

Guidance for writing a personal statement for university.

The format has changed slightly. From the 2026 intake, personal statements will be broken down into three sections rather than one long statement.

It will still be expected to contain 4000 words, however, these will be across three specific sections, which include;

- 1) Why do you want to study this course or subject
- 2) How have your course 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?

To help you prepare to answer these questions, I have broken down the purpose of each question and given some examples to help prompt you.

1) Why do you want to study this course or subject?

It is your opportunity to showcase your passion, interest, and knowledge of your chosen subject area and demonstrate to universities why the specific course is suited to you and your future ambitions.

- **Motivation/reasons for studying the chosen course:** Has someone or something inspired you to study this subject? What is it about the subject that makes you want to know more? It is important that you can demonstrate a clear motivation. Universities do not want to hear that you didn't know what else to do, so you opted for this subject randomly; they want to see that you will be committed to your studies.
- **Knowledge of the subject area and interests:** Have you researched a particular subject area and are excited to discover more? Have you read a certain book or attended a discussion by a subject expert who has inspired you? Do you participate in any extracurricular activities that evidence your interest in the subject outside of the classroom? Universities need to be confident that the chosen subject is going to be something that you will enjoy and excel in.
- **Future plans:** Do you have a particular career in mind? If so talk about how this area of study will support your career ambitions. If you don't have a specific career in mind, think about what you want for your future, what is important to you, and how the knowledge gained from your chosen course will help you to achieve these goals.

Examples:

- Think about personal life experiences. Where did you grow up, Any challenges you faced, an inspirational friend, family member, or even teacher? Did you read a book, news article, or watch a video or podcast that sparked an interest in a specific subject/career?
- Make sure you understand the skills and qualities you might need to be successful – Do your research

2) How have your course and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject

This is your opportunity to show evidence of the relevant or transferable skills that you have gained from your formal education and highlight your understanding of how this is going to help you succeed in this subject area.

Examples of what you might include:

- **How your studies or training relate to your chosen course or subject area:** this could be current or previous studies with a school, college, or training provider, or even a short online university course. Any form of formal education. The main thing to focus on is what's most recent and relevant to the chosen course
- **What relevant or transferable skills do you have that might make you a great candidate?** Maybe there are a couple of subjects that have helped you develop a core set of skills required, or a particular module that has helped you to understand where your interests and strengths lie.
- **Any relevant educational achievements:** Universities will see students grades elsewhere on the application so you don't waste your time talking about these. Consider accomplishments like winning a school or national competition, serving as a student ambassador or team captain or landing the lead role in a play. Maybe you were head boy/girl, or were asked to perform at the end-of-term assembly.

Other Examples:

- Voluntary work
- Private lessons, music, drama school, sports academies
- EPQ – Extended project qualification
- Private tutoring or mentoring by a local business owner

3) What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

This is your chance to talk about any other activities that you have undertaken outside of your formal education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section will be highly personal to you, and anything you include should reflect on why you're including it.

Examples of what to include:

- **Work experience employment or volunteering;** this could be in-person work experience that you did when you were at school, or it could be virtual work experience that you may have done through Spring Pod. You may have volunteered at the local food bank or homeless shelter. The main focus is to reflect on these experiences and the skills that you gained that are relevant to your chosen course.

- **Personal life experiences or responsibilities:** Have you been in a situation where you've personally overcome something that has influenced your decision? Have you moved towns or even countries? How did you deal with that? how did it make you feel? what challenges did you face? Think about how you managed these and how you developed essential qualities like resilience
- **Hobbies and any extra curricular activities or outreach activities:** Think about sports, reading, community work, summer schools. Any activities outside of your studies that help further showcase why you'd make a great student. Universities will be looking for commitment and how proactive you are
- **Achievements outside of school or college:** Maybe a position of responsibility. Were you the Captain for a local club? Have you ever won a competition? Have you obtained any qualifications outside of the classroom? Again, universities will be looking at your passion for success and your motivation to achieve great things for yourself

More examples:

- Young enterprise
- Job/employment - Part-time or full-time
- Work experience
- Shadowing
- Online learning - Springpod, MOOC's
- Trips and visits - Exhibitions, galleries, sites of historic interest, sites connected to your course, eg; magistrates court for law, construction site for architecture, hospital for medicine
- Podcasts, talks, and documentaries
- Duke of Edinburgh awards and activities