A GUIDE TO COMPLETING YOUR UCAS APPLICATION
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RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOU

Please also look at our UCAS pages on the Student Hub

UCAS
Universities central admission service
https://www.ucas.com/

Which University
What to study where to go and how to get there
http://university.which.co.uk/

Push
Information about choosing a university and student life
http://www.push.co.uk/

Studentroom
The largest student community in the world
http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/

Studential
Support for students going to College or University or taking an apprenticeship
https://www.studential.com/

Student World
Help if you want to study abroad
http://thestudentworld.edufindme.com/

Complete Uni Guide
Support with course and university choice
http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/

Not Going to Uni
Work and Apprenticeship support
http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/

Higher Ideas
Support with choosing a course
Access via the Student Hub > Careers > UCAS
OVERVIEW

All applications for full time undergraduate courses across the UK are processed through the UCAS (University & Colleges Admission Service) system. This is an online system accessed through the UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Solihull College & University Centre has a team of specialist advisors based in Student Services who are available to support you with your UCAS application and provide general course & careers guidance. Your tutor will also be very knowledgeable in this area.

Before applying, however, it is important to have conducted your research regarding the course options available to you. Research is a vital part of an effective university application; if your research is not thorough it will show in your application.

Please note the information contained in this guide is correct at the time of printing. It is a student’s personal responsibility to check that their personal statement meets the specific standards of each university applied to and evidences the criteria they require. Solihull College cannot accept responsibility for failure to secure a place at university.

DEADLINES & TIMESCALES

There are different dates to be aware of when making an application and waiting for decisions from your chosen universities and colleges. The application deadlines below specify the dates when UCAS need to receive your application.

- **Mid-Sept 2017** 2018 entry applications can be sent to UCAS.
- **15 Oct 2017** Deadline for receipt at UCAS of applications to the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge and all with choices for courses in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science to reach UCAS.
- **17th Nov 2017** Solihull College internal deadline for submission of university applications. We can’t guarantee that UCAS applications received after this date will be processed prior to the 15th January 2018 Equal Consideration Date.
- **2nd Dec 2017** Solihull College internal deadline for completion of references by tutors.
- **15 Jan 2018** UCAS Equal Consideration Date. Deadline for receipt of applications at UCAS for all courses except those listed with a 15 October 2017 deadline and Art and Design courses with 24 March 2018 deadline. Applications received after 15th January date will be classed as late and not considered until all “on time” applications have been processed.
- **25 Feb 2018** UCAS Extra opens. If you have been unsuccessful in securing a place at university, you can continue to apply for one additional course at a time until you receive an offer. For advice & guidance on UCAS Extra please speak with Careers.
- **24 March 2018** Deadline for the receipt of applications at UCAS for some Art and Design courses except those listed with a 15 January 2018 deadline. Go to UCAS course search to check application deadlines for courses.
31 March 2018  If UCAS receive your application by 15 January, the universities and colleges should aim to have sent you their decisions by this date (but they can take longer).

6 May 2018  If you receive all offers from your universities/colleges by 31 March, you need to reply to any offers by this date (unless you are applying through Extra). **If UCAS don't receive your replies, your offers will automatically be declined.**

7 May 2018  If you applied by 15 January and are waiting for decisions, universities and colleges need to send UCAS their decisions by this date. If they don't, UCAS will make any outstanding choices unsuccessful on their behalf.

4 June 2018  If you received all your decisions by the 7 May you must reply to any offers by today (except for Extra) or **UCAS will decline your offers on your behalf.**

25 June 2018  If UCAS receive all decisions from your universities or colleges by 4 June, you need to reply to any offers by this date (unless you are applying through Extra). **If UCAS do not receive your replies, they will decline the offers on your behalf.**

30 June 2018  Applications received after today are entered into Clearing. If you send your application to UCAS by 18:00 on this date, they will send it to your chosen universities and colleges. If it is received after this date, you'll be entered into Clearing.

4 July 2018  Last date to apply through UCAS Extra.

16 July 2018  If you applied by 30 June and are waiting for decisions, universities and colleges need to send us their decisions by this date. If they don't, UCAS will make any outstanding choices unsuccessful on their behalf.

