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Acing your Personal Statement

What is a Personal Statement?

- The 2 most important sections of your UCAS application are:
 - Your Choices (where you are applying and what you are applying to study)
 - Your Personal Statement (your chance to convince the admissions tutors that they should give you a place on their course!)
- No longer than 4,000 characters (roughly one side of A4)
- It HAS to be your own work (plagiarised statements = disqualification)
- You can only write one!
- Your statement should reflect you as a person AND the interest you have in the subject you want to study.
- This session will aim to show you how you can ace it!

Task 1 - Get inspired!

There are 2 choices of task you can do now, depending on whether you know what you want to study, or not:

Option 1 – Look at unis and courses in more depth

Using the ‘UK Universities’ tool, make a shortlist of courses. This might give you some inspiration for which strengths different courses favour, and you can tailor your personal statement to match!

UK universities

You have **5 shortlists**

[Start >](#)

Course facts

2022 course description
This programme gives an excellent general overview of physics with an emphasis on: * physics theory * the formulation and solving of physics problems using mathematics and computing

2023 course description
This programme gives an excellent general overview of physics, covering most areas of Classical and Quantum Physics, with an emphasis on: - physics theory - the formulation and solving of physics problems using mathematics and computing

2022 years of study	2022 annual fees
4 years full-time	£9,250
2023 years of study	2023 annual fees
No change	No change

▼ Rank ▲ ▼ Filter ▼ Keyword search

Entry requirements
Randomised
Average points
Fees
Rent

Hours of independent study
Hours of Placements
Value for money
Expectations exceeded
% Application success (overall)
% Application success (UK)

Size of uni
% Disabled
% International
Guardian rank
Guardian Physics rank
QS world rank
THE Impact rank
People and Planet rank

Distance from home
Student welfare
Spend on Access
Social life

Aspirational (36) <small>Top of your range</small>	Solid (56) <small>In the middle</small>	Safe (3) <small>At the bottom</small>
<div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics - 3FT BSc (Hons) UCL (University College London) Avg. starting salary: £37,289 </div> <div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics - 4FT Msci (Hon) UCL (University College London) Avg. starting salary: £37,289 </div>	<div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics with Scientific Computing - 3FT BSc University of Bristol Avg. starting salary: £39,542 </div> <div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics with Scientific Computing with Industrial Experience - 4FT MSci University of Bristol </div>	<div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics with Foundation - 4FT BSc (Hons) Queen Mary University of London Avg. starting salary: £30,067 </div> <div style="font-size: x-small; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Physics with Foundation Year - 4FT BSc (Hons) University of Exeter </div>

Option 2 – Search for some ideas of what you could study!

Using the ‘Subjects Library’ explore different courses you could study and get inspired could be right for you!

Social policy

Emily Blakeman
Government Policy and Society (BA)
University of Edinburgh

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[Read Emily Blakeman's story](#)

Subjects library

✕ Subjects favoured

[Go to tool >](#)

In a nutshell

In a few words

If you feel strongly about contemporary social issues such as crime, gender inequalities

