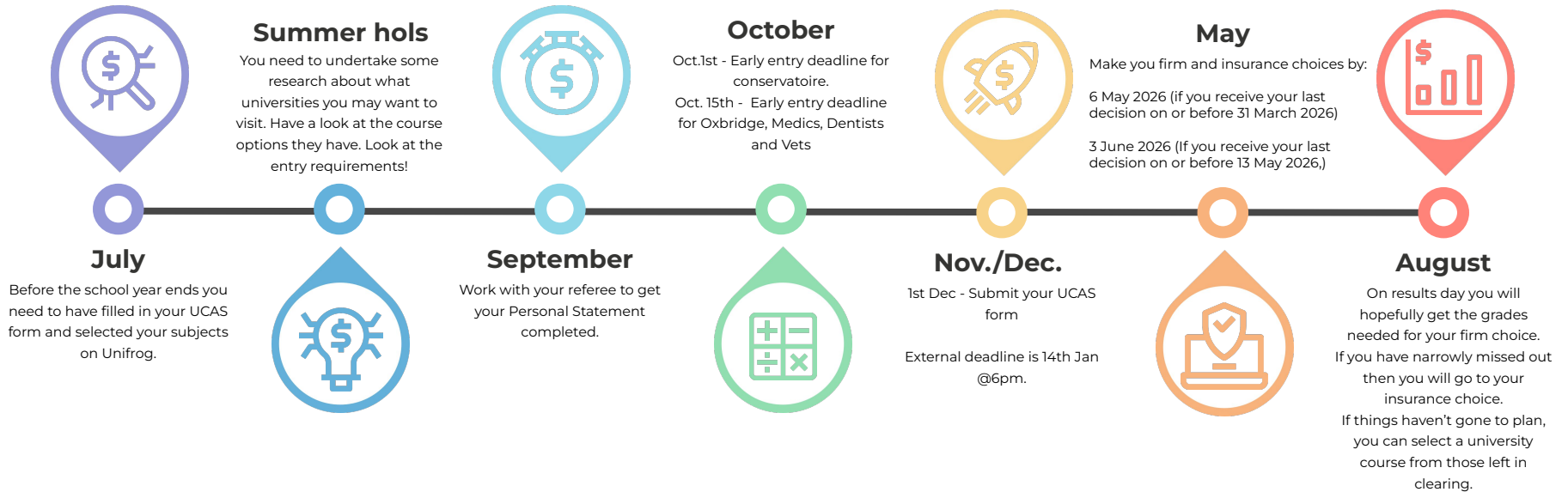


Personal Statements

For 2026 Entry Onwards

TIMELINE INFOGRAPHIC

The stages of UCAS



Has the Personal Statement changed?

Content the same but the format is changing

Scaffolding into 3 questions:

- Why do you want to study the course or subject
- How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare for this course or subject
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Advice around the personal statement is staying the same.

FAQ: Do I have to write a personal statement? I have heard universities do not even read them.

Yes, you do need to write one as we do not know which course at which university uses them!

At the same uni:

- some courses will SCORE them as part of the application process
- other courses will just read them for context (and use only the academic qualifications.)

FAQ: What do University Admissions Teams look for in a personal statement?

ENTHUSIASM

They want to know that you want to do the course!

The best PS are ones that comes across as 'natural' and authentic' not extravagant!

ACADEMICALLY PREPARED

That you are ready for the demands of the course. What have you done to prepare yourself? Hint: A-levels and research!

HAVE THE SKILLS

Have you the skills for the course and give examples of where you have demonstrated this.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Can you provide examples of relevant experience and engagement outside of the classroom, e.g. work experience, uni visits, reading, etc...

Structuring your personal statement

1.



Why do you want to study this course or subject?

2.



How have your qualifications 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?

