# Personal Statement UCAS

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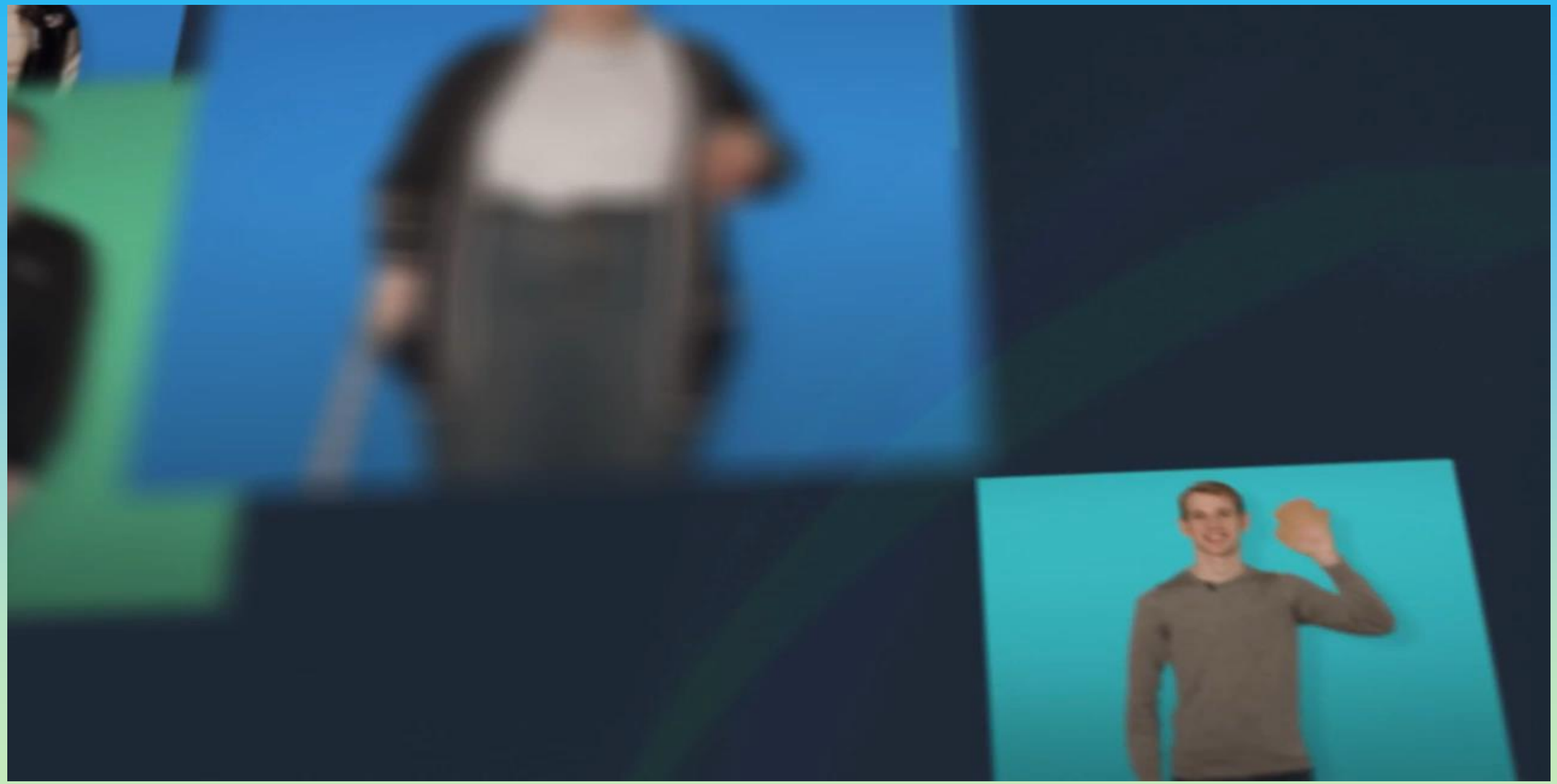

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# Session Details:

1. Approach to writing a personal statement-
   Identifying the program
   Understanding the pre-requisite of the program.
   Difference between recommended/preferred/required.

2. Importance of Personal Statement Vs Letter of Recommendation.

3. Personal Statement Structure.

4. How University review personal statement Do's and Dont's.

5. Case Studies.

6. Use of AI.

7. New UCAS format.

8. Q & A.

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*A competitive process*

# UCAS APPLY

## What is UCAS?

Central body that administers university applications in the UK

## Where?

All applications are made online www.ucas.com

## When?

UCAS Apply goes live for applications in September – your school will set their own internal deadlines

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# University Search:

**Set Clear Goals**
Before selecting a university, define your academic and career objectives.

**Consider Programme Costs**
Carefully evaluate the total cost, which can vary significantly depending on the location.

**Review University Rankings**
It's important to review its rankings as rankings offer insights into global reputation, teaching quality, and key values. Pay special attention to the student-to-staff ratio.

**Select the Right Subject**
Choosing the right subject at a UK university is crucial, as it will shape your studies and impact your career for decades. Review course content and reading lists, as they vary by university.

