

Personal Statements

Student Pack

January 2021

For more information: schools@royalholloway.ac.uk
www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/schools-and-colleges/

Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

@RoyalHolloway

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Tackling Personal Statements:

Personal Statements are a reflective essay about why you are the best candidate for the course and university. Within this session:

1. You will understand what a personal statement is and why it is important.
2. You will know what you should be including in your personal statement and how to structure it.
3. You will know some of the best top tips for getting started and writing your personal statement.

Resources	Additional Resources	Useful websites
1. Student Pack (this document)	1. Personal Statement Template	UCAS Personal Statement Tool—https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement
2. Personal Statement Presentation	2. Personal Statement Quiz	
3. Personal Statements in 60 seconds video.	3. Personal Statement—how do you structure—video.	
4. Personal Statements 10 minute video	4. Personal Statements—what should I write—video.	
5. Personal Statement Narrated PowerPoint.	5. Pandemic Blog—living in halls during lockdown.	
	6. Pandemic Blog—Exams and Coursework during the pandemic.	
	7. Pandemic Blog—Returning to university in the pandemic.	

Activity 1: Watch the Personal Statements in 60 Seconds video

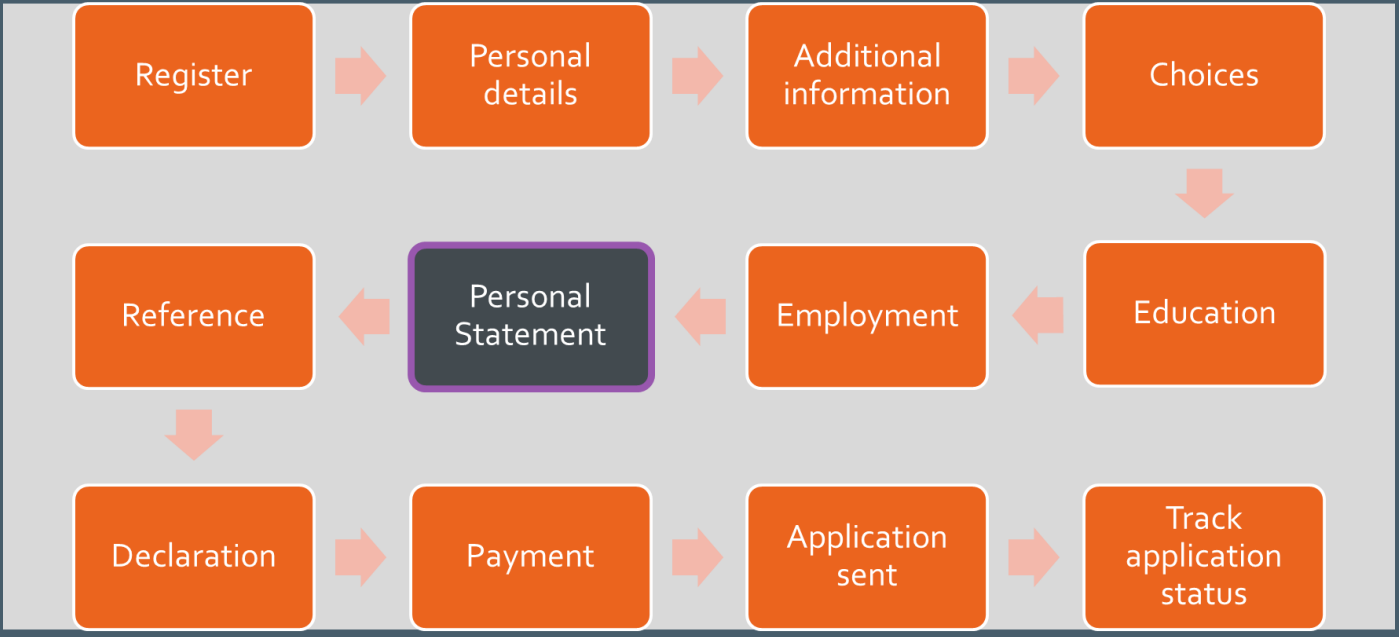
What is a Personal Statement?

Personal Statements

A personal statement is a reflective essay about why you are the best candidate for your course and it allows universities to get to know the person behind the grades. It will be submitted to UCAS as part of your application.

It is restricted to only 4,000 characters and 47 lines.

How does it link with The UCAS Process?