23 July 2018  If UCAS receive all decisions from your universities/colleges by 16 July, you need to reply to any offers by this date (this includes if you are applying through Extra). **If UCAS do not receive your replies, they will decline your offers on your behalf.**

14 Aug 2018  **GCE A level and Advanced Diploma results are published and the full Clearing vacancy information service starts. UCAS Adjustment also opens for registration.**

For advice & guidance on Clearing & Adjustment, please speak to Careers.

31 Aug 2018  UCAS Adjustment closes and Remaining offer conditions must be met – otherwise your University may not accept you.

21 Sept 2018  Last date UCAS will accept applications for courses starting in 2018.

30 Sept 2018  The Clearing vacancy search is closed after this date. You should contact universities direct to discuss vacancies. Clearing choices can still be added in Track.

**Attention!**  Your university may also give you dates by which you have to provide them with further information e.g. Exam grades, DBS checks etc. **It is essential you meet these dates, students have been declined places due to failure to comply**
APPLYING

Apply is an application system that allows you to apply online for courses at universities and colleges in the UK.

You’ll be asked to complete the following sections:

- Registration
- Student Finance
- Employment
- Declaration
- Personal Details
- Choices
- Personal Statement
- Pay and Send
- Additional Information
- Education
- Reference (if not applying via a College)

On many UCAS sections there are useful videos that you can watch to help you complete the application correctly.

REGISTRATION

Register to use “Apply” - the UCAS online application system:

When you register, you will need to provide personal details like your first names, last name, title, gender, date of birth, address, telephone numbers and email address. These details are transferred to your application and you will not be asked to enter them again. You can change any of these details when completing your application.

The registration process generates a username and you create your own password, which you need to log in to your application. Make a note of your username and password and keep them in a safe place. Apply is case sensitive so write the details exactly as they are shown on screen.

When you register, you’ll be asked to choose four security questions and enter relevant answers. If you need to contact UCAS, they will ask you these questions to check your identity, so make the answers individual and memorable.

To start your application:

- Go to www.ucas.com and click on Apply.
- Click on register/log in to Apply.
- Follow the online instructions to register and enter your personal details.
- Choose a password, select four security questions and enter relevant answers.
- Write down the username on screen and your password; you’ll need these every time you log in.
- Write down your UCAS personal ID number. You will this information for every contact you make with UCAS, so keep it safe.

Record your UCAS username. Keep this safe. Click log in now to start your application.
You will need to link your application to Solihull College. Pick the “apply through school or College” option and then add our buzzword. The **Solihull College buzzword for 2018 entry which is** `solcol18`. You will then need to pick out your personal tutor so that they can write and attach their reference. Once you have completed your application and paid, it is sent to your Tutor who adds the reference, checks and approves your application and sends your application to the faculty “super user” to be checked and authorised. Your application is then sent to UCAS.

Select your tutor from the list. If you are not sure of your personal tutor, select “don’t know” and notify careers so that your application can be moved into the correct group for referencing purposes.

You are now in the UCAS application form.

**IMPORTANT – RECORD & KEEP SAFE YOUR PERSONAL ID.**

You now need to verify your e-mail address by clicking on the red url.

You will need to access your personal e-mail account & cut and paste the verification code sent by UCAS into here. Select verify e-mail.
PERSONAL DETAILS

Your title, gender, name and address and date of birth will be filled in automatically with the details provided when you registered.

Further personal details

You're asked for extra information so that the universities and colleges can decide what tuition fees you should be charged and what entitlements you might qualify for. They need to know your residential status, where/whether you will be looking for funding and/or sponsorship, and if you have any special needs or disabilities which they would need to consider.

Areas marked with a red asterix * must be completed. Where available, you must click on see list to select from pre-selected criteria.

Passport details sections only need to be completed if your permanent home is outside of the UK.

The reference numbers section does not need to be completed.

Student Support Code
01 if you are privately funding your degree.
02 if you will be making an application for student finance.

Nominated Access, You can nominate someone who universities & UCAS can speak to in the event you are unavailable, unwell or out of the country.
Nominated access

You can choose to nominate someone, e.g. parent/guardian/adviser, who can discuss your application with us and the universities if you’re unavailable. This section of your application is not compulsory - you do not have to nominate anyone. If you do, you enter their name and their relationship to you.