- ★ You do not have to write the same amount for each section. Depending on the course that you are applying for and your experience you may write more in one than in the others.
- ★ Do not stress over which section to include information in; the most important thing is that it is included as the statement will be reviewed as one piece.
- ★ You do not need to include an introduction to each questions - get straight to the point.

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

You need to explain to the University your **motivations for wanting to study this subject**

... so, you want to ask yourself:

When did you become interested in this subject?

What moment/experience sparked your interest?

For vocational courses

What do you like about the profession?

Why do you think it is the right career for you?

For academic degrees

Why do you want to spend a long time studying this subject in detail?

Think about what you have enjoyed so far and what you want to learn more about.

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

Motivations for studying this course:

- ★ Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life?
- ★ Is it a subject you love and want to pursue further?
- ★ What is your drive?

Knowledge of this subject area and interests:

- ★ Is there a particular subject area you have researched?
- ★ Is there something that you can't wait to learn more about?
- ★ Has there been a book or subject expert that has sparked your interest?

Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit:

- ★ Have you already a particular profession in mind?
- ★ How might you use your subjects to launch your career?
- ★ What is important to you and your future, and how might the knowledge gained from your chose help you achieve this?

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

YouTube UCAS video link about Personal Statements:

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/writing-your-personal-statement/the-new-personal-statement-for-2026>

2026 personal statement guides → take a look at this page for some subject specific suggestions on what to include!

<https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/writing-your-personal-statement/2026-personal-statement-guides>

Section 2 - How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

- ★ What **skills** and **experience** do you have that are relevant to your chosen university degree and how will the skills and experience help equip you for the course.
- ★ Talk about your favourite parts of your current course(s) content. Especially those topics that link most to your degree.
- ★ If you are planning to study a combined honours degree, how do the skills in your current subjects support another?
- ★ How have you been inspired to go **beyond the syllabus**? Give **ONE example** and relate it back!
- ★ Can you give some evidence of independent research or group work, a taster lecture or MOOC, that helped you connect to this subject at a higher level of study.

Answer these questions:

- ★ What have you learnt on your course that will help you on this degree?
- ★ What skills have you gained that you could use on the degree e.g. teamwork, communication and leadership?

Section 2 - How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

How do your studies relate to your chosen course or subject area:

- ★ This could be current or previous studies.
- ★ From any form of formal education - think school, training provider or short online university course (MOOC).

What relevant or transferable skills do you have that will make you a great candidate:

- ★ Are there a couple of subjects that helped develop a core set of relevant skills required for your chosen course.
- ★ Is there a particular module or project that has helped you to understand where your interests and strengths lie.

Any relevant educational achievements

- ★ Universities will see grades on your application so you do not need to talk about these.
- ★ Focus on accomplishments like a competition, holding a position of responsibility or representing the school.

FAQ: AI - To use or not to use???

- ★ Microsoft CoPilot / Chat GPT - Use them wisely!
- ★ Use AI as a support tool - you must not copy from it. Your statement has to be your work.
They say the AI works means that it strips back the personal element and makes it sounds like a robot and is very generic!
- ★ Use in the planning section but not to write your statement.
- ★ The more specific you can make what you want to ask AI the better the response will be.

Over the following slides are some examples of how you could use it...

Course: Mechanical Engineering

A-levels: Maths, Physics, DT, Psychology

Qu. asked to AI: *How do my A-level subjects in Maths, Physics, DT and Psychology help me with applying for a Mechanical Engineering degree.*

Given you need to like Maths, talk about your favourite topic. Why do you like it? What fascinates you about it.

What have you learnt about human behaviour and how could think influence product designs?

