

How to Make a UCAS Personal Statement Stand Out

- It is a statement of **academic** intent:
 - A statement of why a student wishes to take a course
 - Demonstrate what they can offer the course / university
- As many students meet the entry requirements it is one of the key ways students can **set themselves apart from others**

Durham University suggest three key areas:

1. Why do you want to study this subject / follow the career?
2. What have you done that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject / follow the career?
3. What else have you done that will contribute to the course / institution and makes you an interesting and unique individual?

At Cambridge, all admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability and potential). Therefore, in your personal statement, we'd like you to:

- explain your reasons for wanting to study the subject at university
- demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to your chosen course
- express any particular interests within the field
- outline how you've pursued your subject interest in your own time

Tonight's - focus

2. What have you (the student) done that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject / follow the career?

Why?

- This is the area that can set a student apart
- Still time to make a difference and do something to write about

What to include?

- Refer to your EPQ if you've taken one
- Do a MOOC
- Read publications related to your subject
- Follow two or three stories / events / issues in details
- Set up a club
- Join a group
- Read widely - outside your period in history
- Read widely - outside your set texts

Personal Statement – How to stand out

Queen Elizabeth High School

- Familiarise yourself with the work of key artists
- Be able to reflect on what you have read
- Do some creative writing
- Be a part of a book group - start one
- Join a society - history, geography
- Follow a legal case
- Research mathematical theories outside the A level course
- Go to public lectures



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- Visit inspiring buildings
- Visit art exhibitions
- Visit theatre and explore different genres of theatre
- Visit historical sites, museums and exhibitions
- Volunteer
- Act as a mentor
- Get appropriate work experience



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- Placements at small companies may give you a wide range of experience
- Attend insight days
- If work experience not available- look wider
- Dentistry
 - volunteer to teach younger children about dental hygiene
 - take part in an activity that requires high level manual dexterity
- Medicine/Nursing - work in a care home, work with disabled children
- Consider an internship
- Attend university taster courses



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- Reflection

“In many cases applicants describe and report on their subject-related experiences but fail to reflect and critically analyse them, for example, elaborating on what they learnt, how their view changed or what challenged them.”

Durham University



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What type of course are you applying for?

- Purely academic
 - e.g. maths, English, history, business
- Vocational
 - e.g. physiotherapy, medicine, nursing, teaching, social work



Personal statement examples

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Student A – Engineering

- Engineering education scheme (experience of project management)
- 5 days work experience at Thomas Swan's
- Independent OU short course 'living without oil'
- Attended 3 day Headstart Summer School at Herriot-Watt University
- Wider reading
- Sporting interests (with recognised coaching qualifications)



Personal statement examples

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Student B – Politics

- Middle East Conference with Lancaster University
- Newcastle University public lecture
- EPQ on Joint Enterprise Law
- Work experience with an International Law Firm
- Links to A level studies
- Keen ballerina who has supported younger children for 6 years and competed at national level in Scottish dancing



Personal statement examples

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Student C – Nursing

- Personal experience as a patient
- Series of lectures at Newcastle University on healthcare
- Volunteering for Tynedale Youthlink as a Peer Mentor
- Volunteering to support patients at the Marie Curie Hospice
- Volunteering at Oxfam shop
- Links to her academic studies and wider reading
- EPQ on the amount of sleep we need compared to guidelines



Personal statement examples

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- Student D – Marine Biology
- Work experience at Plymouth University's marine biology department
- Work experience at the University of Stirling's department of aquaculture
- EPQ on the effects of renewable energy on marine ecosystems
- Qualified PADI open water diver
- DofE, football & music



Personal statement examples

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Student E – Mathematics

- Participated in the maths challenges and in the further maths support programme
- Extensive wider reading on maths theory
- Basic Python programming
- Work experience at Corfinancial where he was modelling risk
- Volunteered at a local special needs school
- Subject champion assisting in maths at QEHS
- Volunteering at Oxfam and part time job
- Participates in lots of sports to a high standard plus music and on the student executive



Personal statement examples

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Student F – Sociology

- Links to her A level sociology & English language c/w
- EPQ on social media
- Volunteered at Sure Start & Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services
- Planning a gap year in South Africa – a mixture of travelling and volunteering
- Volunteering at Crisis at Christmas
- Work experience in a law firm's family and public law department
- Part time job



Personal statement examples

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Student G – Dentistry

- 2 weeks work experience seeing NHS & private treatment
- EPQ on the causes and management of dental anxiety
- Volunteering in a care home and for WECAN
- ST John's Ambulance first aid course
- DofE & higher sports leadership
- Sport & music



Personal statement examples

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Student H – Product Design

- Specific projects in graphics & product design
- Work experience with an architect (designing an MBT trail centre)
- Work experience with an interior designer (designing a sports bar)
- EPQ on advancements in technology in mountain biking
- Represents the NE in national cyclocross and cross country mountain biking



Personal statement examples

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Student I – Drama (acting courses)

- Productions he's been in
- Plays he's been to see
- Zoe Birkett Academy two-day workshop
- LAMDA
- EPQ on gender
- Own YouTube page

Personal statement examples

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Student J – physiotherapy

- Work experience at Hexham general Hospital (elderly & stroke, outpatients & hip & knee replacement wards)
- P/t work as a trainee pharmacy assistant at Boots
- Pharmacy advisor programme
- EPQ on health & fitness
- Biology subject champion
- First aid course
- NCS, boxing & working out



Personal Statement – How to stand out

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- How you can support
 - Familiarise yourself with the structure of the personal statement
 - Talk to your son/daughter about their personal statement
 - Discuss what they have done “extra”
 - Help them with contacts
 - Consider a gap year



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- Use our Moodle Page

Next Steps – Progression Beyond Sixth Form



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Timing

- From our Progression Days at the end of June students can begin their forms
- Fast track ready for end of this term
- Forms can be sent from the middle of September
- All forms sent by October half-term



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Beware Plagiarism

- What happens if a personal statement has similarities? Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or more are reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service Team.
- Applicants, universities and colleges are notified at the same time by email when an application has similarities confirmed.
- Admissions tutors at individual universities and colleges decide what action, if any, to take regarding reported cases.
- <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement/similaritydetection>