**Explore Student Societies**
Look for one that supports your hobbies and interests through various societies and clubs.

**Connect with Students and Alumni**
Engage with current students and alumni to get real insights into the university experience, also check out student blogs or vlogs for unfiltered views on campus life, academics, and overall satisfaction.

**Assess Accommodation Options**
Consider on-campus and off-campus options, focusing on cost, amenities, and location.

**Value Diversity and Inclusion**
A university that values different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives creates a welcoming space where everyone feels they belong, enriching the overall experience for all students.

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# Eligibility Requirements for UK Universities

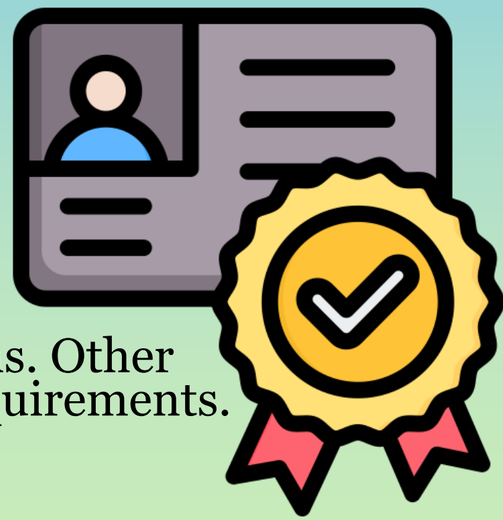
## 1. Academic Qualifications

**A-Levels**: Most UK universities require A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) for undergraduate courses. Typically, universities will specify the grades and subjects required for the course you're applying to.

**International Baccalaureate (IB)**: The IB Diploma is widely accepted, and universities usually require a specific score, often between 30-40 points, depending on the course.

**Equivalent Qualifications**: International students may need to provide equivalent qualifications from their home country. Universities typically publish a list of accepted international qualifications.

## 2. English Language Proficiency



**IELTS**: Generally, a minimum score of 6.0 to 7.0 is required, depending on the course.

**TOEFL**: A score of 80-100 is typically required.

**Cambridge English**: Some universities accept C1 Advanced or C2 Proficiency qualifications. Other universities may offer English language courses if you don’t meet the minimum language requirements.

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## 3. Entrance Exams or Tests

For certain courses, particularly competitive ones like Medicine, Law, or some Engineering courses, you may need to take additional entrance exams, such as:

**UCAT / BMSAT** : For Medicine and Dentistry courses.

**LNAT**: For Law courses.

**STEP/MAT**: For Mathematics and related courses.

These tests assess specific skills relevant to the course you're applying to.

## 4. Portfolios or Auditions

For creative courses like Art, Design, Music, or Drama, you may need to submit a portfolio of your work or attend an audition. This showcases your talent and suitability for the course.

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# Oxford Assessments 2024

- History Admissions Test (HAT)
- Ancient History and Classical Archaeology Admissions Test (AHCAAT) - NEW for 2024
- Biomedical Sciences Admissions Test (BMSAT) – NEW for 2024
- Classics Admissions Test (CAT)
- Modern Languages Admissions Test (MLAT)
- Philosophy Test (PhilAT)
- Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) - Sections 1 and 2: Philosophy, Politics and Economics; Section 1 only: Economics and Management, Experimental Psychology, History and Economics, Human Sciences and Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
- Physics Admissions Test for Physics, Engineering and Materials Science (PAT)
- Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT)

**Interview**

Some courses, particularly those in Medicine, Law, and Oxbridge (Oxford and Cambridge), may require an interview as part of the admissions process. This is used to assess your suitability for the course.

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# Understanding **Required, Recommended and Preferred** Subjects for UK University Applications

**1. <u>Required Subjects:</u>**

**Definition**: These are the subjects you must have studied and achieved a specific grade in to be eligible for admission to a particular course. Without these subjects, your application may not be considered.

**Example**: For a degree in **Medicine** at the University of Oxford, **Chemistry** and **Biology** at A-Level are required. You must have high grades in these subjects to apply.

**2. <u>Recommended Subjects:</u>**

**Definition**: While not mandatory, recommended subjects are those that will strengthen your application and better prepare you for the course content. These subjects provide a solid foundation in the key areas relevant to your chosen degree.

**Example**: For a degree in **Economics** at the London School of Economics (LSE), **Mathematics** at A-Level is required, and **Further Mathematics** is highly recommended. While you can apply without Further Mathematics, having it could enhance your application.

**<u>3. Preferred Subjects:</u>**

**Definition**: Preferred subjects are those that universities look favorably upon but are not essential. They are often related to the degree you are applying for and demonstrate your interest and capability in that area.

**Example**: For a degree in **Law** at King's College London, while there are no specific required subjects, **English Literature** is a preferred subject. It shows your ability to engage with complex texts and develop arguments, skills that are crucial for a Law degree.

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## Examples of Subject Requirements for Popular Courses:

### Engineering

### University of Cambridge

- **Required**: Mathematics and Physics at A-Level.
- **Recommended**: Further Mathematics.
- **Preferred**: Chemistry (especially for Chemical Engineering).

### Psychology

### University of Bristol

- **Required**: At least one science subject (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or Mathematics).
- **Recommended**: Psychology or another science subject.
- **Preferred**: A combination of science and humanities subjects.