Your A-level subjects form an excellent foundation for a Mechanical Engineering degree! Here's how each one contributes:

- **Maths:** Engineering is built on mathematical principles. You'll need strong problem-solving skills for areas like calculus, algebra, and differential equations, all of which are crucial for modeling physical systems and designing mechanisms.
- **Physics:** This is directly relevant. Mechanical Engineering relies heavily on physics concepts like forces, motion, energy, thermodynamics, and material properties. Your physics knowledge will help you understand how machines work and how to optimize their design.
- **Design & Technology (DT):** DT gives you hands-on experience in problem-solving, prototyping, and understanding materials and manufacturing processes. Engineering often involves designing and building solutions, and DT helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.
- **Psychology:** While it may seem less directly related, psychology can be surprisingly useful in engineering. Understanding human factors is important for designing user-friendly machines, ergonomic structures, and improving safety. It also helps with teamwork, communication, and leadership, which are essential in engineering careers.

Together, your subjects make you a well-rounded candidate with strong analytical, creative, and technical skills—key traits for a future engineer. What aspect of Mechanical Engineering excites you the most?

Maybe provide an example of a topic that has helped you to understand this.

[Link here directly to your NEA. This is you engaging in engineering!](#)

Course: Film Studies

A-levels: Psychology, DT, History, Media

Qu. asked to AI: How do my A-level subjects in Psychology, DT, History and Media help me with applying for a degree in Film Studies.

Could you provide an example of types of human behaviour you have studied and link it to films that you have seen?

Has studying certain events and then watching these in film challenged your thoughts?

Your A-level choices give you a well-rounded perspective that can absolutely strengthen your Film Studies application. Here's how each subject contributes:

- **Psychology:** Film is deeply rooted in human emotion, behavior, and perception. Psychology gives you insight into how audiences engage with storytelling, character development, and cinematography, which can help when analyzing films or even creating them.
- **Design & Technology (DT):** If you're interested in film production, DT can be incredibly useful. It helps with practical skills in set design, prop-making, special effects, and even understanding camera mechanics. Filmmaking is a blend of art and technical precision, and DT equips you with hands-on knowledge.
- **History:** Film is a powerful medium for exploring historical events, social movements, and cultural shifts. Studying history will give you a strong foundation for analyzing period films, historical accuracy, and the ways cinema reflects society over time.
- **Media Studies:** This is directly relevant to film analysis and industry knowledge. You'll likely cover topics like cinematography, editing, narrative techniques, and the evolution of film as a medium. It also helps you understand how films are marketed, distributed, and received by audiences.

Altogether, your subject choices highlight critical thinking, creativity, technical skills, and cultural awareness—key qualities for studying Film. Do you lean more toward film analysis or production?

You could link your design of your NEA to the audience that you were trying to appeal to. What did you need to take into consideration?

You could pick a topic area and discuss how you want to develop this further at university.

Course: Interior Design / Architecture

A-levels: Psychology, DT, Law

Qu. asked to AI: How do my A-level subjects in Psychology, DT and Law help me with applying for a degree in Interior Design / Architecture.

Thinking about your NEA, you could discuss the design process that you undertook and link also back to the skills you utilised.

Your A-level choices give you a surprisingly strong foundation for an Interior Design or Architecture degree! Here's how each subject contributes:

- **Psychology:** Understanding human behavior and cognitive processes can be incredibly useful when designing spaces. You'll be better equipped to create environments that influence mood, productivity, and well-being—especially in areas like workplace design, hospitality, or residential projects.
- **Design & Technology (DT):** This is directly relevant! DT gives you practical skills in problem-solving, materials, construction techniques, and creative thinking. Many interior designers and architects benefit from hands-on experience in prototyping and technical drawing, which DT likely covers.
- **Law:** While it might not seem directly connected, law equips you with analytical thinking and knowledge that can be useful in construction regulations, property law, and contract negotiations. Understanding legal frameworks helps architects and designers navigate building codes, planning permissions, and ethical practices in the industry.

Overall, your subjects suggest a well-rounded applicant with creativity, analytical skills, and an understanding of how spaces affect people. You can emphasize these strengths in your personal statement or interviews. What part of architecture or interior design excites you the most?

You could discuss your understanding of human behaviour and how this needs to be acknowledged when creating designs.