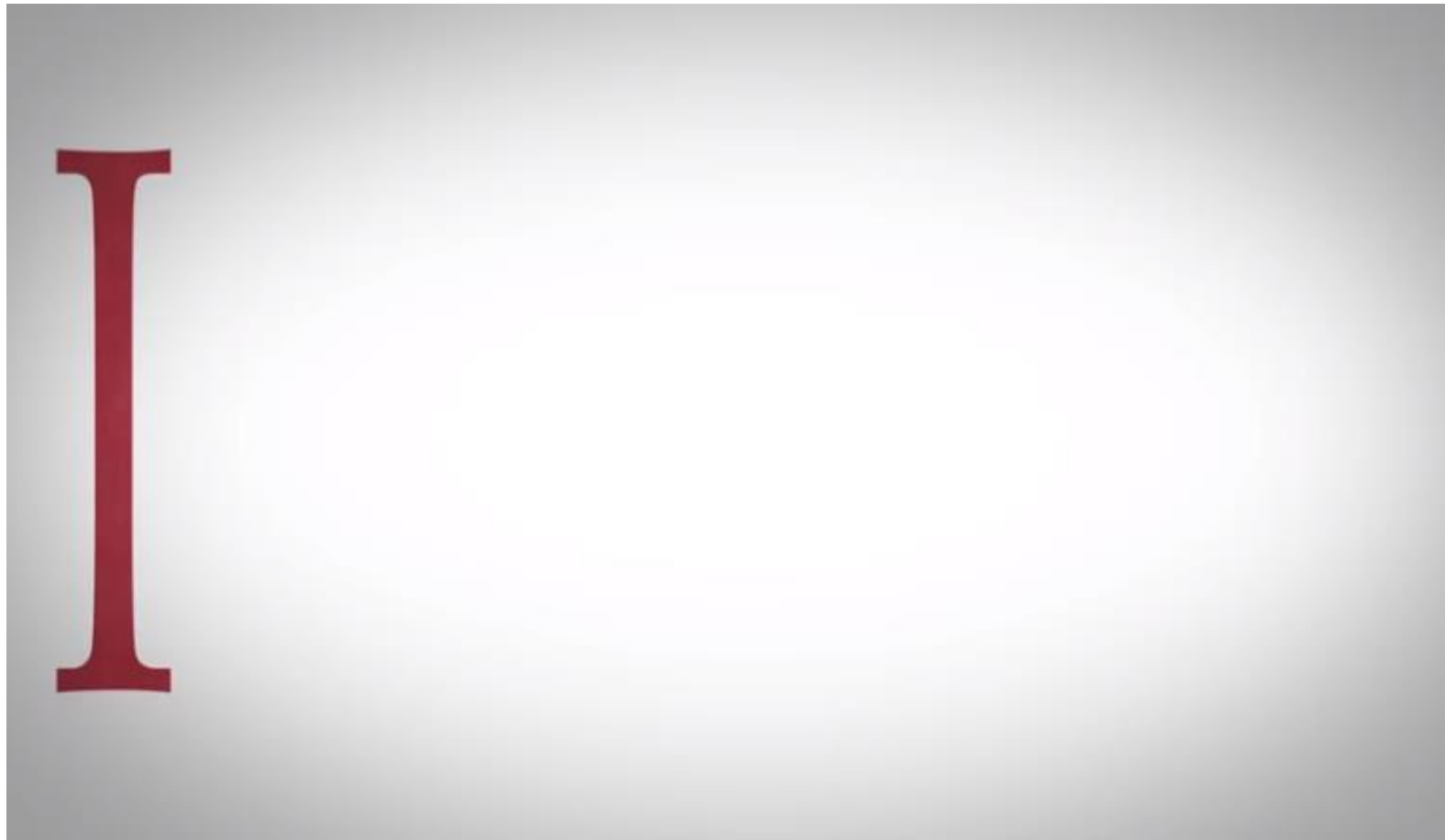
Study

This type of degree gives you the chance to combine subjects such as Sociology, Politics

By interests

- [Arguing \(11\) >](#)
- [Computers \(8\) >](#)
- [Food \(11\) >](#)
- [Helping people \(21\) >](#)
- [Making things \(19\) >](#)
- [Numbers \(23\) >](#)
- [Sports \(8\) >](#)
- [Travelling \(29\) >](#)
- [Words \(26\) >](#)

So what do you actually need to write about in a Personal Statement?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8hFkMAjW-I

Standing out from the crowd

- Getting noticed by admissions staff is really important for securing your place on a course.
- Your Personal Statement booklet (we'll come to this in a minute!) will help you gather and record inspiration for enhancing your Personal Statement.