Your Personal Statement is the first part of the UCAS application process that allows you to put your personal stamp on it, so you want to show off your knowledge and experiences .

Activity 2—slide 9: Think about the answers to these questions and note them down, as it will be useful for researching courses and writing your personal statement.

1. Why do you want to study further?
2. Why do you want to study your course of choice?
3. What type of course do you want to study? BA or BSc?
4. Are looking at the courses making you excited and why?

What should you include in your personal statement?

The criteria admissions specialists are looking for are:



ABLE TO STUDY INDEPENDENTLY



CAN CONTRIBUTE TO UNIVERSITY LIFE



MOTIVATED AND HIGH ACHIEVING



INTELLECTUALLY CAPABLE



POTENTIAL TO SUCCEED



SIGNIFICANT SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



INTEREST IN STUDYING SUBJECT

Activity 3: Take a minute to think about examples of what you could include in your Personal Statement. List these themes below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

You will want to spend most of your word count discussing 'Academic Content' such as your studies and any academic references you have.

A great way to expand your knowledge and to give yourself this 'academic content' is to complete extra reading and research then talking about this in your statement. For example, reading journal articles, attending taster days (even if online), or listening to podcasts.

Another excellent use of your word count is the inclusion of 'Extracurricular Activities' - such as: music, hobbies, sports, travel, work experience/volunteering.

How do you structure your personal statement?

70%

Academic: Focused on your chosen course(s):

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

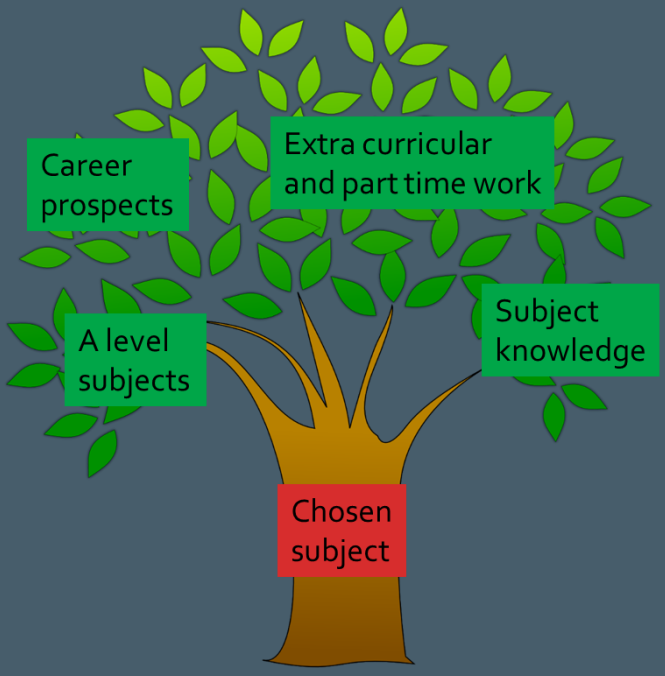
30%

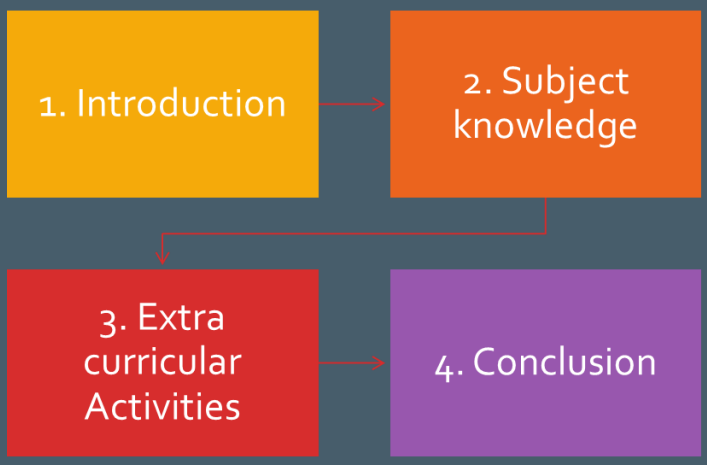
Extracurricular: What other skills and experience do you have?

- Work experience
- Extra curricular activities
- Career aspirations
- Unrelated activities

Activity 4: Review the structures to find which is best suited to you:

Structure 1—The Tree Structure OR Structure 2— The Flow Structure





The Tree Structure: Each paragraph will 'branch our' from the main concept of your 'chosen subject'

The Flow Structure: Each four boxes are different paragraphs. This is easy to lay out and keep track of and also ensure a highly methodical flow to your personal statement.

