'*, *'going to the cinema'*.







Fine to mention films, books that you like but make sure to mention genres, authors, artists etc. and mention why they interest you. Try to make it relevant.



# What about the structure?

## Summary

Finish with a one or two line summary recapping:

- Why you want to go to university and study the course?
- Why you deserve to be offered a place?

Conclude your personal statement by briefly and concisely bringing it back to why you are a good choice for the course and the university.

Highlight how you are prepared both **academically** and **socially** for the challenge of Higher Education.

# UCAS Similarity Detection

‘Ever since I accidentally burnt holes in my pyjamas after experimenting with a chemistry set on my 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, I have always had a passion for science.’



**233 other applicants used this opening  
in their Personal Statement in 2007**

## Reasons given to unsuccessful applicants

// **You failed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and enough interest in the subject in your personal statement for the course you are applying for**

//

# Punctuation

Dear John: I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we are apart. I can be forever happy – will you let me be yours? Gloria



## **Top tips**

- Focus most of your statement on evidencing why you are the best candidate for the course
- Be specific
- Be positive
- Be original
- Analyse your experiences
- Keep a copy
- Get someone else to read it

# Any questions?