To get some ideas of what to include as evidence of your passion, start looking on Unifrog, in the Subjects Library at the following sections:

Geek out

Read

Watch

Listen



Geek out

Use the **Geek out** section in the Subjects Library to get ideas for current 'hot topics' in your subject and areas you could do more research in to.



Psychology
The scientific study of the mind and how this underpins behaviour.

Jan Feeley
Psychology (BSc)
University of Southampton

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- + Story
- + In a nutshell
- + Getting in
- + Decisions
- + Statement
- + Reference
- + **Geek out**
- + Recommendations: Read
- + Recommendations: Watch
- + Recommendations: Listen
- + Explore

Psychology

Some specialist areas

Experimental Psychology

The most classically scientific branch of psychology, experimental psychology aims to learn more about our cognition, perception and memory. To do so psychologists employ experimental methods on human and animal research subjects.

Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychologists use psychological knowledge to treat and counsel those with mental illnesses. Therapy is one of the main ways in which patients will be treated. Clinical psychologists have a hugely important job in a society where depression and other mental illnesses are more and more common.

Hot topics

Rising depression rates

The worldwide depression rate has risen by 18% since 2005, the WHO reports. That is a massive increase which can only partly be explained by better methods of diagnosis. This alarming statistic means that there is more need for therapists, as well as for research into the causes of depression. What is it about our contemporary world that causes people so much despair?

New approaches to education

The way the world's youth is being educated hasn't measurably changed in the last few decades, even though the world itself has changed immensely. Psychologists are trying to figure out what the most effective forms of education are, and what we can change in order to make kids more excited about learning. Are grades really necessary? Should technology play a larger part in schools? Psychologists are setting up large-scale experiments to find out what works.

Read Watch Listen

- **Read**: Examples of articles, books, magazines and websites relating to your subject
- **Watch**: Relevant Ted Talks, videos and films
- **Listen**: Music and Podcasts which link to your chosen subject

Psychology

The scientific study of the mind and how this underpins behaviour.



+ Story

+ In a nutshell

+ Getting in

+ Decisions

+ Statement

+ Reference

+ Geek out

+ Recommendations: Read

+ Recommendations: Watch

+ Recommendations: Listen

+ Explore

Examples of best practice

You might have heard the term 'best practice' before. This is reading or seeing a good example of something you're about to do.

Use the 'Statement' section in the Subjects Library to see examples of best practice personal statements.

Subjects library

✖ Subjects favoured

Go to tool >

Geography

Stephanie Storry
Geography (BA)
University of Liverpool

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- + Story
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Save to Favourites? ♥

Back

Where next?
Return to the Subjects library Start.

Geography

The universities will obviously know what A-levels you're taking; explaining the skills you have gained from them is the important part. Data analysis and being able to use GIS is a key part of most geography courses. By including this in the Statement, the university has an idea of what you already know and hopefully what you can bring to the course.

My A levels were quite a random mix, however this section ensured I was showing links and benefits relevant to the course I wanted to apply to.

Throughout my time studying A-level geography, I have developed my enthusiasm for reading around the topic. Louise Amoore's chapter in *Observant States* was an engaging view on geopolitics. By profiling the 'norm' of behaviour, whether via mobile phone images or CCTV footage, it becomes an algorithm that can be encoded so that deviations can be identified and decisions can be taken. This idea to minimise the war on terror was fascinating. The 'precautionary principle' is depicted throughout our lives, and is a critical asset to help minimise the war on terror and something I hope to take forward in political geography modules.

This section on wider reading involves a book with many interesting concepts, perhaps slightly above Key Stage 5 studies. Despite this, you're already showing how you can challenge your way of thinking and how suitable you are for university. It also provides an interesting starting point for any interviews that you can interpret and discuss effortlessly, which is always a plus.

The concept of sustainability is a paramount part of geography. By studying world cities I came across Mexico City's new energy-efficient buses, which won the 2013 sustainable transport award. At the root of this project is an understanding of sustainable development which I've developed by studying the course 'Sustainability for Professionals', giving me further insight into how businesses and communities can create sustainable development strategies and allowing me to refine my evaluative and critical thinking skills. The sustainability of our world is a topic that shows constant international innovation and therefore a topic that I believe would be beneficial to study.