### Architecture

### University College London (UCL)

- **Required**: No specific required subjects.
- **Recommended**: Art or Design & Technology to demonstrate creative skills.
- **Preferred**: Mathematics or Physics for the technical aspect of the course.

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# One word which best describes you ?

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*The personal statement*

# ASK YOURSELF….

Why have you chosen this subject area?

What have you done inside and outside school/university which relates?

What did you learn from your work experience/employment?

Do you know what you would like to do after your degree?

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# IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL STATEMENT & LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Personal Statement is a ***crisp*** one-page essay about *your* motivation, inspiration, goals, and achievements.

It should be no longer than ***4,000 characters***, including spaces, or ***47 lines of text***, whichever comes first.

The UCAS personal statement should emphasize how the student has prepared for their chosen ***field of study***, highlighting their experiences, inspirations, and enthusiasm for the subject, rather than focusing on cool, fun, or quirky aspects of their personality.

It will be reviewed by someone looking for evidence of the student's ***academic capability*** to study the chosen subject throughout their degree. In some instances, it may even be read by a professor, so it needs to be highly course-focused.

Any ***extracurricular activities*** unrelated to the student's chosen subject are generally irrelevant, unless they demonstrate relevant study skills or attributes. For example, doing an internship outside of school shows time management and people skills, while leading a sports team indicates leadership and responsibility.

The personal statement should primarily focus on your high school experiences, classroom activities, and preparation for external exams. About ***75%*** of the statement should highlight your *academic achievements* to demonstrate your qualifications for the course, while the remaining 25% can cover extracurricular activities to showcase additional qualities that make you a well-rounded candidate.

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

A letter of recommendation is a document in which the *counselor evaluates* the qualities, characteristics, and abilities of the person being recommended, particularly in relation to their potential to perform specific tasks or functions, complementing the personal statement

References should be factual, specific, and concise. There is a maximum of 4,000 characters within the reference; please note the character count includes spaces, section headings, and line breaks, all of which take up at least one character

Letters of recommendation provide admissions officers with *insights* they could not gain from the rest of the application and help them really get a feel for a student’s character - their passions, values, strengths, and goals

Recommendations carry significant weight in admissions decisions and can often be the deciding factor in whether a student is accepted. However, they *primarily serve to validate* the claims made in the personal statement.

Include insights into a student’s *extra-curricular activities*, their impact on the school community, and how they might contribute to campus life at their chosen university

Be prepared to discuss any *mitigating circumstances* that have affected a student’s personal or academic performance - for example, an illness, home life problems, or teaching and learning challenges

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*The personal statement*

# THE BASICS

- **Key for competitive courses**
- **Key for courses with particularly high grade requirements**
- **Only 4000 characters or 47 lines**
- **Demonstrates your motivation, enthusiasm and aptitude**
- **Can be orientated toward a profession (or not!)**

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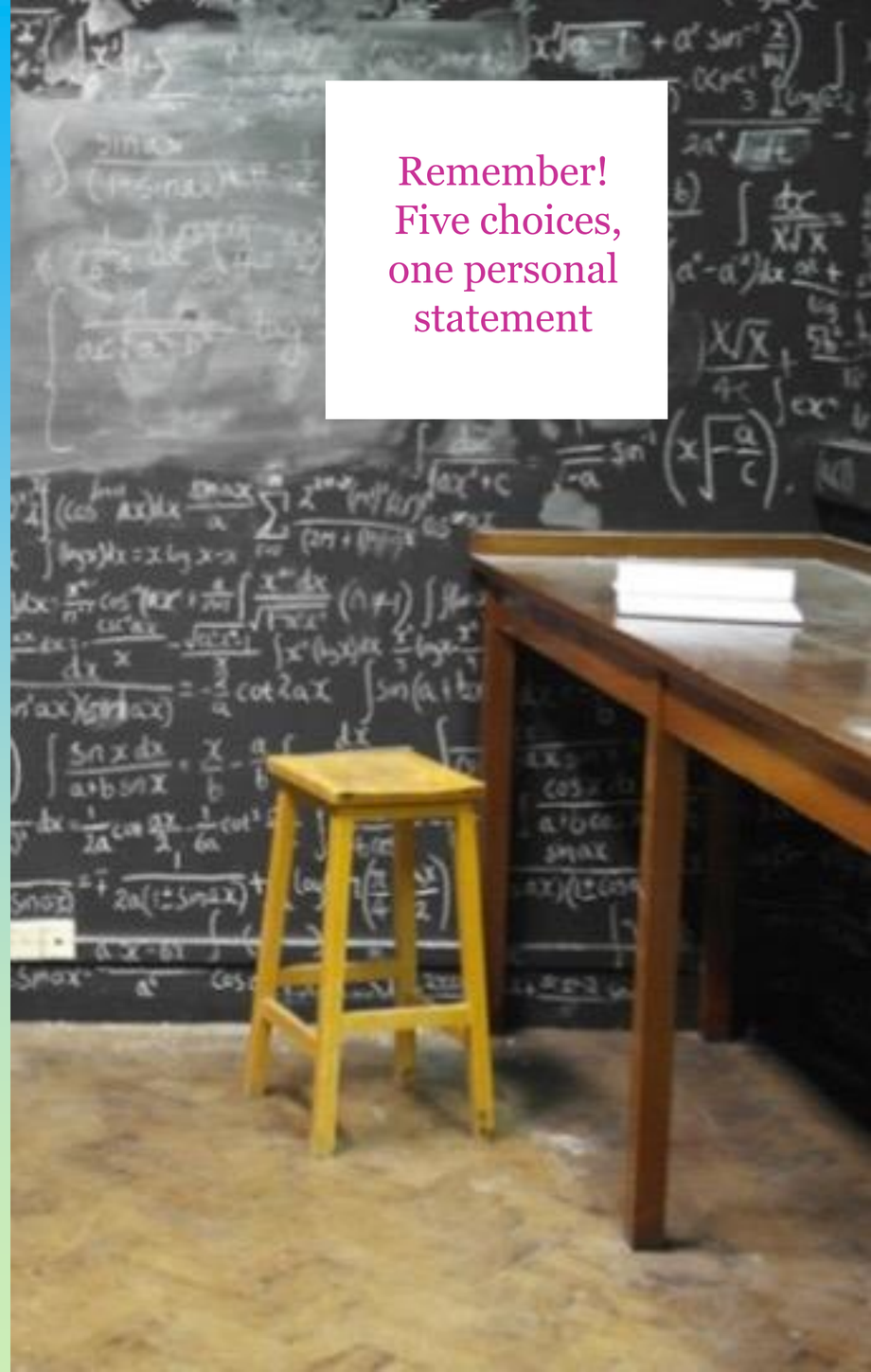
*The personal statement*

