

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

For 2026 Entry

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We will cover

- Introduction to UCAS and key dates
- Personal Statements overview
- Top tips!

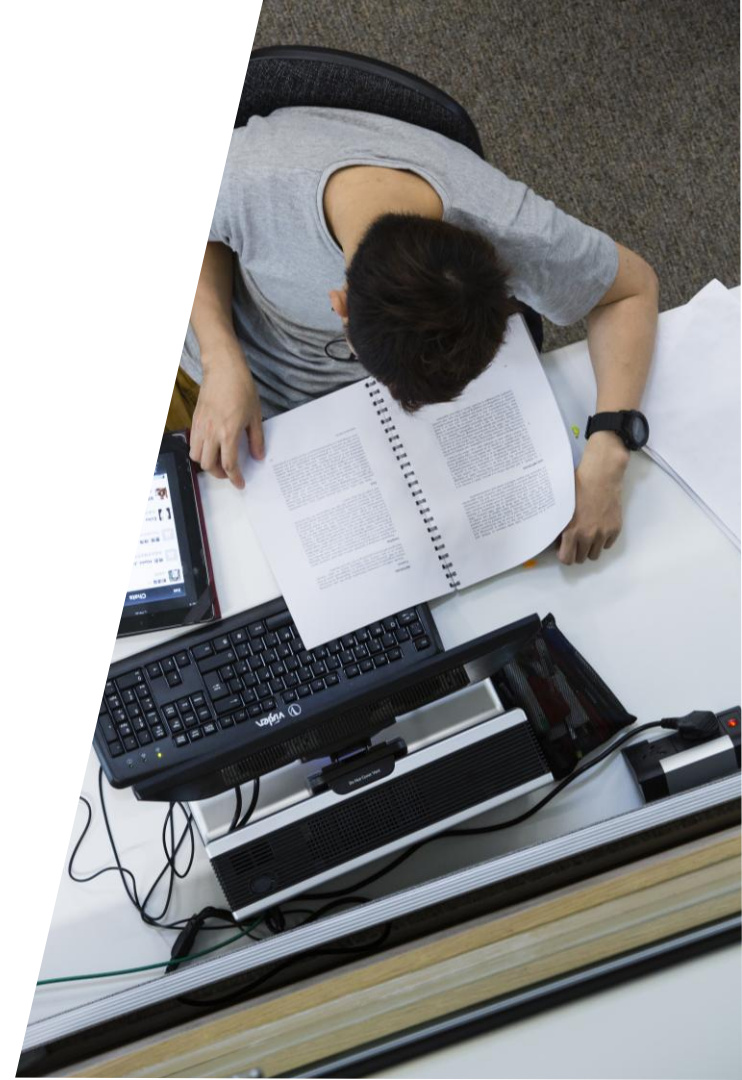
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UCAS Overview

- All undergraduate applications are made through the 'University and Colleges Admissions Service': www.UCAS.com
- UCAS is a good resource for researching your university and course options, especially through their 'Hub'.
- Applications require; personal details, your education and qualifications, employment history, course choices, teacher reference and of course the Personal Statement.

