

Personal statements: 10 top tips



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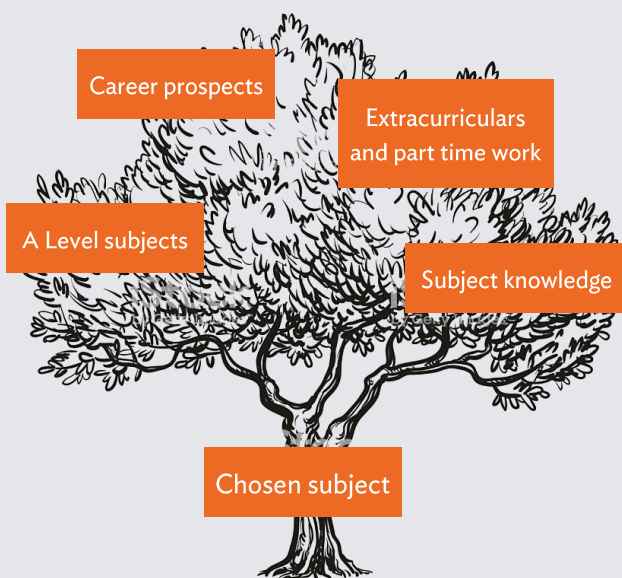
1

Start your statement early – The sooner you start thinking about your statement the better. Think about why you want to study your course, why you want to go to university and why you should be offered a place at university as these will form the basis of your statement.

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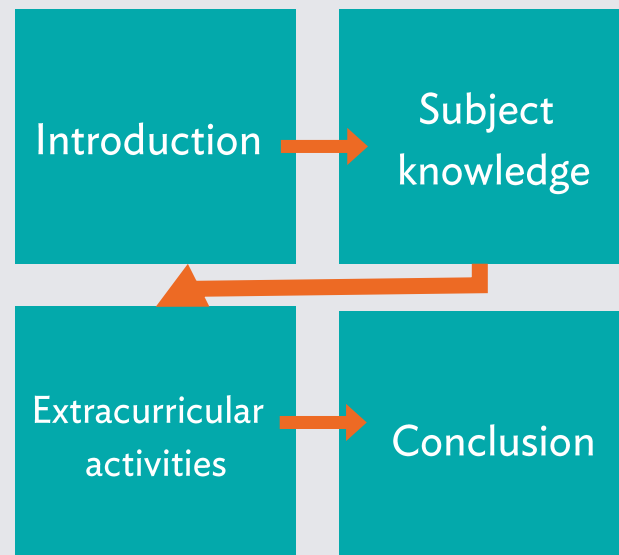
Think about your structure – There are a number of different ways to structure your statement. See below for two suggested structures.

Tree structure



- Main theme of your personal statement is the subject you are applying for.
- Each section (split into four here) will directly relate to how you would be the perfect candidate for your chosen course

Flow structure



- 4 paragraphs, each focusing on an aspect of your ability to succeed at university
- Should show your interest in the course, subject knowledge, relevant extracurricular activities and finally your future aspirations and career goals

3

Be concise and to the point: The statement is a short piece of either 47 lines or 4,000 characters. You need to make sure that everything you decide to include is relevant and that you do not drift from the structure.

4

Stand out and be different: Every year, admissions specialists will read through many personal statements including similar things. Make sure that you are not cliché– especially in your opening line.

5

For every example you use (e.g. 'I am very organised') back it up with evidence. Use the STAR technique (Situation, Task, Action and Result) or PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explain, Link) when using any examples. Do not use sweeping statements or examples that you cannot back up.

6

Make sure your statement is balanced between your academic achievements and your extracurricular activities. Universities are looking for a rounded student who can not only contribute academically but also contribute to the university community. See below for suggested content:

75- 80% Academic, focusing on your chosen course

Why have you chosen this subject?
 What particularly interests you about this subject?
 Where has this interest come from?
 How are you competent at this subject?
 What independent reading or research have you done?

20—25% Extracurricular:
 link to transferable skills:

Work experience
 Awards, prizes, accolades
 Career aspirations
 Other activities

7

Try and think about which transferrable skills an admission tutor is looking for that will be useful when you get to university. Your statement should be skills orientated rather than a list of what you have done.

8

Ask your friends, family and teachers to read over your statement. These people are often the ones who know you best and will think of examples you may not have included. Also, they may spot mistakes that you may have missed yourself.

9

Make sure your statement reflects you as a person. Your UCAS application can be quite colourless until your personal statement. Your personal statement is your only chance to reflect your personality and to show what makes you great. Make sure it sounds like you have written it- not your teacher or parent.

10

Just before you submit your statement, proof read and keep checking your statement. Make sure the statement flows, there are no spelling mistakes and you are within the word limit. Check technical terms and dates. It's always better to be safe than sorry!

We run workshops, talks and events to help you with your personal statement, as well as other activities and events related to university. For more information, please visit
royalholloway.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges

