

NC

WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

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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.

You may not have an interview for your course which makes your personal statement even more important. Visit wwwucas.com for more advice on how to write your personal statement and other parts of the application process.

WHAT ARE ADMISSIONS TUTORS LOOKING FOR?

When reading your application tutors will be considering the following:

- Does the student have a genuine interest in the course and a desire to learn more about it?
- Are they suited to the course they've applied for?
- Does the student have the right qualifications and qualities for the course?
- Has the student researched the course?
- Do they understand what the subject/course involves?
- Is the student conscientious, hardworking and committed to the course?
- Will the student be able to cope with the demands of the course?
- Can the student work under pressure?
- Is the student capable of balancing academic work and university life?
- What are their communication skills like?
- Do they have the ability to produce a structured piece of academic writing?

You will need to provide evidence of these things within your personal statement.

STARTING TO WRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

It is a good idea to begin the process by writing notes about the easiest parts first rather than worrying about structure, language, or how to start!

These bullet points will give you ideas of what to include:

- Which course you are applying for and why
- Specific parts of the course that interest you
- Personal experiences that have influenced your choice of course
- Evidence that you understand what is required to study the course
- Career goals for the future
- Things you have studied/read/experienced related to your course
- Work experience/voluntary work/charity work
- Part-time work
- Activities you have taken part in/organised
- Skills you have gained from Duke of Edinburgh's Award, National Citizen Service (NCS) or other achievements
- Relevant skills/knowledge you have
- Activities you like to do in your spare time e.g. sports, music etc
- Languages you speak.

These are just ideas so don't worry if these don't all apply to you. Write about the points that highlight your skills, qualities and experiences in a **positive and interesting** way.

As well as writing about what you have done or experienced, it's important to include **what you learnt from it**. When answering these points keep in mind that you must convince the tutors reading your application that you are committed to studying your chosen course.

Remember: Admissions tutors are passionate about their chosen subject so make sure you demonstrate your enthusiasm.

DO NOT COPY ANYTHING FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK – THIS IS PLAGIARISM. UCAS SCAN ALL PERSONAL STATEMENTS TO CHECK FOR SIMILARITIES AND IF ANY ARE DETECTED A UNIVERSITY CAN REJECT YOU INSTANTLY!

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?

LAYOUT

You may wish to divide your personal statement into a few clear sections or paragraphs focusing on different topics.

Spend time planning how to begin and end your personal statement. These sections can be the most difficult to write, but if you get them right they will capture the reader's interest and make your application unique and memorable.

CONTENT

Be prepared to do several drafts before your personal statement is ready to add to your online application. Email a copy to the Futures Team for feedback: futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

The UCAS limit for personal statement length is 47 lines, or 4000 characters (including spaces and punctuation).

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.
- 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.
- Don't write a list of your hobbies without explaining them, any information you include should be relevant and interesting.
- 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.

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 The Lookout at Booth Lane, or pop into Student Services at Lower Mounts or Daventry to make an appointment with an advisor.