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# Personal statements.

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## University of the Year

Students have voted the University of Sheffield:

- ★ University of the Year
- ★ Best Students' Union
- ★ Best Student Life

Whatuni Student Choice Awards (WUSCAs) 2024



## Overview

1. Why a personal statement?
2. What to include in the personal statement
3. How to structure your statement
4. Top tips from admissions officers
5. Time for Questions



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Why do you have to write  
a personal statement?





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Showcase your  
skills

Demonstrate  
enthusiasm

Demonstrate your  
knowledge

**Why?**

Share your  
experience

To stand out

Show your  
ambition





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## **How long can your personal statement be?**

- You are limited to 4000 characters (approx. 650 words) and 47 lines of writing (around 1 side of A4)
- Do not write your statement directly into UCAS- there is a time-out function and you can easily lose your work
- Your statement will be checked for plagiarism- make sure it's your work!



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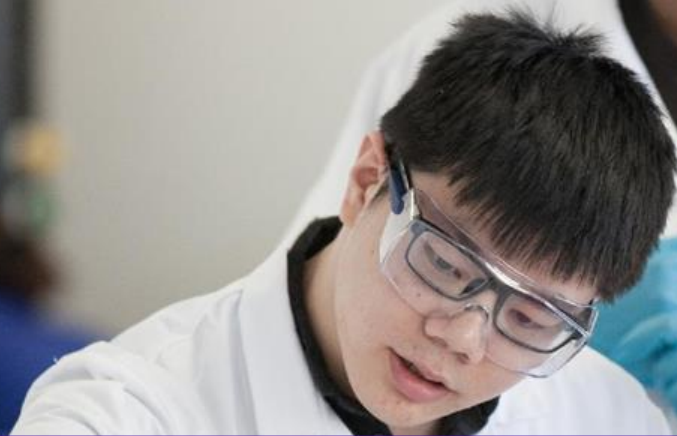
## The importance of preparation

- Remember you only have 4000 characters - ***Don't waffle!*** You need to make every sentence count.
- Ensure your personal statement is focused and relevant - ***planning is key!***
- Before you start writing your personal statement, make some notes on what you're going to include.





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What should your personal  
statement focus on?

## **A good place to start when planning is to note down the answers to the following questions:**

1. Why have you chosen this course?
2. What excites you about the subject?
3. How is your present/past study relevant to the course?
4. What relevant work experience do you have?
5. Are there any life experiences you've had that are worth mentioning?
6. What transferable skills do you have that will allow you to be successful on the course?
7. What achievements are you proud of?
8. What are your future aspirations?



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**Why have you  
chosen your  
subject?**

**Why should we  
select you to study  
that subject?**

**What else do you  
do?**



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## **Keeping things relevant and focused**

- Talk about your experiences and what they've taught you- not a list of achievements and skills
- You should give examples from academia, work experience or hobbies
- Make sure you do yourself justice!
- A great way to approach this is the A-B-C method



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## A-B-C Method

**Activity:** What you have done?

**Benefit :** What skills and experience have you gained through said activities?

**Course:** How does this link to the course you're applying for?



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## Activity

In year 12 I completed a research project on the role of women during WW1 in Britain.

## Benefit

As well as providing me with historical knowledge, I was able to develop my research, communication and analytical skills.

## Course

During my research project, I did an in-depth analysis of my research findings and then wrote a 2,000 word essay. This will serve me well for studying a History degree, where I will need to write regular analytical essays as well as carry out my own research projects.





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Idea

generation.



## **Student profile**

- Works at Game
- Doing the EPQ
- Looks after younger siblings
- Watches WW1 documentaries



**Rosie**

**Wants to study history**

## Student profile

- Enjoys The Big Bang Theory
- Plays Tennis
- Tutors GCSE Science students
- Subscribes to “Chemistry in its element”



**Mo**

**Wants to study chemistry**



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## Student profile

- Weekly show on his college radio
- Writes a blog on football
- Enjoys watching the News
- Completed the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award



**Ollie**

**Wants to study journalism**



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Career  
planning

University events

Work experience

Standing out  
from the crowd

Hobbies/interests

Research and  
analysis

EPQ/MOOCs



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## Time to reflect....

- Why do you want to study your chosen subject at university?
- What have you done so far that would demonstrate this to an admissions tutor?

## The ‘so what’ activity

- Write down some personal experiences that you think would support your university application.
- In pairs, take it in turns to go through your list of experiences whilst partners ask “so what?” until the first student can explain why it’s useful and relevant to their application.





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Over to you.