Criminal Convictions

As part of their duty of care to all, universities will also need to know if you have any relevant criminal convictions. You are asked to tick a box if you have a relevant criminal conviction. If you don’t, please leave the box blank.

Failure to disclose criminal convictions could result in an offer being withdrawn or removal from your degree later on. All health & care professions, Qualified Teacher Status degrees and any degree that includes work experience with vulnerable groups require an enhanced DBS, and as a result, universities will carry out DBS checks as part of the entry requirements. Having a criminal conviction does not automatically result in rejection from a degree programme. Each case will be considered on merit. It is always best to be honest.

Disabilities.

If you have a confirmed medical diagnosis, learning disability or difficulty, please declare this information on UCAS. This should be declared so that a university can ensure that full support is in place to enable success on your degree programme.

Once you have completed all areas of the personal details section, tick the section completed box and save. You will notice that you now have a red tick in this section of the left hand menu.
**CHOICES**

You can choose up to five choices and **there is no preference order**.

Your application will be sent to all chosen universities and colleges at the same time. Each university and college will only see details of their course or courses that you've applied to. They won't see your other choices until you've received your final decision.

**You do not have to add five choices**

There is space for five choices, but you don't have to use them all.

You can apply for just one if you know exactly where you want to go.

Only add choices you are sure about. If you would not be happy going to one of them, see if there is somewhere else, or apply to fewer choices; you don't have to fill up the space.

If you apply to fewer than five choices, you can add more later if you want to (but be aware of the deadlines for adding choices) this can be useful if you find a new course after you have sent your application to UCAS.

**Course combinations that you can have at Oxford/ Cambridge / Medicine / Dentistry / Vet Medicine / Vet Science**

- A maximum of **four** courses in any one of medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine/veterinary science.
- Universities of Oxford and Cambridge:
  
  **2018 entry: one** course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge. The exception to this has changed: if you will be a graduate at the start of the course and you're applying for graduate medicine (course code A101) at the University of Cambridge, you can also apply to medicine (course code A100) at Cambridge, in addition to being able to apply to graduate medicine (course code A101) at the University of Oxford. No other combinations are permitted.

  Some applicants will need to complete an additional application form in order to apply. For full information about applying to the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, please visit their websites at [www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/) or [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/)

  You can use your remaining choice(s) for any other subject. For example, if you apply to four medicine courses, you could still make one choice for veterinary medicine. However, be aware that your personal statement will be sent to all universities and colleges you've chosen.

**Additional requirements**

Some courses require an **admissions test** (Oxford/Cambridge, Medicine some Biomed/Vet Science etc.). It is your responsibility to find out whether your course(s) need you to take one, and to register by the relevant deadline. [https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests](https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests)

If you are applying for medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery or certain other health courses, UK health authorities recommend you should be immunised against Hepatitis B before you start training. Universities may also ask you for certificates to show that you are not infected. Check the immunisation and certification requirements with your university.
**Adding choices**

You will be taken through to the following screen.

**EDUCATION**

Advice about completing the education section

Universities need to know where you have studied and which qualifications you are taking/have taken. You will need to fill in details of your schools or colleges, and then list your qualifications, one by one. You must include all schools, colleges and universities that you have attended since the age of 11, even if you withdrew from your course. There is space to enter up to 10 centres.

For each school and college, you provide details of:

- all qualifications for which you have accepted certification from an awarding organisation, even if you're retaking all or part of the qualification
- all qualifications for which you are currently studying or awaiting results. **All qualifications must be entered, even if you received an unsuccessful grade, if you are still waiting to take the final exams or if you are waiting for the results.**
How to enter qualifications

Add details of all of the schools, colleges and universities that you have attended, then click on the 'add qualification' link below each one and enter the qualifications you have taken, or are currently taking, at that institution.

If you cannot find your qualification name in the list, try looking under the country where you completed the qualification (for example, France - French Baccalaureate). If you still cannot find it in the list, click 'O' in the A-Z list and select the relevant 'other' option and free type the details of your qualification from your qualification certificate.

If you are re-sitting a qualification you need to enter it twice: once as a completed qualification with the grade achieved and once as a qualification with the result 'Pending'.

Entering Individual Qualifications. Select Find and type in name of school / college. Select the institution from the list.