Show an awareness of the legal framework that you must comply with and what would happen if you didn't.

Course: Psychology

A-levels: Psychology, Sociology, DT, Art

Qu. asked to AI: *How do my A-level subjects in Psychology, Sociology, DT and Art help me with applying for a degree in Psychology.*

What is your favourite part of the course so far and why? Has this inspired you to take the course at A-level?

Describe a problem that you had to overcome, how you dealt with it and what was the end result.

Your A-level subject choices actually set you up quite well for a Psychology degree! Here's how each one contributes to your application:

- **Psychology** – This is the most obvious one! It gives you a foundational understanding of psychological concepts, theories, and research methods, which will give you a head start in your degree.
- **Sociology** – Sociology explores human behavior, social structures, and cultural influences, all of which are highly relevant to psychology. It helps develop critical thinking skills and an understanding of societal influences on individuals.
- **Design Technology (DT)** – You might not immediately connect DT with psychology, but it can be valuable. It teaches problem-solving, creativity, and analytical thinking—skills useful in areas like cognitive psychology and human-computer interaction.
- **Art** – This might seem unrelated at first, but art can enhance your ability to think creatively, express ideas visually, and even engage with psychological topics like perception, emotion, and therapy through artistic expression (e.g., art therapy).

Your subject choices demonstrate a mix of analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills, which admissions officers value. If you're applying for a Psychology degree, you could emphasize how your subjects have prepared you for the research, creativity, and social understanding required in psychology.

Is there an example that you can provide where you have showed critical thinking skills.

Could you discuss ways in which you have used emotion in your work. Why did you do this?

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

You should include activities that you do outside of your studies - **reflecting on the skills** you have learnt and **how these are relevant** to your chosen course.

Work experience, employment or volunteering

- ★ In-person or virtual work experience.
- ★ Paid for work or volunteering.
- ★ The key is to reflect on the experiences and the skills gained relevant to your chosen course.

Personal life experiences or responsibilities

- ★ Is there a situation you've personally overcome that has influenced your decision?
- ★ Are there personal experiences that have helped you develop essential qualities for the course?

Hobbies and any extracurricular activities

- ★ Think sports, reading, community work, summer schools!
- ★ Any activities outside of core studies that help further showcase why you would make a great student?

Achievements outside of school

- ★ This could be a position of responsibility for local clubs/groups, competitions, or qualifications you have gained outside of the classroom.

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

Examples come in all shapes and sizes:

In person work experience	Blogs and vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses (MOOCs)
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions

You **do not** need to list everything that you have done or what you did - focus on **what was gained from the experience** and **how this is useful** for the course that you are applying for.

Recent, Reflective, Relevant

The examples that you are using need to be:

- ★ **recent** (within the last 3 years max.)
- ★ **reflective** (what did you learn from the experience)
- ★ **relevant** (how does it link to the course you are applying for?)

P = **Point** - What did you do? E.g. Work Experience

E = **Evidence** - What did you gain from the activity?

E = **Explain** - How will this help you in the future?

L = **Link** - Link it back to the course

If the activity does not link back to the course then do not use it!

Recent, Reflective, Relevant - Example

Scenario: You are captain of the schools Rugby team and are applying for an accounting degree.

POINT

P

Being captain of the school rugby team has provide me with skills such as teamwork, strategic thinking, and responsibility. that I can draw upon in a accounting career.

EXPLAIN

E

My ability to lead a team shows that I can manage responsibilities, coordinate tasks, and work well with others, all valuable in professional financial roles.

EVIDENCE

E

As team captain, I have been responsible for are responsible for motivating my teammates, and making on the spot decisions on the field under pressure.

LINK TO COURSE

E

These qualities are essential for accountants when handling financial challenges, budgeting, and risk assessment.

Recent, Reflective, Relevant - Example

Scenario: You work at a large supermarket and are applying for an accounting degree.