# WHAT TO INCLUDE:

- 75-90% relevant to academic pursuits in and outside of school/college
- Key skills and competencies
- Your rationale for studying your course
- Work experience or placements
  - Shadowing doctors/healthcare professionals etc.
  - Volunteer or paid work
- Relevant extra-curricular activities
- What you've learned from your experiences

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# Give few words or a phrase to begin with your Personal Statement.

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## *The personal statement*

# OPENING PARAGRAPHS

| C | A | R |
|---|---|---|
| **Context** | **Action** | **Result** |
| Where were you? | What was the activity? | What did you achieve? |
| What were you doing there? | Why were you doing it? | What skills were improved? |
| What were the circumstances? | What were the skills demonstrated? | What knowledge was gained? |

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# PERSONAL STATEMENT

## Good Beginning:

**Example 1:** You should teach yourself Python this summer," suggested my grade 10 Computers teacher. She wanted me to enhance my repertoire beyond Java, in which I had consistently been ahead of the class. Acting on her advice, l enrolled for the online course IBM: Python Basics for Data Science. As I delved deeper, I began referencing resources such as Pythoni.org, StackOverflow and GitHub.

**Example 2:** I have developed my problem-solving skills through playing chess for the college; this requires concentration and analytical thought. I am used to working as part of a team as I play clarinet in the college orchestra and cooperate with others to achieve a finished production.

## Not so good Beginning:

**Example 1 :** During the summer of 2021, I decided to learn Python to add to Java that we were being taught in our curriculum at school, for which I enrolled for the online course "IBM : Python Basics for Data Science". Having become conversant with the basic syntax, I implemented my newfound skills at an internship I took up with a stock broker in my city where they asked me to analyse large datasets of intraday stock prices, for which I taught myself Pandas and eventually became adept at it. I interned with them from September 2021 to March 2022 and also learnt about the functioning and regulation of financial markets.

**Example 2:** I am a member of the college chess club. I also play the clarinet in the orchestra.

# Real Life Example:

## Good Personal Statement

**Name:** [redacted]

**Course applied: Bsc Mathematics**

Looking back over a complex equation that has been reduced to a simple solution provides an addictive sense of achievement. So far with mathematics, I have found that frustration and success go hand in hand, and I thrive upon the challenge. At my primary school, mathematics was always my favourite subject, and increasingly as I move through education, I feel a sense of excitement when I start to study a topic which before had only been a mysterious concept. Mathematics provides a perpetual opportunity for expanding knowledge and learning, and in reading into the subject I have started to realise how my studies so far have been very much the tip of the iceberg.

SHOWS GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF COURSE AT START

HONEST ASSESSMENT

For me, areas of particular interest in the subject are the applications of pure mathematics in the real world - ideas that may at times seem to be extremely abstract in fact have remarkably common applications - an example being the use of complex numbers for technology such as mobile phones. After attending a 'Maths Inspiration' lecture in [redacted] my eyes were really opened to the sheer scale of mathematics that is involved in structural engineering, specifically the design of the Olympic Stadium in London. Even in music, mathematical theories can be applied to study of pitch and harmony. Over the last few years, I have attended various mathematics workshops and seminars, including the 'Making Maths at [redacted] two-day course. Also, each year I have entered the UKMT Maths Challenge, in which I have found success - I reached the European 'Kangaroo' stage on two occasions. Books such as 'The Code Book' and 'Fermat's Last Theorem' by Simon Singh have made me realise the enthralling nature of the history