It's important to link to the real world and skills you can apply to it, especially in a subject like Geography which has so many real life applications.

Like in the introductory paragraph where I speak about *The Geography Review*, this paragraph shows that I am up to date with current geographical research as I am discussing current issues, important as it shows drive and real engagement with geography.


Sustainability is a huge part of geographical studies as well as part of our daily lives. It comes across well if you can select specific aspects of the subject you enjoy and incorporate them into the Statement. It's even better if you can show how it has affected your personal studies and attitude to the ideas (great for interviews!)

In the Subjects library you can read an example Personal Statement for the subject you're interested in.

Annotated Personal Statements allow you to see clearly what makes a good statement in your chosen subject, and gives you ideas as to things you could include.

Task 2 – Stand out from the crowd!

Psychology
The scientific study of the mind and how this underpins behaviour.



Jan Feeley
Psychology (BSc)
University of Southampton

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- Recommendations: Watch
- Recommendations: Listen
- Explore

Pick the subject you think you want to study at university (or one you are considering) and work through the Geek out, Read, Watch and Listen sections and the Personal Statement examples.

Make notes of what you could be doing in the next few weeks, and over the summer to help you stand out from the crowd.

Geek out **Statements**

Read **Watch** **Listen**

Subjects library

✖ Subjects favoured

Go to tool >

How will I write my Personal Statement?

Everyone will be required to use the Unifrog Personal Statement tool to write their statement.

This is held online and you can view past versions, meaning you can't lose it!

Staff will give you feedback on your personal statement on here.


You will then copy and paste it onto your UCAS application when you are finished.

Write

Add, edit and delete text

Preview

How it'll look to universities




Section 1

Why do you want to study this subject?

0 of 1200 characters

Start >




Section 2

What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?

0 of 2400 characters

Start >



Section 3

What else have you done that would contribute to the university community?

Start >

Personal Statement Tool

Log on to Unifrog and open the UK Personal Statement tool.

Section 2: What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?

This part should make up 60% of the total statement

Examples of what you may want to write about:

- + 1. Your academic studies related to this subject
- + 2. Particular project work you've done in your studies
- + 3. Things you have learnt online, and from books, newspapers, TV
- + 4. Course related activities
- + 5. Experiences in your year out (if you are having one)
- + 6. Any relevant work experience (especially for vocational courses)
- + 7. Any voluntary work
- + Personal Statement Dos
- + Personal Statement Don'ts

Drafting application materials

The dashboard displays several tools for drafting application materials, each with a status indicator and a button to access the tool:

- UK Personal Statement** (Red): Status: x Subject added. Button: Go to tool >
- Classes** (Olive): Status: x 3 Classes, 3 grades missing. Button: Edit >
- Subject References** (Purple): Status: x 4 References, 4 missing. Button: Edit >
- CV / Resumé** (Green): Status: x Write CVs tailored for each roles. Button: Start >
- Writing tool** (Orange): Status: x 0 writing items added. Button: Start >
- Common App Essay** (Light Purple): Status: x Prompt chosen. Button: Go to tool >
- US recommenders** (Teal): Status: x No recommender selected. Button: Go to tool >
- Notes for Reference writers** (Pink): Status: x 4 notes missing. Button: Go to tool >

Each section has suggestions and examples of the sorts of things to include

Task 3

Spend the rest of the lesson exploring the Personal Statement tool.

Read through each of the three sections, and click the drop down buttons to view examples of what you might want to write about.

Make bullet points of any thoughts you have into each section of the tool.

Personal Statement Booklet

After work experience you will get a copy of this booklet which will guide you through exactly what you can include in each section.

You will be able to write down all of your ideas in detail before typing them up.



**Personal
Statement**

Guide

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Sign in at:
unifrog.org/student