Northampton College



# Writing a UCAS Personal Statement

## What is a personal statement?

**This is your opportunity to sell yourself to admissions tutors and convince them that you are a good candidate for a place on their course. To do this successfully you will need to convey your enthusiasm for your chosen subject and your suitability for the course.**

Personal statements are especially important if you're trying to get on a very competitive course, where you need to stand out to admissions tutors.

Visit **www.ucas.com** for personal statement guides on specific courses with more tailored advice and examples.

## Content

Be prepared to do several drafts before your personal statement is ready to add to your UCAS application.

Email a copy to the Futures Team for expert feedback:

**futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk**

Your personal statement can be up to 4000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines.

## Layout

The personal statement is split into 3 sections:

- Motivation
- Preparation
- Extra-curricular activities

Each section has a question to be answered with a minimum of 350 characters required, which is clearly labelled on the question boxes, along with an overall character counter, so you can keep track.



# SECTION 1

## Why do you want to study this course or subject?

This is your opportunity to demonstrate why your chosen course is a good fit for you.

**Examples of what you could include are:**

- Your motivation for studying this course, personal experience, or learning that has inspired you.
- Your knowledge of this subject area and/or career.
- Any super-curricular activities you've taken part in to show your interest beyond the classroom, e.g. wider reading, online courses, podcasts, careers webinars etc.
- Think about the impact it had on you, how it has developed your thinking or knowledge, any skills you developed, or how it inspired you.
- Your future plans or ambitions and why this course is a good fit for you.

If you're unsure of your career goals at this stage, you could mention how the knowledge gained on your chosen course will help you with your future plans.



# SECTION 2

## How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

This is your chance to highlight transferable skills you've gained from your education and your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.

**Examples of what you could include are:**

**How your studies or training relate to your chosen course or subject area.**

Focus on what's most recent and relevant to your chosen course.

**Relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate.**

Is there a unit or experience from your current course that has helped you develop a core set of skills required?

# SECTION 3

## What else have you done to prepare outside of education and why are these experiences useful?

This is your chance to mention any other activities you have taken part in outside of college, or personal experiences which show your suitability for your chosen course.

**Examples of what you could include are:**

**Work experience, employment, or volunteering.**

Remember to reflect on your experiences and the skills gained that are relevant to your chosen course and to balancing the demands of work and study.

**Personal life experiences or responsibilities.**

These can help you to show essential qualities needed for the course/career.

**Hobbies and extracurricular activities or achievements.**

Any activities outside of your studies that highlight why you would make a great student.

**Follow the ABC rule to explain your experiences:**

**A-Action:** What did you do?

**B-Benefit:** What skills/qualities did you gain from it?

**C-Course:** How does this relate to the course you wish to study at university?

## Useful tips to consider:

- Try to limit the number of sentences starting with “I”. e.g. “I am interested in Law” could be changed to “Law has interested me since...”
- Don’t make sentences too long as this is hard to read and confusing, use punctuation.
- Don’t waffle or tell a story; try to be selective and focus on recent study/ experiences from the last few years.
- Don’t be tempted to use language you don’t really understand and wouldn’t normally use.
- Don’t lie.
- Don’t try to be funny or make jokes, you need to convince the reader that you are serious about applying for a place on their course and they may not share your sense of humour!
- Don’t repeat what you have already written in other sections e.g. qualifications.
- Make sure the tone is enthusiastic and positive.

## Words/phrases to avoid:

- I have always been interested in
- From a young age
- Passion/passionate
- Love e.g. “I love learning about...”
- Socialising with friends

**Remember to do a spelling check on your final draft to spot any mistakes, or ask the Futures Team to do this.**

**Do not copy anything from other people’s work – this is plagiarism. UCAS scans all personal statements to check for similarities and shares this with universities.**

**Do not copy and paste from AI tools. AI can help to generate ideas for content, but your personal statement is personal to you so share your thoughts and experiences in your own voice.**

**Before you submit your application, please ensure that you have emailed the Futures Team a copy of your personal statement for expert feedback: futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk**

Alternatively, you can visit the **Futures Team** based in **E1.01 at Booth Lane**, or pop into **Student Services at Lower Mounts or Daventry** to make an appointment with an advisor.

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