Enter the start and finish dates at the institution.

Enter whether you attended full or part time, and whether you received any formal qualification.

Adding a qualification. Your educational institution will now show. Select your highest level of education from the drop down list, and add qualification to enter each qualification taken when attending.

Select your qualification from the list provided. If your qualification is not listed see guidance above.

Entering Qualifications. The qualification you have selected will now show. Enter the title of your qualification, and the date you expect it to be awarded.

Enter the validating agency – e.g. Edexcel, OCN etc.

Entering Results. If you are entering a current qualification that is not yet completed you should enter 'pending'. If completed, enter 'completed qual.'

Entering Modules Studied. You must enter all modules for your course, the QCF credit value, level and result. If the qualification is currently being taken, enter pending. If your qualification has been completed, you should enter the grade achieved.

National Diploma students should enter the achieved grade for all modules on year 1 of the course, and pending for year 2 modules.
When you have entered your first qualification, select save. Continue to add all qualifications at that institution by selecting the **add qualification** link.

To add qualifications from another school / college select add new school / college / centre and repeat the above process. When you have entered all of your qualifications, select save.

**Tip** – The modules for your achieved qualifications will be listed on your qualification certificate. Modules for courses currently being studied will be detailed in the course information provided to you at the beginning of your course.

**BTEC Registration Number**

Btec students only – this number will be on your first year certificate or the exams desk may be able to help

**Your highest level of qualification**

You will be asked to select the highest level of qualification you will have before you start your degree / HND. This does not include the course you are applying to – it is just about the qualifications that you will complete before starting the course. There are three options available in a drop-down list:

- Honours degree level or above, e.g. Bachelor’s degree with honours, Master’s degree, PhD.
- Below honours degree level, e.g. AS and A level, National Diploma and Advanced Higher, GCSE, Irish Leaving Certificate, International Baccalaureate or HND.
- No formal qualifications: this means that you will not have received any formal and certificated qualifications before you start a higher education course.
Mature students

Enter details for all your qualifications. If you do not have any qualifications, you should still enter details for your schools. You will be asked whether you obtained any qualifications at each school or college and can then select ‘no’. If this is correct, ignore the warning message and click on ‘section completed’ and ‘save’ to complete the education section.

If you are hoping to enter higher education through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), you still apply through UCAS, but should contact your universities and colleges first to discuss whether APL or APEL is acceptable and what evidence they will need.

International students

Check the suitability of your qualifications with the admissions offices at your universities and colleges before applying. They will decide whether or not your qualifications meet or could meet their entry requirements for the course(s). When you apply, you give full details of all your qualifications, including exams you took when you left school, exams you took to get into higher education, vocational exams and any other qualifications or awards.

**Please do not try to give a UK equivalent.**

If your first language is not English, you should:
- Say whether or not your qualifications were completely or partly assessed in English
- Enter details for any English language tests you have taken or plan to take.

EMPLOYMENT

Enter details of up to five employers, including company name and address, a description of your job, and start and finish dates. You will also be asked to say whether you worked full or part-time. This includes weekend and holiday jobs.

If your work experience has been unpaid, please include the details in your personal statement.

If you have not had any paid work experience, you can leave this section blank but you will need to mark it as complete.

Adding an employer. Select add employer and enter information requested.

**Tip** – work experience is a vital part of applications for certain degrees. Universities value work experience. If you have work experience it is important that you enter it here.
WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

When applying through UCAS for university courses, all applicants must complete a personal statement as part of the application. This is often one of the hardest parts and the amount of time and effort that needs to be applied to writing a successful personal statement should not be underestimated.

The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Personal Statement Facts

1) You can enter up to 4,000 characters (this includes spaces, full stops and commas) or 47 lines of text (this includes blank lines), whichever comes first. You do not have to use all the space provided. When you save text, the system will tell you how many characters are still available. You can preview your statement after you have saved it.

2) You cannot write more than 4,000 characters or 47 lines (whichever comes first) as the UCAS system will not allow this.

3) You cannot use italics, bold or underlining in your personal statement - the system will automatically remove these when saved. This will not disadvantage your application.