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## **The admissions tutor**

You will play the role of an Admissions Tutor

Take a look at the following statements and discuss

- Positives
- Negatives

You will see opening, middle and closing paragraphs

Your statement will be checked for plagiarism- make sure it's your work!



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## **Law**

In my opinion, university is the perfect stepping stone for me to take, at this stage in my life. I have taken a while to decide what I want to do for my career, which meant I had to take a break from studying, for a couple years after sixth form. For this duration I have been working at a local convenience store, to improve my work experience and support my living, but I have finally decided to become a barrister and then eventually a judge. The occupation is difficult and challenging to achieve but it is one I am willing to work as hard as I can for, and therefore I wish to study law.



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## **Law**

My interest in Law stems from my enjoyment of helping people to resolve conflicts and an enthusiasm for the legal side of debates surrounding groups and high profile law cases, as well as how the law has changed in response.

I want to be a part of something that permeates all of society and I feel that law will enable me to help people whilst providing a challenge every day. My career aspirations are to enter corporate law and become a corporate lawyer.



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## Journalism

From a young age I have been fascinated with nature. I couldn't comprehend, and still can't to this day, the variety and beauty of the natural world and its inhabitants. I would read and reread my dad's old National Geographic magazines, then decide I was going to be the next Nigel Marven/ Steve Backshall.

To me they had the dream job- being able to travel to exotic locations around the world to find a variety of flora and fauna, and then tell people about them. My interest in nature inspired me to deliver a presentation discussing the possibility of reintroducing large carnivores, such as wolves and bears, back into the UK.



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## Journalism

I have recently completed a week's work experience at a local newspaper, The Comet. This was a hands-on placement, and I was required to research and then write up a number of short articles that were published in the paper. These articles were based on my own ideas after talking to people in my community. It was thrilling to see my words appear in the printed edition. During my work experience I learnt that it is important for a journalist to be able to tap into the interviewee's emotions during an interview, focusing on the precise words that get to the heart of the issue and are most enlightening for the reader.



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## Mechanical Engineering

I am good at managing projects and presenting them. I manage my time effectively and complete my assessment before deadlines.

I have watched of documentaries about building methods and worlds biggest structures e.g how are they built and what kind of techniques they use.

I am looking forward to study with \*\*\*\*\* University to achieve my life goal. It's my honour to be part of this University.



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## **Mechanical Engineering**

I believe that I have all of the necessary attributes to be a successful mechanical engineer. I am particularly looking forward to the opportunity to study fluids engineering, aero propulsion and robotic systems in more depth as part of my degree, and then to work as part of a successful design team which will provide novel and innovative solutions.





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## Top tips

- Structured, balanced and flows well
- Evidence-based
- Uses appropriate language
- Correct spelling punctuation and grammar
- Consider how you present yourself
- Mention any wider circumstances that may have disrupted your studies
- Remember, your statement should be relevant to all the courses you're applying for



## Don'ts

- Use generic statements such as “I’ve always been interested in engineering”
- Lie, exaggerate or misrepresent
- Make your statement a list
- Include irrelevant information
- Copy another person’s work
- Overuse synonyms





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## Opening sentence

- Avoid overused or generic opening sentences
- Radical statements/humour can be risky
- Topical references/ current affairs can work well
- Subject-focused
- Specific to you



## Closing statement

The closing statement should essentially tell us why YOU should be offered a place on the course.

- Link it to the beginning of your personal statement
- Reinforce your strongest point as to make them stand out

The closing statement is your opportunity to leave the admission tutor with a strong lasting impression. Make it count!





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## **Access+**

You may be eligible for additional support through Access+ if:

- You live in an area with a low rate of participation in higher education
- You're a care leaver
- You're care experienced
- You're estranged from family
- You're a carer
- You're a forced migrant
- You have parenting responsibilities
- You're entitled to free school meals

To check eligibility criteria visit: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/access-sheffield/eligibility](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/access-sheffield/eligibility)



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As an **Access+** student, you'll be eligible for wraparound support:

- financial support; Funded Open Days, IT & Equipment Bursaries, Sheffield Bursary
- a dedicated team on hand to answer your questions about university
- help with study skills and revision
- A reduced grade offer equivalent to one grade below the standard A Level entry requirements  
e.g. if the formal entry requirements for your course are ABB and you meet the criteria, you'll receive an alternative offer of BBB.



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## Any questions?

### Sheffield Live

Insight into career opportunities, study skills and support. Our team will be on hand

### Taster sessions

Experience what it's like to study your chosen subject at the University of Sheffield

### Chat to current students

Start a conversation with our student ambassadors and staff