SUPPORTS CLAIMS WITH EXAMPLES

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

## Not so good Personal Statement

**Name:** [redacted]

**Course applied: Bsc Accounting for Management**

I am currently a final year student studying Accountancy, English Literature (AS and A2 in the one year). From my childhood I have always been interested in, and practised, dealing with numbers. Whether it was counting objects from my buggy, or calculating profit from sales of my drawings, I have always had a passion to learn more about and engage in numeracy. Studying accountancy, has been really exciting for me, as I love seeing how each figure affects the overall 'landscape' of the accounts, and how one misplaced item can ruin the whole balance. I know that if I put my head down, work hard and focus, I can achieve a good result from this subject. I have considered other numeracy careers such as banking, however, I feel the role of Accountants suit my passion more adeptly, and for this reason I have decided to choose Accounting as my university course. My ambition is to one day become a Chartered Accountant, and I believe that studying Accounting in university will be another stepping stone towards reaching this goal.

LISTING A LEVELS NOT NEEDED

TOO MUCH INFO, OCCASIONAL WAFFLE

FOCUSES ATTENTION ON NEGATIVE

Outside of the Educational surroundings, I have partaken in many activities and tasks which have helped me become more responsible. One example is from a few years ago; I was part of a select board, which included a former Home Secretary, which was put together in order to familiarise ourselves with certain changes that were occurring within the community. I was chosen to represent [redacted] alongside a few other individuals from [redacted]. In addition to this, I have been involved in a lot of sporting activities from my youth, predominantly football, where I have gained opportunities to work with a team. Because of this I have been able to play at [redacted], representing [redacted] and [redacted] respectively. Furthermore, one of my many passions is poetry and I write new pieces on

SPELLING/GRAMMAR

DATED EXAMPLE

# Examples of a Good Personal Statement

My maternal grandfather once made a sculpture out of clay, this was before 2013. He sculpted the torso of a sprinting man with a clock dial in place of its facial features… and right above the given man, was a hand, holding him back by a tuft of his hair, depicting halting of "Time".

I began my journey in fine art with plasticine that my mother bought me when I was about six years old sculpturing tigers, horses, elephants, deities, cavemen, chariots amongst others. Oil based clay was my weapon of choice in the battle of passing time. Being fond of exploring the medium, I requested Nanu (maternal grandfather), to help me work with clay that he used. He prepared four and a half pounds of it and gifted the lump to me along with a side note. He said to me that that was his special clay, easier to mold, with a greater scope for excellence. Upon drying, it would become harder than the usual clay but mark that it must be used before it hardens itself. He told me that his secret ingredient was sand, which he had mixed with the clay.

Moving on from plasticine, I decided to explore other media such as ink and pencil. I never enrolled in any formal art class but ever since I started drawing, my inspiration has been the people around me, on the street, in school, everywhere. Instead of their face value, what I saw were cartoons, or characters to be more precise. I could see the intricacies as well as the baseness in their expressions and the bounce and jerks in their movements. I used this skill in almost every aspect of my extracurriculars. Introduced illustration and animation in Model UNs, Parliamentary debates, even held the office of HOD Design a couple of times. Won in inter school art competitions, etc. Other than that, I used to be a state level swimmer, and what all of this taught me, or rather plunged it down my throat, was that I was always in a time crunch and panic was the only resort for me.

I vividly remember asking my mother to treat me to butter chicken on the night of the last exam of my class twelve mid-terms. I was having lunch while watching Sherlock Holmes, A Game of Shadows, when my grandmother waltzed into the house, screaming and moaning in fear. My father's father, my grandfather, Dadu had been in an accident. Dad was not home and my mother, being the only adult present there, commanded me to leave everything and go with her. I wore my cargos while running down the building staircase, looking for dadu everywhere, nowhere to be found. At last, we found him lying on a cot outside the society, surrounded by a crowd of 35 or 36 people. His forehead covered with a dirty rag, nose cracked and lifted all the way up to his glabella, bleeding immensely. I was there when he was admitted, there when he was spitting and coughing up clots, there when he was being stitched and there throughout. I don't know how, but I felt nothing at that time. I couldn't feel his pain, all I knew was that if I had not been in a complete state of awareness, things would have gone south. Nobody had expected me to take charge like that, in fact my mother had said to my father that day, that the boy's all grown up, we should at least send him to the store to buy some grocery, get some exposure. Well, abruptness acted as the best agent to do so. My grandfather is well and healing and still says that he had never seen me show strength like that. That I had grown up indeed. However, I felt that it was merely my duty.

The point is, all this time, working on projects for school and outside, swimming, setting records for myself, all I had ever known was that if I wasn't fast, I'd lose something or the other, that the clay would dry up again. It is still the law, but that mindset held me back from doing my best, made me compromise. What I've learned is that I don't need to rush to beat time, there is no beating it. It made me realize that time is fleeting as it is permanent. The matter is to control. That situation transformed me into something stronger, when the trick was always to merely control my breathing, hope for the best, have faith and always remain calm.

**Program Choice**: Illustration and Animation

**Offers Received From**:

- UAL

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Choosing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme over the domestic education board for senior secondary education came with its own set of challenges. In my pursuit to chase hands-on education, develop critical thinking skills, and gain a well-rounded understanding of what international mindedness actually means, I delved deep into the avenues of business through academic learning.