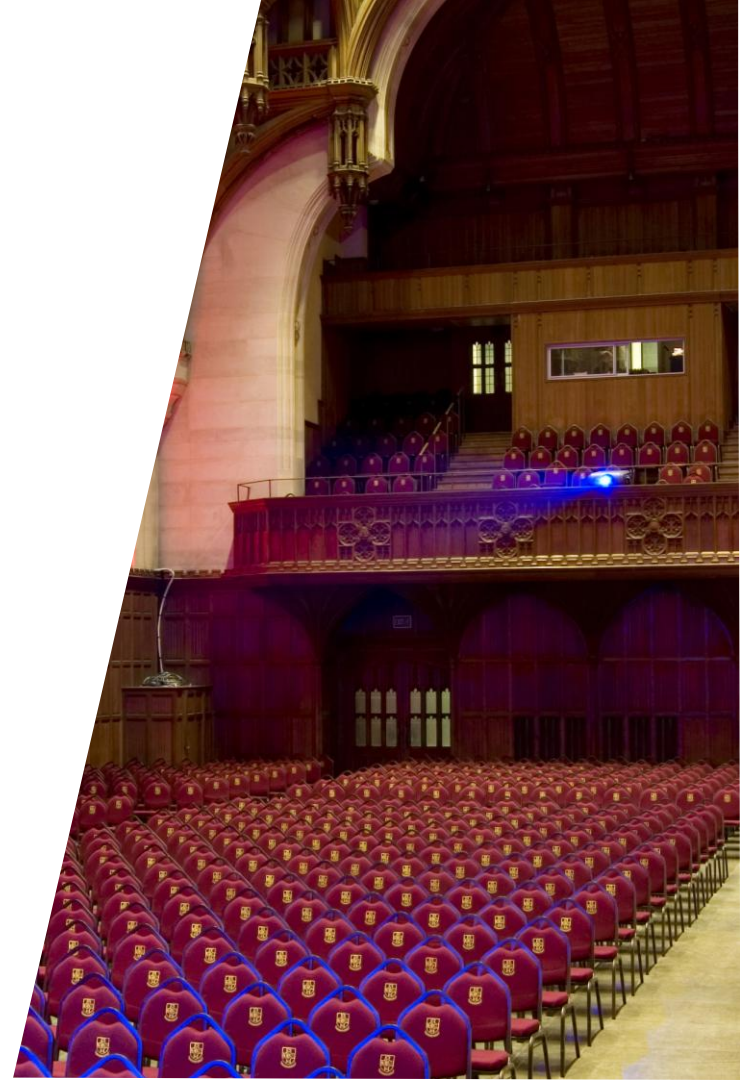
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UCAS Overview

- You can apply for up to 5* different courses at multiple or the same institutions but only with one personal statement!
- UCAS is the site you use to submit application; monitor offers and choose your firm and insurance choices.
- Applications require; personal details, your education history, employment history, course choices and of course the Personal Statement.

*4 Med/Dent schools plus 1 alt course choice!



UCAS Tip!

- The optional '**personal circumstances**' questions help universities build a broader picture of your personal situation. It's worth being candid with these questions, as sometimes it may support universities to offer you admission concessions (such as contextual/guaranteed offers) or signposting to funding you may be eligible for.



Check out the UCAS Hub here



UCAS Key Dates

- **13th May 2025**- Applications open for 2026 (You can register your account and access the Hub now!)
- **15th Oct 2025 (18:00 UK Time)**- 'Early Application' Deadline (for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Med/Sci)
- **14th Jan 2026 (18:00 UK Time)**- 'Fair Consideration' deadline for most other course.



Check out the UCAS dates here



Personal Statements- The Basics

The personal statement should;

- Provide a university insight into an applicant's character, knowledge and relevant experience. It also helps if you highlight your academic and career desires.
- Be 4,000 characters or 47 lines of text (including spaces)

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Personal Statements- Changes!

In short, there is no longer one large piece of text- instead, it's split into 3 sections!

- **Section 1-** Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- **Section 2-** How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
- **Section 3-** What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

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Personal Statements- Structure and Advice

- There is a 350-character minimum per question as each is 'scored' equally.
- The statement will be reviewed as a whole, so you should avoid repeating information between sections.
- It's better to include all your key information/content than worry too much about which section it appears in.

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What universities are looking for

- Relevant academic ability
- Motivation
- Passion for the subject
- Relevant experience
- Study skills
- Critical thinking
- The whole person
- An understanding of the course on offer

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

- Read the course description and identify key skills.
- Reflect on key moments that inspired your interest or why certain experiences influenced your choice.
- Think about how and why you have an interest, rather than just that you have one.
- Be specific in your examples, e.g., reference a specific book, topic, or event.
- Consider how you can connect your subject choice to real-life issues e.g., Climate change.
- Address your career or academic aspirations e.g. where do you see this subject leading you?

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

Causeway Education recommend:

- Choosing two course-related skills that you enjoy and explain a recent instance where you've demonstrated them- one example per skill.