4) Do not type your personal statement directly into the UCAS personal statement screen. The system will time out after 35 minutes and you will lose your work that you have not saved. Write up your personal statement in Microsoft Word so that you can adapt and make amendments freely. You can cut and paste your personal statement into the UCAS personal statement screen when you are completely happy with it.

5) The same personal statement will be sent to all of your UCAS university choices. You cannot write multiple personal statements for different courses.

Researching your subject

Before writing your personal statement it is important to have conducted your research regarding the course options available to you. Research is a vital part of an effective university application; if your research is not thorough, this will show in your application. Here are our hints and tips about how to research and understand your subject area in order to evidence a current understanding of the profession.

- Attend open days at local universities before writing your personal statement. At open days, Admission Tutors often give specialist talks that will inform you with invaluable information that will help you evidence your understanding of the degree applied for. For information on when university open days are taking place look at www.opendays.com.

- Read the course specification on the universities own website and understand the structure of the course. Look into mandatory modules that you must study and also optional modules that may be of interest to you. Courses with the same name can often have very different content and methods of assessment so be sure of this before you apply.

- Identify the professional body for the profession you are seeking to enter. Professional body websites hold vast amounts of information on careers and often have case studies about professional roles. They also hold current research and up-to-date articles about challenges and developments within the profession. Again, these will assist you in writing an informed personal statement.
• Keep your knowledge up-to-date by reading professional magazines. For example: science students keep abreast of developments with the New Scientist, early years and teacher training students keep abreast of issues in TES (Times Educational Supplement), sport students top up your knowledge by reading S&PA Professional the official publication of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA). Free downloads are often available from their websites.

• Get work experience. There is nothing as effective as taking part in work experience to inform you about the realities of a job or try and arrange a one day work shadowing or a meeting with a practicing professional. By talking to current professionals in the field you will be able to gain information on current issues affecting the profession and a clearer understanding of the professional challenges.

• READ, READ, READ. It is important that you keep abreast of current issues within your sector by reading newspapers, magazines and websites. Stay informed as this will be of great importance should you be successful in securing an interview.

Preparing to write your personal statement

Step 1: Use a mind map.

Take time to map out all your work or voluntary experience, education, charitable activities under other relevant experience first. Also see UCAS’ mind map in this guide.
**Step 2: Choose your strongest examples**

Most applicants have lots of experiences that they could write about. The key to a successful personal statement is ensuring you write about the most relevant and strongest examples that evidence a range of relevant skills and qualities for the profession you are applying for.

**Step 3: Map out your skills**

For each of your experiences, consider the skills that you utilised, strengthened or gained as result. Think about how these relate to the professional area you are applying for. If you are not sure, look at job descriptions, case studies or the National Careers Service website for job profiles to get inspiration for some of the skills that you have and understand how these relate to the professions and university courses you are seeking to enter. For example:

Some skills gained from college might include:
- Planning & organisational skills
- Academic writing including referencing, constructing critical arguments, researching and structuring essays and numeracy and literacy skills.
- Presentation skills might also include IT skills and considering how to engage listeners.
- Effective communication both verbally and in writing, including listening & non-verbal communication skills.
- Becoming an independent learner

Some skills gained from work experience:
- Problem solving
- Working on your own initiative
- Customer Service
- Team working

**Step 4: Only now can you start to write!**

Look at the picture of yourself you have created and decide which you are going to write about first. Don’t worry about writing too much at first. You can edit your personal statement as many times as you wish before sending and the Careers team can help you do this.

**UCAS Personal Statement Writing Support**

Ucas has a number of videos, worksheets and a new online support guide to help you start writing your personal statement. They ask you to write about:
- Why are you applying for your chosen course.
- Why does this subject interest you.
- Why you think you’re suitable for the course.
- How does your current or previous studies relate to the course that you have chosen?
- Have you taken part in any other activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s).
- Consider jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work and try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course you are applying to.
- If you know what you’d like to do after completing the course, explain how you want to use the knowledge and experience that you will gain.