While researching the Chinese EV market for my Extended Essay, I faced struggles in conducting secondary research. My inexperience in skimming through academic journals and a feeling of not knowing where to start was overwhelming, but through the help of my Business Management educator, I was able to conduct thorough research of BYD's market leadership position and successfully place and substantiate their product portfolio on the Boston Consulting Group Matrix, with researched evidences. While this exercise also immensely helped me improve my secondary research skills, I gained a means to research my curiosity in the future, while deepening my interest in the field of business.

Motivated by my newfound curiosity in business research, I set out to shed light on the nature of operations and business ethics in Indian firms through an independent study in a paper titled, 'The Role of Business Ethics in the Management of Family-Owned Businesses and Professionally Run Business in India'. This gave me substantial insight into the organisational structure and growth paths of India's largest multinational conglomerates- Larsen and Toubro and Adani Group of Companies. This research gave me substantial insight into topics beyond my curriculum such as fair practices in business ethics, especially ones pertaining to the responsibilities that large corporations hold in influencing regulatory and public decisions.

Furthermore, the research work served as motivation to explore other avenues in business. Consequently, I enrolled in the University of London's online course titled, 'Brand Management: Aligning Business, Brand and Behaviour', which I passed with a 98% grade. Through this course I gained a deep understanding of how brand-led culture change, brand experience, brand promise and healthy brand practices can foster a greater brand image, eventually resulting in a highly nuanced brand management strategy. Additionally, through reading over various titles in the entrepreneurial field, such as "The Discipline of Innovation" by Peter F. Drucker, I learned a great deal about the key non-financial motivators of a successful entrepreneur and how the entrepreneurial mindset has and will continue to drive innovation in the future especially through recent breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and hybrid-working models.

I continued my journey in the world of business by interning at ALM Industries and Star Paper Mills Ltd., where I was able to gain substantial knowledge into the handling of accounting and finance by these large scale corporations. As an accounting intern, I observed the bill generation process and how vastly integrated systems keep track of each sale and purchase. Additionally, I gained experience by inputting sales into the internally moderated software, which was developed by the company, for the company. As a keen observer, one thing that stood out in particular was the efficiency of the people working in those companies. I too, aspire to achieve the same level of knowledge, expertise and efficiency in my work through my tertiary education.

In order to explore my interests beyond the curriculum, I consistently pursued extra-curricular activities to the same end. Participating in several Model United Nations' conferences during my high school years instilled the true notion of global citizenship in me, while also assisting me to develop oratory skills. I attended accredited entrepreneurial conferences, such as the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards conference, through which I learnt how to dynamically adapt my pitch to the psyche of the investor. It also stood out among the other activities as it taught me the importance of strong leadership in becoming a successful entrepreneur. Following that, I thoroughly enjoyed leading the organising committee for my school's Model Shark Tank contest- mentoring all participating teams on the ins and outs of pitching and connecting with the top angel investors in my city and surrounding areas. These experiences increased my engagement with like-minded individuals and further solidified my desire to pursue business.

In my experience with the International Baccalaureate, I have cultivated a deep respect for different cultures. I believe that pursuing a business undergraduate degree in the UK, with its multi-cultural, cosmopolitan milieu, would be the ideal next step in my progression. The UK's position in the international market leads me to believe that studying here can be a direct stepping stone into the global conglomerates I hope to gain experiences at. Additionally, the entrepreneurship support provided by universities through incubators, mentorship programmes and networking opportunities with industry experts will help me achieve my long term goal of becoming a successful entrepreneur.

**Course Applied:** BSc Business Management
**Offer Received:** University of Warwick

"You should teach yourself Python this summer," suggested my grade 10 Computers teacher. She wanted me to enhance my repertoire beyond Java, in which I had consistently been ahead of the class. Acting on her advice, I enrolled for the online course 'IBM: Python Basics for Data Science'. As I delved deeper, I began referencing resources such as Python.org, StackOverflow and GitHub.

Interning at a stock broking firm later that year, I was tasked with manipulating large datasets of intraday stock prices, for which I taught myself Pandas. Here, I also became fascinated with the functioning and regulation of financial markets, leading me to seek an internship with a Mumbai-based asset management company next summer. Asked to manually extract 7 years of monthly hedge-fund performance data from aurum.com, I researched how it could be automated instead, proposing to my guide that we could web-scrape using Beautiful Soup. In 3 days, I delivered not only the data asked for, but also a tool that would allow the company to update their database every month. I evaluated the dependence of this data's risk-return on underlying factors through regression and correlation analysis. Appreciating my performance, the senior management even entrusted me with an urgent analysis of market behaviour during Fed-tightening periods, for a client presentation.

As Team Leader of the 7-member school team participating in the Wharton Global Investment Competition during Sep-Dec 2022, I led with my coding experience. Acquiring price data using Python's YFinance library, I used Unsupervised ML to create clusters of stocks with similar price behaviour. Our team decided on a methodology to select the best- performing stocks across these 20 clusters; I wrote code to create and optimize the quantitatively selected, monthly-rebalanced portfolio. Two intense months later, our 7-year back-tested strategy generated 2.5 times the S&P 500's return. I used Plotly to embellish our final report with log charts, dendrograms, underwater plots and heatmaps. My team finished in the top 11% globally.