POINT

P

Working in a large supermarket has helped me in developing my team working and communication skills.

EVIDENCE

E

I am frequently required to coordinate with my colleagues of customer inquiries so that a high level of customer service is maintained.

EXPLAIN

E

These interpersonal skills will be beneficial for client interactions that will occur in an accounting role.

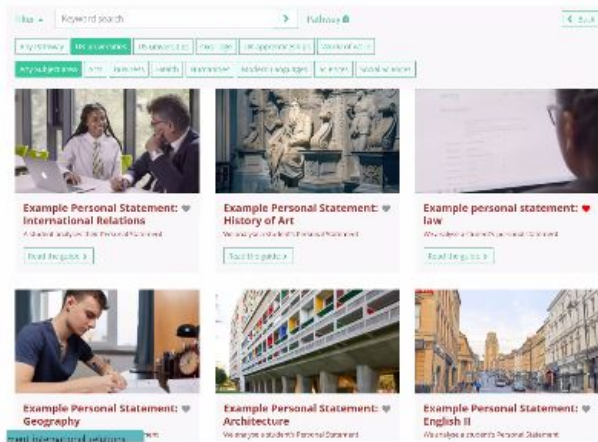
LINK TO COURSE

E

Having been given the responsibility of handling financial transactions and managing inventory, these tasks have involved financial record-keeping and attention to detail, which are all aspects of the accounting profession.

General resources - Ideas of Personal Statements

- ★ Look at Unifrog as they have examples of different examples of personal statements on there.
- ★ Same for the UCAS website!!!
- ★ *The images below are hyperlinked to the relevant websites!*

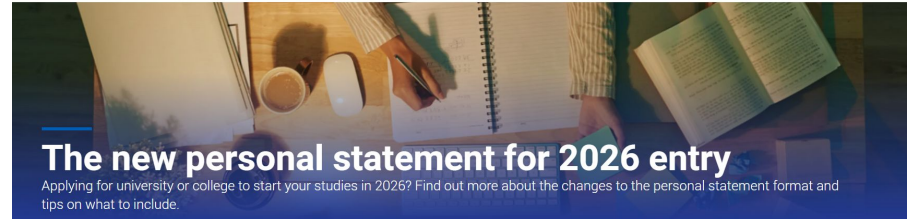


UCAS News Events Help and training Guides, resources and training

Applying / Applying to university / Writing your personal statement / The new personal statement for 2026 entry



Add to favourites



What's on this page?

- What is a personal statement?
- Why has the personal statement format changed?
- The new personal statement questions
- What universities and colleges are looking for

General resources - To build up your experiences

- ★ UniTasterDays - <https://www.unitasterdays.com> (Free university events, workshops, taster lectures, insight sessions)
- ★ Springpod - <http://www.springpod.com/> (Free virtual work experience with top employers and universities)
- ★ University departments website and social media pages (Taster lectures, competitions, current research, first year reading lists!)
- ★ MOOCs; Podcasts / TED talks / etc. are in the “[Read, Watch, Listen](#)” tab in the Unifrog resources section.

Other FAQs:

Q: Do I need to write the same amount in each section?

A: No - you just need to meet the minimum for each section that is required. If you are applying for a more academic course then section 1 is likely to be in more detail than the other sections.

Q: Where do I put my super curricular?

A: Super curricular can go in either section 2 or 3

Q: Do I need to write an introduction for each section.

A: No introduction needed!!! Get straight to the point.



Why do you want to study this course or subject?

- What are your motivations for studying this course?
- What knowledge do you have of this subject area?
- Future plans – demonstrate why this course is a good fit.

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

- How do your studies relate to your chosen course or subject area?
- What relevant or transferable skills do you have that will make you a great candidate?
- Any relevant educational achievements

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

- Work experience, employment or volunteering
- Personal life experiences or responsibilities
- Hobbies and any extracurricular activities
- Achievements outside of school