For further information please look at:
https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement

Also look at:
MY UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT

1. Preparation
   - Find out what it needs to be finished so you can have time to get feedback
   - Remember you have to write it to cover all the course you're applying for so don't mention every college by name
   - Check uni and college websites to see what skills and qualities they'd like you to have
   - Make a list of things you want to include
   - And start drafting early

2. What to include
   - Why you're interested in the subject
   - Why you've chosen the course(s)
   - Why you want to do higher education
   - Your understanding of the subject and what's required to study it
   - Your enthusiasm for the subject and any specific areas of interest
   - What you want to do in future with the skills and knowledge you'll gain
   - And how you'll be an asset to the uni or college

3. Extra things to add...
   - Say what you've done since leaving school
   - If you've had a variety of relevant jobs and experiences, maybe send a CV (suitable to the universities/colleges, not to UCAS)
   - Demonstrate how you can cope with the academic work
   - Evaluate your experiences and match them up to the course requirements

4. How to write it
   - Say why you want to study in the United Kingdom
   - Give evidence of how you can successfully complete a higher education course taught in the English language
   - Say if any of your previous studies have been assessed in English
   - Give examples of using your English communication skills
   - Structure what you want to include into an order that's most relevant to the uni or college
   - Introduction – start with an opening sentence that encourages the reader to read on
   - Conclusion – restate your commitment, enthusiasm and skills suited to uni or college life
   - Check your grammar, spelling and punctuation – read it aloud to hear what it sounds like
   - Get plenty of feedback from advisers and family members
   - And be prepared to redo it a few times until you're happy with it

5. Technical details
   - Length – up to 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text including spaces and blank lines that's approx 600 words
   - Make sure you don't copy from anyone or the internet – our software can detect any similarities and could jeopardise your application
**Personal Statement Structure**

Below is a suggested format for your personal statement. These are guidelines only, so do not worry if some of the suggestions do not apply to you.

**Paragraph 1: Capture the attention of the admission tutor**

- Clearly explain your reasons for applying for the degree subject. What interests you about the subject & why? Where does the inspiration come from? It is important that you demonstrate subject knowledge early on so use some of the knowledge you have gained from your research in your opening statement.
- Some statements start with quotes, some include jokes, and some set out to be unusual or eye-catching. Sometimes it works, but it might have the opposite effect to what you hoped. The admissions decision maker may not share your sense of humour so be careful when trying to make your statement stand out.

**Paragraph 2: Evidence your ability to perform academically.**

- Show subject knowledge by writing about how your current studies relate to the degree you are applying for. Talk about something new that you have learnt and discuss how this will benefit you when studying at university or on placement to show understanding of the subject – e.g. how will an understanding of bereavement or psychological perspectives in Health & Social Care benefit you in professional practice.
- Use your study to evidence your academic skills. These are as important as your other skills as you need to evidence your ability to cope academically on a challenging degree programme. Think about skills such as report writing, academic structure, research, referencing, debating or your ability to construct a critical or balanced argument.

**Paragraph 3: Write about the experiences that make you suitable for the profession / degree**

- Tell the Admissions Tutor about relevant work, voluntary, charity or community experience etc. and identify relevant skills and knowledge that you have gained as a result. It is essential that you show evidence of your academic skills and also your skills and research into the professional area you are looking to work in beyond your degree. This will demonstrate to the Admission Tutor reading your personal statement that you have researched thoroughly. Look at job descriptions and person specifications if you are not sure. Show understanding of the profession by linking back your skills & knowledge to the profession or saying how they will make you a strong candidate and enable success on your degree (see page 8, Personal Statement paragraph structure for how to do this).

**Paragraph 4: Write about your relevant interests & hobbies**

- If you have interesting & relevant hobbies, you should write a short paragraph about these. Do not write about interests & hobbies that have no relevance. If you decide to write a paragraph about this, it is essential that you identify skills gained from your hobbies and say how these relate to the degree or profession you are applying for.

**Paragraph 5: Summarise**

- In this paragraph, try and summarise the key points that make you a strong candidate for the course. Emphasise the qualities & skills that you have that set you apart from other applicants. This is an important aspect of selling yourself.
- If you can, tell the Admissions Tutor where you would like to specialise once qualified.
- A strong closing statement is important to leave a strong impression with the Admissions Tutor.
Personal Statement Paragraph Structure

Now you know the overall structure of your personal statement, you need to consider the structure of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. In order to provide a detailed personal statement, evidencing your skills and showing understanding of the profession, it is essential that your paragraphs are structured as follows:

A Activity
Tell the Admissions Tutor what you did.

