



## A Short Guide to the UK Personal Statement for Alumni



### Step 1: The key considerations

When you apply to UK universities, you will do so via UCAS, which has a maximum stipulation of **five** college & majors (**four** if you are looking at Medicine).

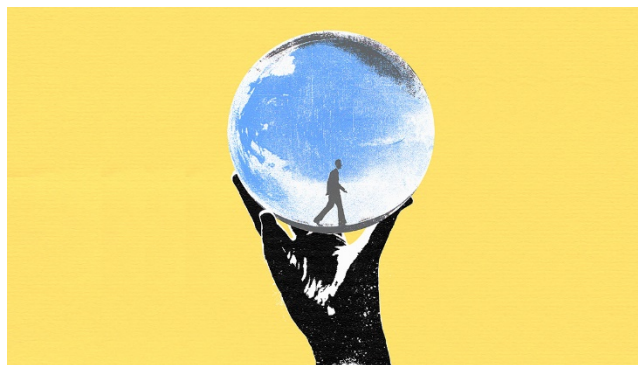
You can only write **one** personal statement; so avoid reference to any specific university or college. There is a limit of 4000 characters or 47 lines of text, spaces included. Paragraphing should be kept, in order for your statement to be reader-friendly.

Be very familiar with the description of the intended course(s) of study. The courses you select should be similar across schools, for your statement to work.

In your statement, **focus mainly on academic activities**, as a demonstration of your passion for, ability in and understanding of the course(s) you are applying to.

You may include your non-academic pursuits only if they are relevant to your course of study. Consider adhering to the 80-20 principle: 80% or more for academic coverage, 20% relevant non-academic attributes.

## Step 2: Reflect on your academic experiences

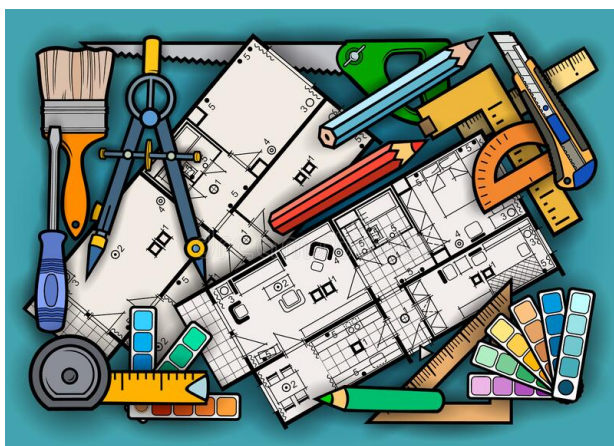


Your experiences should not just be limited to what you did in school. You should continue to demonstrate academic aptitude in the activities pursued post A-levels. This could be in the form of independent readings, courses taken, or in your work experience, for instance.

Your aptitude is demonstrated not just in listing what you have done, but in your independent analysis and opinions about what you have studied. What, for instance, may be the impact of a learnt policy? Is an economic/mathematical model so easily applied in the real world – what could be some constraints?

Aptitude is also shown in your real-world awareness about the skills needed to pursue your major. In light of this, relevant soft skills related to your major could have been learnt in non-academic activities: if writing about them, be able to explain why these skills are important in the pursuit of your major/field.

Key question to ask yourself: From your time in school to now, how did you stretch yourself academically in your desired major(s), beyond the A-levels? The focus should be on what you have done and learnt **beyond** the H2 curriculum, be it pursued independently and informally, or otherwise.



## Step 3: Drafting your statement

From your reflections, select relevant information and insights for your statement.

**For your introduction, the following may be useful:**

What sparked my interest in this field?

Why do I want to pursue it in university?

**For each content paragraph:**

Focus on actual activities, done within and beyond school, which demonstrate academic ability and aptitude to pursue your chosen course. Tip: as you are applying as an alumni, you will want to show clearly that you have continued pursuing your interests, even beyond the A-levels.

What relevant academic insights did you learn from all that has been accomplished? Have you demonstrated this in clear, succinct writing? Avoid overelaboration and repetition.

For non-academic activities: Have you explained why the skills learnt are transferable to your major? (This is the 20%; only if relevant).

Tip: Ensure your time context is clear, particularly for activities done post A-levels.

**End off with a simple conclusion**, possibly reflecting on your aspirations/plans upon completing your degree or the UK experience you look forward to.

**Step 4: Refining your essay**



**The key questions to guide you here:**

Through my range of activities, have I demonstrated aptitude for the course(s) I am interested in?

Did I cite specific examples and showed understanding of the field?

Have I demonstrated that my academic pursuits did not stop with the A-levels, but went beyond?

Is everything that I have written relevant to my chosen course(s)?



## Final tips

Do's	Don'ts
Write your statement on your own.	Exaggerate, generalise or laundry-list.
Write clearly and ensure there are no grammatical mistakes.	Cram your statement with irrelevant information.
Start early in planning & drafting.	Leave it to the last minute. Please remember to <b>adhere to internal deadlines for UCAS submission.</b>

**Note on Covid-19:** while many activities may have been curtailed, just as many took on virtual formats, and opened new possibilities. What can you write about to demonstrate aptitude and passion?

Tip: Focus positively as it is a mark of resilience: on new ways in which you have seized opportunities to learn, how Covid-19 may have brought about a period of reflection and personal growth, and the relevant insight into the field you would like to pursue, if relevant.

### For additional reading:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>

### Additional note to alumni:

*Depending on the national situation, we will avail you of channels to seek feedback on your application materials. Check back on the RI open website for details in mid-July.*

Best of luck for applications and remember to let your CTs know early that you are applying!

With all best wishes,  
Your teacher-counsellors @ HEO