Motivated by this, I undertook research under Prof. Thirumalai of the Indian School of Business this summer to evaluate how bid-ask spreads of Indian equities evolve across trading days, for which I devised solutions to manage the source data comprising over 1.2 billion rows. The final outcome correlated with a U.S. study undertaken on NYSE stocks. During these months, I also learnt more about AI, ML, and the mathematics behind it by acquiring insights into Linear Algebra and Neural Networks at 3Blue1Brown.

Since February 2023, I have worked on analyzing the increasing traffic in my city by creating a database of citywide traffic-flow conditions using Google Maps' Routes API. After figuring out how to generate an HTTP POST request with a JSON body in Python, I proceeded to decipher Google's encoded polyline format, and used the Haversine Formula in Spherical Trigonometry to calculate ground distances between coordinates. To manage within Google's monthly free credit of $200, I identified 364 waypoints on the city's roads and divided them into 69 hypothetical routes. Automatically querying these 16 times a day, I derived travel information for all maneuvers across Chandigarh's 129 junctions. With ~750,000 data points captured since July; I am working on uncovering the city's traffic patterns to reprogram traffic lights more efficiently. My software can also be used for real-time traffic monitoring and is reconfigurable for other cities.

Beyond academics, I thrive in the outdoors and am an avid bird photographer. At school, I was elected the Sport's Captain this year. I enjoy improvising on the piano and have passed the Trinity Grade 8 examination with Merit. At college, I aim to build on my experiences of solving real-world problems by pursuing Computer Science with a focus on AI & ML, while continuing to explore its application in Finance.

**Program Choice:** BSc Computer Science

**Offers Received From:**

- Imperial College, London
- King's College London
- University of St. Andrews

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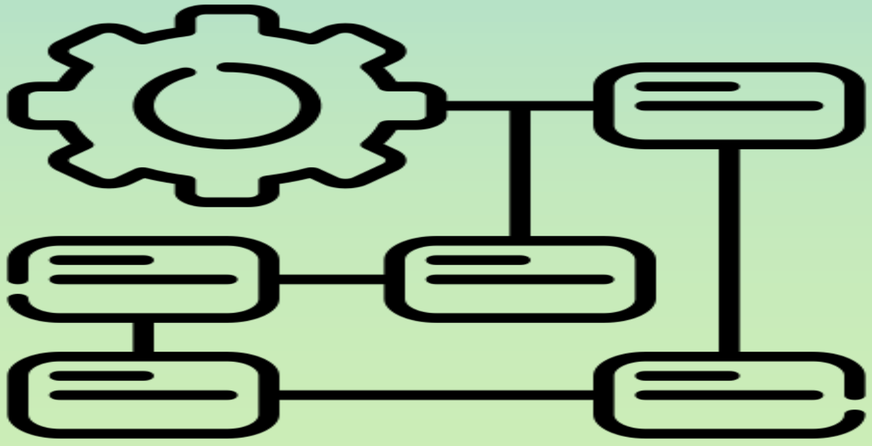
# Personal Statement Structure:

**1. Opening Statement:**

***Example:*** You should teach yourself Python this summer," suggested my grade 10 Computers teacher. She wanted me to enhance my repertoire beyond Java, in which I had consistently been ahead of the class. Acting on her advice, I enrolled for the online course 'IBM: Python Basics for Data Science'. As I delved deeper, I began referencing resources such as Python.org, StackOverflow and GitHub.

**2. Why I am a strong academic candidate:** (This statement will be reviewed by subject experts, so there is no need to describe the course itself. Instead, focus on my relevant qualifications and experiences that align with the academic program):

**Example:** I chose the rigorous ICSE curriculum with a strong focus on Computer Science, a subject that genuinely excites me and drives my interest in advanced studies. My academic achievements include an SAT score of 1540 and perfect scores of 5 on AP exams in Calculus BC, Computer Science A, and Physics C: Mechanics. I have consistently ranked among the top 1% of students, with a 100% score in Computer Science on the Grade 10 ICSE exam and a 99% in Grade 11, securing the top position in my class. My predicted grades for Grade 12 are 99% in Computer Science, 98% in Math, Economics, and English, and 95% in Physics. My passion for Computer Science has solidified my determination to pursue this field in my tertiary education. This year, I have achieved the highest scores in my cohort in the mid-year exams and predicted grades, and I am on track to be the Valedictorian of my class.



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**3. <u>Discussing Academic Journey:</u> (**Share details about your current studies, ongoing projects, and any significant readings that relate to your field of interest.)

**Example:** Undertook research under Prof. Thirumalai of the Indian School of Business this summer to evaluate how bid-ask spreads of Indian equites evolve across trading days, for which I devised solutions to manage the source data comprising over 1.2 billion rows. The final outcome correlated with a U.S. study undertaken on NYSE stocks. During these months, I also learnt more about AI, ML, and the mathematics behind it by acquiring insights into Linear Algebra and Neural Networks at 3Blue1Brown. Since February 2023, I have worked on analysing the increasing traffic in my city by creating a database of citywide traffic-flow conditions using Google Maps' Routes API. After figuring out how to generate an HTTP POST request with a JSON body in Python, I proceeded to decipher Google's encoded polyline format, and used the Haversine Formula in Spherical Trigonometry to calculate ground distances between coordinates. To manage within Google's monthly free credit of $200, I identified 364 waypoints on the city's roads and divided them into 69 hypothetical routes. Automatically querying these 16 Times a day, I derived travel information for all manoeuvres across Chandigarh's 129 junctions. With ~750,000 data points captured since July, I am working on uncovering the city's traffic patterns to reprogram traffic lights more efficiently. My software can also be used for real-time traffic monitoring, and is reconfigurable for other cities.