B Benefit
Tell the Admissions Tutor the skills, knowledge, personal qualities that you gained as a result of the activity.

C Course / Career
Tell the Admissions Tutor how A & B make you a strong candidate. Relate back how the experience, skills and knowledge prepare you for successful study / practice.

Mastering the above paragraph structure is one of the most important parts of writing your personal statement. It enables the writer to demonstrate their research and understanding of the profession / degree. Looking at job profiles on the National Careers Service website and case studies on professional body websites and university course specifications on the university website can help greatly with the final stage (C) of linking your skills and knowledge back to the profession.

Students applying for highly competitive courses.

Often universities are looking for specific information in personal statements if you are applying for competitive courses such as midwifery, nursing, QTS primary education degrees, veterinary, radiography, pharmacy, law or bio/medical sciences.

It is therefore essential that you investigate, for each university, what they look for on a personal statement and their specific guidelines and ensure that you meet their specific personal statement criteria. This information can normally be found on their websites. Alternatively, ask for guidance when attending open days.

Using example personal statements for inspiration

Some students can find it beneficial to look at past personal statements to gain an understanding of what is required. Careers has copies of past statements for many subjects and some can also be found in our "It's all about me" personal statement guide which can be found on the Student Hub, Careers, UCAS.

https://www.studential.com and http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk also have many (good and bad!) example personal statements on their sites. Please be very careful not to copy as your UCAS application will go through plagiarism (copying) software.

Similarity detection

All personal statements sent to UCAS are tested for similarity detection by a system called Copycatch. This system finds all statements in their databases, the internet etc. and works out how much of your statement may have been copied, and reports the findings back to UCAS.

What happens if a personal statement has similarities?

- Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or more are reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service Team.
- Applicants, universities and colleges are notified at the same time by email when an application has similarities confirmed.
- Admissions tutors at individual universities and colleges decide what action to take regarding reported cases. If they believe you have plagiarised they are most likely to reject you.
Check it

This may be your only written work that the course tutor sees before making a decision so make sure it is organised and literate. **Get the grammar, spelling and punctuation right.** A statement filled with errors will give a negative impression of your skills and the effort you have put in to being accepted. Your statement must be written in English.

**Applying to multiple courses**

Remember that you only write one personal statement so it will be used for all your choices. Try not to mention a university or college by name, even if you are applying to only one university. Your personal statement cannot be changed if you apply to a different place later.

If you are applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme.

If you are applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices. For example, both mathematics and law are subjects where you have to think logically and apply rules. You may like both subjects because you enjoy solving problems, using theory and natural or man-made laws to come to a correct conclusion.

If you are applying for a highly competitive course and add another competitive subject as a “back-up” e.g. Radiography with Dietetics as a 5th choice you are likely to be wasting all choices. Your personal statement will need to show Admissions tutors your total commitment to one subject.

If your chosen courses cannot be linked by a common theme, think about your reasons for applying to such varied courses. Speak to a Careers Advisor to get some guidance.

**Applying to another choice later**

If you apply to other choices after sending your application (e.g. you add a choice, or apply through Extra or Clearing), your original personal statement will be sent to the university, but you can contact the university and ask if they will accept a revised statement.

If they agree, you can send a new one to them via e-mail, clearly stating your UCAS Personal ID. Please note that if you do this, your revised personal statement should be e-mailed to the University Admissions department at the same time as your additional / UCAS Extra application is sent.

**Adding in your personal statement to UCAS Apply**

Once you have completed and checked your statement in word you can cut and paste it into UCAS, please note the formatting is different and your character count may change as might your line or paragraph spacing.

You will need to check the formatting of your personal statement when you have pasted it over from word. Make sure it is easy to read with paragraphs but remember every full stop, comma or space etc. counts as a character.
PAY & SEND

When you have completed all of the sections of your UCAS application and have a red tick in each box, the pay / send link will become live. Please ensure that you check your application carefully and have had your personal statement approved before sending your application.

How much will it cost?

There is a fee for making an application for higher education. The amount depends upon how many courses, universities and colleges you apply to. If you apply to more than one course, university or college the cost is £24 for the 2018 entry application cycle. If you only apply to one course at one university or college, you pay £13 for 2018 entry. Please check with UCAS as these may be liable to change. The application fee includes VAT.

