

BRIGHT FUTURES

Our monthly guide to
student finance, getting out and about and
help for families

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An overview of personal statements

The personal statement is an important element of the UCAS application. It's your chance to introduce who you are as a person and as a potential student in higher education.

For competitive courses and courses that don't require an interview, the personal statement can be the deciding factor in whether your application is successful.

Why does it matter?

The personal statement is where you can talk about your experiences and your love of the subject. Universities and colleges read personal statements to identify candidates that are committed and suitable for their courses.

Remember, universities and colleges want students who will complete and flourish on their courses.

While reading a personal statement, they will be asking themselves if this is a person they want at their university (or college) and on their course.

Breaking it down

- The personal statement can be up to 4000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines (on the UCAS form).
- It should be written in the form of an essay, not a letter. This means using paragraphs.
- It should have a strong introduction and conclusion.
- Approximately 75% of the personal statement should be about your passion and motivation for the course and the experience and skills that make them suitable. The remaining 25% should focus on your extra-curricular activities.
For Oxford and Cambridge applications, the split should be 80% / 20%.

The introduction: dos & don'ts

- The introductory paragraph needs to be strong and grab the reader's attention.
- Be original and avoid clichés such as, 'I've always had a passion for...' or 'From a young age, I've always wanted to...'.
'
- Avoid using quotes and don't try to be funny.
- Explain how the course is an essential part of your longer-term plan.

Talking about the course

- Do your homework on the course you are applying for and demonstrate this in your writing. Are there any course elements or modules that you are particularly looking forward to?
- Was there a particular project, or piece of work, that sparked your interest in this subject?
- What have you already studied that will benefit you on this course? (see ABC rule below)

Work experience

- All work experience is valuable and it doesn't have to be glamorous. Include any work placements, part-time jobs or voluntary work.
- Keep the focus on the skills that were developed and how they are relevant to the course you're applying for. This is particularly relevant if you're applying for a vocational course, such as Nursing.
- How has the experience impacted on your future plans?

Extra-curricular activities

- Focus on your most relevant experiences, what you gained from them, and how they benefited you.
- Was there an experience that made you think, 'This is what I want to do?'
- Activities could include special duties at school/college, sports clubs, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme (or similar), volunteering, university masterclasses or taster sessions.
- Again, ask yourself how these activities have affected or reinforced your future plans. What skills were developed?

Concluding the statement

- Like the introduction, the conclusion should pack a punch and leave an impression.
- It should summarise key points from the statement, but be careful not to introduce new information here.
- Make reference to how the course fits into your long-term plans.

The ABC rule

Listing your skills and experiences is not enough. Use the **ABC** Rule to ensure what you write is relevant:

- Activity
- Benefit
- Course

When writing about your experiences (**Activity**), be sure to discuss what skills you developed from each experience (the **Benefits**), and how these skills will benefit you as a student on the course (**Course**).

For more tips and advice on writing your personal statement visit [UCAS](https://www.ucas.com).

Getting Out and About

We know holidays can be expensive so we've developed a fun-filled list of free activities that the whole family can enjoy.

The Box

The Box, which is open Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, is Plymouth's major new museum, gallery and archive. It opened in late 2020 and is one of the UK's most exciting cultural attractions. It's a place where heritage meets contemporary art and archives meet interaction. A museum, gallery and archive.

Nine permanent galleries showcase the city's incredible art, natural history, human history, film, photographic and archive collections. Two major exhibitions are also currently on display.

The exciting permanent galleries and exhibitions combined with great food and drink, a shop, a public square and a vibrant events programme make The Box an incredible and free place to visit.



The Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter

Galleries showcase the world-class collections and collectors that have helped RAMM to become one of Britain's finest regional museums. They tell the story of Exeter and Devon from the prehistoric to the present but RAMM is more than a local museum. Its internationally-important world cultures and natural sciences collections also tell a story of global exploration and collecting in the 18th and 19th centuries.

As well as its diverse and significant collections, RAMM's [lively programme](#) of exhibitions, activities and events ensures that it is the most visited attraction in Exeter and one of the most visited museums in the South West. **FREE entry, open Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm. Closed bank holidays and Mondays.**



Family Action's Welfare Grants Programme

Family Action's Welfare Grants Programme aims to help prevent an immediate crisis from spiralling and threatening the stability of families and individuals.

A broken washing machine for example would for many of us be a financial burden to replace; for a family with three children and a very low income however it may mean taking out a high-street loan and plunging into further debt.

Welfare grants are an integral part of a whole family approach to finding solutions for those who need it the most. Coupled with emotional and practical support, grants help to create a safety net for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our society.

All applications must be made online by a suitable referring agency. Suitable referring agencies include: statutory agencies or charities that provide health or social care; housing associations; probation services and GPs.

They are only able to accept applications from referring agencies that:

- have knowledge of and are able to assess the needs of the individual or family in need
- have a bank account in its own name and are able to bank and administer grants on our behalf. Payments will only be made to the referring agency unless a prepaid Argos card is requested during the application process. If a prepaid store card is requested it will be sent directly to the beneficiary

It is vital that the individual or families needing assistance meet the eligibility criteria of Family Action's Welfare Grants Programme. They regret that if an application is received on behalf of someone who does not meet the eligibility criteria a grant will not be awarded.

The average grant is likely to be in the region of £200 to a maximum of £300 in most cases. Grants of up to £500 can be made under the Disability/Sickness priority area and up to £600 for women's holidays (depending on the size of the family). If the applicant requires more than the maximum amount available from Family Action you will be asked to explain how the balance will be raised.

For further information email: grants.enquiry@family-action.org.uk

Telephone: 07816 408119 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 2pm and 5pm.