

APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY

PERSONAL STATEMENT

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PERSONAL STATEMENTS

What is a personal statement?

It is a key part of your university application and is included in your UCAS application form. It has a limit of 47 lines or 4000 characters – approximately one side of A4 typed in size 12 Arial font.

Who reads it?

University admissions tutors – they are typically academic lecturers who are passionate about their subject and experts in their field.

Why is it important?

It is your chance to create a good impression – stand out from the crowd and impress admissions tutors. It needs to highlight why you want to study their course and demonstrate why you're suitable. It also gives an insight into you as an individual.

If your course does not typically interview or audition as part of the application process, this could be your only opportunity to really sell yourself in order to get your application considered. To find out which DMU courses require interviews as part of the application process, order your copy of our prospectus today.

Where do you start?

Start with a mind-map or make a list of what you'd like to include (see our recommended checklist on the opposite page).

Use key paragraphs to ensure that your personal statement flows and is easy to read.

Be prepared for a lot of re-drafting. It will take a few attempts before you're happy.

What should you include?

Around two thirds of your personal statement should explain your choice of course and your interest in the subject. Highlight relevant skills, knowledge and abilities which will help you to succeed in your chosen area.

Mention any relevant hobbies or personal interests that you have that give an insight into your personality.

Include any work experience which you have undertaken, highlighting the skills which you have gained. Many courses (e.g. nursing, social work) will require work experience as a basic entry requirement so remember to emphasise the quality of your experience.

Most importantly back up your claims with proof – give examples of how you have gained the skills and knowledge you are writing about.

Reflect on your future plans and discuss how the university course which you have chosen fits into your career plans and aspirations. Focus on skills you hope to gain and highlight what you hope to get out of studying at university.

TOP TIPS

- Use a formal writing style and pay attention to accuracy, spelling and grammar. Don't attempt to use words to sound 'more intelligent', as the chances are it will just sound unnatural
- Ensure it is all your own work – UCAS use sophisticated software to check personal statements for plagiarism
- Give examples to justify points you make and be as concise as possible
- Use prospectuses and course entry profiles to find out what universities are looking for from applicants/students who study the course
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Put yourself in the admissions tutor's shoes – think about how easy it will be for them to read, and how you will come across in your statement
- Don't type straight into the UCAS form. UCAS times out after 35 minutes of inactivity and you could lose your work. Type it up separately and then copy and paste into the form
- Remember that you only write one personal statement for all of your course choices on your UCAS form, so make sure that you don't mention specific universities by name and, if you are applying to different course/subject areas, ensure that your personal statement is applicable to all of them.

A good way to achieve this is by focussing on shared themes (e.g. analytical skills for both economics and maths and creativity for both drama and art and design).

PERSONAL STATEMENT CHECKLIST

- Engaging opening paragraph that grabs the reader's attention
- Justification for your choice of subject/course and evidence of a strong desire to study the subject
- Your suitability for the course – skills, knowledge and work experience
- Evidence that you've researched the course and understand what it will involve
- An insight into you as an individual – relevant hobbies and interests
- Your future plans and career aspirations
- Conclusion – end on a positive, upbeat note