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

- Demonstrate your active engagement with the subject/s
- Be specific and reflect on your experiences
- Show how you've gained skills and how this relates to your chosen course
- Include critical reflection
- Link to super-curricular experiences (taster sessions, uni engagement activities, wider reading etc.)

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

Causeway Education recommend:

- Detailed analysis of **either**;
 - a work experience interaction, along with additional research (for care-based courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Med/Sci, Nursing, Teaching, Social Work)
 - **or** course-related wider reading (for all other course types).

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

- Reflect on the skills you've gained from your experiences
- Show how the experiences link to your chosen degree or university-level study
- Include critical analysis of your experiences
- Focus on the impact of the experience, rather than over-explaining what the experience was
- Include reference to work experience, extra-curricular and/or super-curricular activities.

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

Causeway Education recommend:

- Discuss additional activities that show relevant knowledge, prioritising course-related activities (non-care-based courses) or balancing course related and non-course-related activities (care-based courses)

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Structure – STAR Technique

- It's important that for each of these sections, you **show** and **not just tell us** about your experience, i.e. demonstrate your understanding.
- You can do this using the STAR technique
 - **S**ituation
 - **T**ask
 - **A**ction
 - **R**esult



Structure – STAR Technique Example

This is okay...

- “I participated in a Medicine Summer School where I attended different fascinating lectures and workshops. For instance, I got to test the DNA of a Kiwi Fruit. I was checking if the fruit had any of the markers for diabetes. I worked with my team to do the testing so that we had accurate results and I found this opportunity exciting as a way of developing the skills I will need for university study.”

-Medicine

But we can make it better...

Structure – STAR Technique Example

SITUATION,

- *I participated in the Medicine stream of the Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Bristol. I attended lectures and lessons, including a DNA testing workshop.*

Structure – STAR Technique Example

SITUATION, TASK,

- *I participated in the Medicine stream of the Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Bristol. I attended lectures and lessons, including a DNA testing workshop. I was tasked with working within a group to discover which samples of DNA had indicators for diabetes.*

Structure – STAR Technique Example

SITUATION, TASK, ACTION,

- *I participated in the Medicine stream of the Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Bristol. I attended lectures and lessons, including a DNA testing workshop. I was tasked with working within a group to discover which samples of DNA had indicators for diabetes. I communicated clearly with the other students in my group to ensure each of us had a specific role and understood the testing process. This meant the sample was tested consistently. We then recorded these results carefully into our data table, ensuring the experiment was accurately recorded and conclusions could be drawn.*

Structure – STAR Technique Example

SITUATION, TASK, ACTION, RESULT.

- *I participated in the Medicine stream of the Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Bristol. I attended lectures and lessons, including a DNA testing workshop. I was tasked with working within a group to discover which samples of DNA had indicators for diabetes. I communicated clearly with the other students in my group to ensure each of us had a specific role and understood the testing process. This meant the sample was tested consistently. We then recorded these results carefully into our data table, ensuring the experiment was accurately recorded and conclusions could be drawn. As a result of our efficient planning and clear communication we were able to note which DNA samples had diabetes. I look forward to putting these research skills into practice at university.*

Top tips

- Show you understand you're applying for a career, not just a degree
- Reflect on your experiences, don't just list them
- Show evidence of what you have learnt, research you have undertaken, or skills you possess
- Be enthusiastic and tailor towards your chosen course
- Use the STAR method

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Top tips

Causeway Education: OSCAR Platform

- A free Personal Statement building tool available to all students in state-funded schools or colleges.
- Ask your school for a login and if they don't have one ask them to sign up as it's free for schools too!



Check out the
OSCAR platform!

Considerations...

- The extent to which statements are used in offer-making varies across and within universities.
- In cases where they don't form the main part of decision, they can be used to differentiate between two evenly-matched candidates.
- Please ensure you read the 'Admissions Statement' on your course page to determine to what extent the Personal Statement will be considered at the University of Bristol for your year of entry.



Check out the UCAS guide for more info and top tips!



THANK YOU

Email choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk for any
general enquiries