How do I pay?

You pay online using a credit or debit card. The card does not have to be in your name, but you will require the consent of the cardholder. If you pay your fee using a credit or debit card that you do not have permission to use, UCAS will cancel your application.

Credit and debit cards: UCAS accept UK and international Visa, Visa Debit, Delta, MasterCard, JCB, Maestro and Electron. At the moment they do not accept American Express or Diners Club cards.

When do I need to pay?

You pay after you have completed your application and are in the process of sending it.

If you are paying by card, you will be asked for your card details once you have agreed to the terms of the declaration and data protection statement.

Sending your application

Once you have paid, your application will be sent to your tutor in order that your reference can be added. It does not go directly to UCAS. Once your reference has been added, your application is checked by a Solihull College Super User (normally the Faculty Senior Director). Once this verification process has taken place your application will be approved and sent to UCAS. If you have a verified email address, UCAS will send you an email when your application has been received by them.

Once UCAS receive your application, they will process it, send it to each of your chosen universities and colleges and send you a welcome letter.

You can only send UCAS one application in each year’s application cycle. If you send a second application, it will be cancelled and you will not receive a refund.
REFERENCES

When applying through Solihull College, your personal tutor will be responsible for writing your reference. The personal tutor is required to comment on your suitability for your chosen course and may comment on areas such as:

- Proposed career ambitions, attitude, motivation and commitment. If relevant, the personal tutor will give an opinion on your suitability for this career path.
- Past achievement and current activities, with particular reference to subjects relating to the courses for which you are applying.
- Any supplementary information about your qualifications and study which you have not already described in your application.
- Relevant curriculum enrichment and related skills such as work experience, voluntary work.
- Any factors, such as personal circumstances, that may have affected, or might affect student performance. However this will only be disclosed with your permission.
- Information about any special needs and other requirements. This information will only be given with your consent.

Your tutor will also report your predicted grades within the reference in order that the university admission department can verify that you meet the academic entry requirements.

All references are provided in confidence to your chosen universities. Should you wish to see your UCAS reference, you should contact UCAS Customer Services directly and make an application under the Data Protection Act. You will be charged £10 by UCAS.

References for Access to Higher Education Students

As an Access to HE course student, your personal tutor may not have known you long enough to write a full reference. In this case, your personal tutor will provide a short initial reference and will (if required) provide a complete reference the following Spring. All supplementary references are sent directly to all the chosen institutions and will quote your Personal ID.

Extenuating Circumstances

In the event that there has been any extenuating circumstances that have affected your academic achievement, either on your current course, or during previous qualifications, you should inform and discuss this with your personal tutor in order that this information can be included within your UCAS reference. Examples may include reduced grades due to ill health, family bereavement, or late diagnosis of a learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

FURTHER ADVICE & GUIDANCE

For further advice & guidance on the UCAS process you can either:

- Speak to your tutor.
- Speak to admissions staff at the universities
- UCAS Student Support line 0371 468 0468
- Contact a member of the Solihull College Careers team:

  Book an appointment via - Email: careers@solihull.ac.uk   Tel: 0121 678 7020/7021

  Attend a Careers Drop In Session:
  ° Blossomfield : Monday to Friday : 12.00 till 13.00
  ° Woodlands : Monday & Wednesday : 12.00 till 13.00
UCAS Undergraduate application journey

1. Apply online on time!
   Find out about deadlines*:
   www.ucas.com/whentosapply

2. Wait to hear from the unis
   Follow your application using Track:
   www.ucas.com/track

3. Reply to your offers on time!
   You can reply when all decisions have come in:
   www.ucas.com/replies
   Don’t have offers?
   Use Extra:
   www.ucas.com/extra

4. Get your exam results and see if your place is confirmed
   Results – what you need to know:
   www.ucas.com/examresults
   Find out where there are still places available using Clearing:
   www.ucas.com/clearing
   If you’ve done better than you expected you can use Adjustment:
   www.ucas.com/adjustment

Thinking about how you’ll pay for uni or college?

What you can get

Student finance

How to apply

Repaying your loan

Find out when the application service opens at
www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps

Read our interactive quick start guides at
www.sfengland.slc.co.uk/quickstartguides

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