The Flow Structure further explained:

Part 1

- **Introduction**
- Why are you interested in this course? Why do you want to study it at degree level?

Part 2

- **Discuss your subject academically**
- How do your A-Levels link to your chosen course? What independent reading or research have you done? What other course-related activities have you taken part in?

Part 3

- **Extra-curricular activities**
- What additional activities do you take part in? How could these show skills that are relevant for studying at university level?

Part 4

- **Conclusion**
- Including career ambitions

UCAS Personal Statement Rules:

Character / line limit

- UCAS has a limit of 4000 characters and 47 lines.
- The character limit includes apostrophes, spaces and other special characters.
- The line limit includes blank paragraphs.
- Anything over this limit is lost.
- It is possible to write a great personal statement within these limits- it is good practice for university and eliminates waffle.

Plagiarism

- UCAS is very strict on plagiarism using a particular software to make sure your personal statement is unique
- If plagiarism is detected, this information is passed to universities.
- In 2007, plagiarism detectors found 234 personal statements for medicine contained a story about a dramatic incident involving "burning a hole in pyjamas at age eight". This was because the applicants had all used the same online example statement.

Activity 5: Watch the Personal Statements 10 minute video

Personal Statement Top Tips:

1.Explain why you want to study the course

2.Explain why you're right for the course

3.Say what you've done outside the classroom & why it's relevant.

4.How is your chosen career related to you course?

5.Make it easy to read

6.Start strong

7.Let your personality in

8.Write naturally

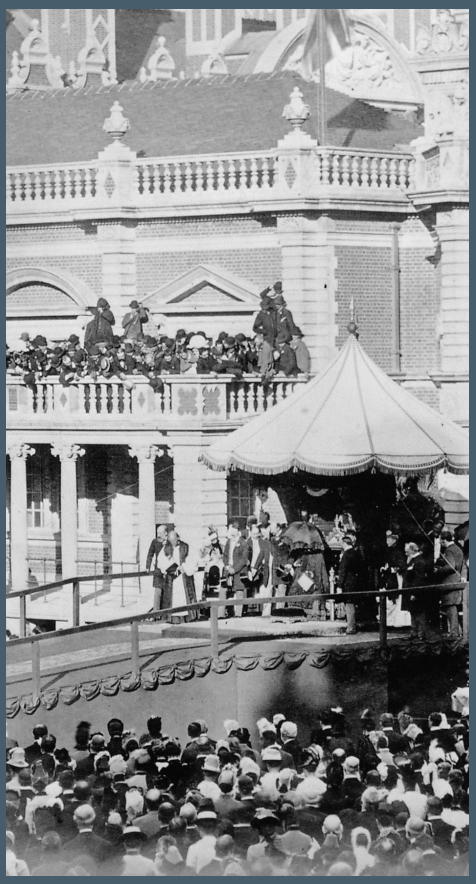
9.Remember STAR

10.PERSONAL & STATEMENT—remember this should be about you!

Thank you for 'Tackling Personal Statements' with us!







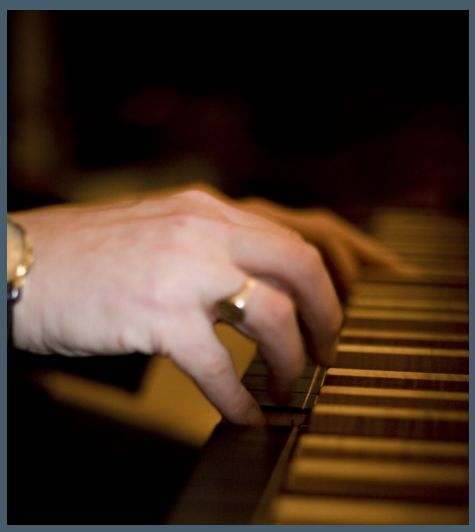


Royal Holloway is a campus university in Egham, Surrey. Just 40 minutes by train to London Waterloo and 7 miles from the international hub of Heathrow.

Ranked highly* in the UK for the quality of our research and teaching we're a close-knit community that's all about inspiring our students success.

As one of the UK's most international universities ours is a global community bringing diverse perspectives to your studies. With a rich history we're proud of we continue to be inspired by the egalitarian and ambitions sprit of our founders.





*Top 25 University in the UK (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, 2019)



