

# THE PERSUASIVE PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement is your chance to make the best impression you can to the universities you are applying to, and for highly competitive courses it could make all the difference to your application. You can only write one personal statement, so you really need to use the opportunity to write passionately about your ambition, skills and experience and really convince the admissions selector to make you an offer!

The personal statement is formed of three questions. Each answer has a minimum character count of 350 characters, and there is an overall character limit of 4000 (including spaces).

“The key to a good personal statement is to always sound like yourself. If there are museums you’ve been to, galleries you’ve volunteered or worked in, books you’ve read, or exhibitions or artists that you just love, even if you can’t explain it, talk about that, because that’s how we’ll get to know you best, and realise that you’ll bring something specific, exciting, and new to the discipline.”

**Professor Jason Edwards, Admissions tutor,  
Department of History of Art**

## HOW TO WRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

- **Your personal statement needs to be unique and personal to you.**  
A persuasive personal statement will take time so make sure you don’t leave it until the last minute.
- **Think about the impression you want to give.** Try to be enthusiastic and use a concise and natural style. It’s important that what you say is relevant – so don’t just say what you’ve done but what you’ve learnt, the skills you have acquired and how these are relevant to the course you are applying for – give specific examples.
- **Take time to reflect and organise your answers logically,** and don’t forget to check your grammar, punctuation and spelling. If you need help to get started then UCAS has lots of advice and useful online resources
- **It’s a good idea to write a few drafts then cut and paste your answers into UCAS Apply when you’re happy with it.** Allow plenty of time for proofreading and editing. Asking people you trust to read your work is a good way to get feedback and ideas, and they may spot a spelling mistake you’ve missed!
- **Your personal statement should be all your own work.**  
UCAS uses the Similarity Detection Service which means your personal statement is screened to spot anything which has been submitted before.
- **Remember, the personal statement may be the only piece of your written work that the University sees** and, if you are interviewed, the personal statement can help set the agenda for the interview discussion, so do the very best you can to make it stand out!

## THE THREE QUESTIONS

1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?	2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?	3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell us about how your interest in the subject developed – did a book or role model inspire you? Or was it a particular subject area that sparked your interest and made you want to know more?</li><li>• Showcase your knowledge of the subject by talking about insights you’ve gained from further reading, listening to podcasts or online taster courses that you’ve undertaken. Anything you have done beyond your current studies will evidence your commitment.</li><li>• You can talk about activities you’ve done outside of school that evidence your passion for the subject, and if you have a career path in mind, talk about how the course is relevant to your ambitions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This section allows you to demonstrate the relevant and transferable skills you have gained through your formal education.</li><li>• Examples could include writing, presenting, creativity, research, problem solving and critical analysis, as well as time management skills and resilience.</li><li>• You need to explain how these skills relate to your course, and how they will help you to succeed in Higher Education.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is your chance to highlight any activities outside of education which demonstrate your suitability for the course. Have you done any work experience, employment or volunteering? Have you been involved in clubs or societies – sporting, creative or musical? Have you taken part in any Higher Education taster courses, summer schools or widening participation schemes?</li><li>• You should only include examples that support your application, and you should choose your strongest and most relevant activities.</li></ul>

## USE THESE PROMPTS TO GET STARTED ON YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

### QUESTION 1

- Why are you applying for the course, and why does it interest you?
- Are there specific aspects of the subject that you enjoy?
- What personal qualities do you possess that make you suitable for this course?
- Do you have any future career plans, and how will your chosen course help you achieve your goals?

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### QUESTION 2

- Are there any aspects of your current studies that relate to the course(s) that you want to study at University?
- What have you learnt in your current studies that have inspired you to take it to university-level?
- Have you gained any transferable skills in your current studies that are relevant to your chosen course(s)?

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### QUESTION 3

- What relevant experience do you have, e.g. work experience, employment or volunteering?
- Have you been involved in any clubs, societies, or helped to plan any activities (e.g. theatrical/ musical productions or sporting events)? What transferable skills did you develop (e.g. communication skills, responsibility, team work)?
- Have you done any taster courses, summer schools or widening participation schemes?
- Have you gained a deeper understanding of your chosen subject by engaging in a Massive Open Online Course? See [york.ac.uk/study/moocs](https://york.ac.uk/study/moocs) for further details.

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