**4. Relevant Experience:** (Highlight any work experience, volunteering, or shadowing opportunities that are pertinent to the course or the skills required in the field.)

***Example:*** Interning at a stock broking firm later that year, I was tasked with manipulaθng large datasets of intraday stock prices, for which I taught myself Pandas. Here, I also became fascinated with the functioning and regulation of financial markets, leading me to seek an internship with a Mumbai-based asset management company next summer. Asked to manually extract 7 years of monthly hedge-fund performance data from aurum.com, I researched how it could be automated instead, proposing to my guide that we could web-scrape using Beautiful Soup. In 3 days, I delivered not only the data asked for, but also a tool that would allow the company to update their database every month. I evaluated the dependence of this data's risk-return on underlying factors through regression and correlation analysis. Appreciating my performance, the senior management even entrusted me with an urgent analysis of market behaviour during Fed-tightening periods, for a client presentation.

**5. Additional Achievements and Interests**: (Mention any other notable achievements or interests, and if taken a gap year, explain what the student is doing. Ensure to connect these activities to his/her application, emphasizing their relevance to his/her chosen field of study.)

***Example:*** As Team Leader of the 7-member school team participating in the Wharton Global Investment Competition during Sep-Dec 2022, in addition to managing the team, I led with my coding experience. Acquiring price data using Python's YFinance library, I used Unsupervised ML to create clusters of stocks with similar price behaviour. Our team decided on a methodology to select the best-performing stocks across these 20 clusters; I wrote code to create and optimise the quantitatively selected, monthly-rebalanced porɳolio. Two intense months later, our 7-year back-tested strategy generated 2.5 times S&P 500's return. I used Plotly to embellish our final report with log charts, dendrograms, underwater plots and heatmaps. My team finished in the top 11% globally.

**6. Concluding:** Beyond academics, I thrive in the outdoors and am an avid bird photographer. At school, I have been elected the Sports Captain this year. I enjoy improvising on the piano and have passed the Trinity Grade 8 examination with Merit. At college, I aim to build on my experiences of solving real-world problems by pursuing Computer Science with a focus on AI & ML, while continuing to explore its application in Finance.

## *A competitive application*

**UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE – WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT**

‘I witnessed a nurse giving pills to a long-time patient who suffered from dementia. She was initially very confused and unwilling to take the tablets, but by being patient and taking the time to comfort the patient, the nurse was able to convince her to take them. She later told me that this was a very common occurrence with inhabitants of the hospice who suffered from mental illnesses. Through this, I saw how large a role that patience and sympathy can play in having a good bedside manner’

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*A competitive application*

# WHAT WE LOOK FOR

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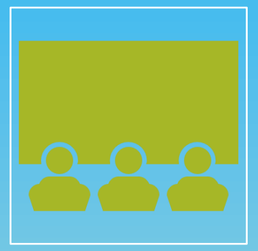
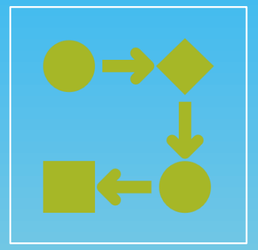
# Some Don’ts:

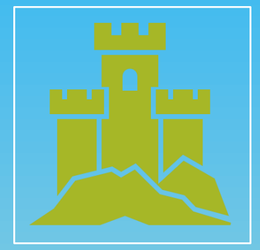


I like going to the theatre, but I only go occasionally.

I am a keen reader and am committed to the study of human behaviour through TV soaps!



I have led a full life over the last 18 years and it is a tradition I intend to continue.



I describe myself in the following two words: 'TO ODIN!' the ancient Viking war cry.

My favourite hobby is bee-keeping and I want to be an engineer.

My interest in Medicine stems from my enjoyment of Casualty and other related TV series.

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# Use Of AI

Generating (and then copying, pasting and submitting) all or a large part of your personal statement from an AI tool such as ChatGPT, and presenting it as your own words, **could be considered cheating by universities and colleges** and could affect your chances of an offer AI is good but it can't replicate your personal thoughts and feelings and convey your own skills and experiences.

**Recommended AI Use**:

**Brainstorm some ideas**

You could use ChatGPT to give you ideas about topics that are relevant to your chosen subject, which you can then relate to your own experiences and opinions. Or you could ask it to list skills that are relevant to the course you're applying for, allowing you to think about your own talents and how to convey them.

**Help with structure**

You may want to ask ChatGPT to suggest ways of structuring your personal statement.

**Use it for checking readability**

ChatGPT can be used to check your personal statement draft for readability. It may suggest ways to rephrase sentences to make them more concise, while maintaining their meaning.

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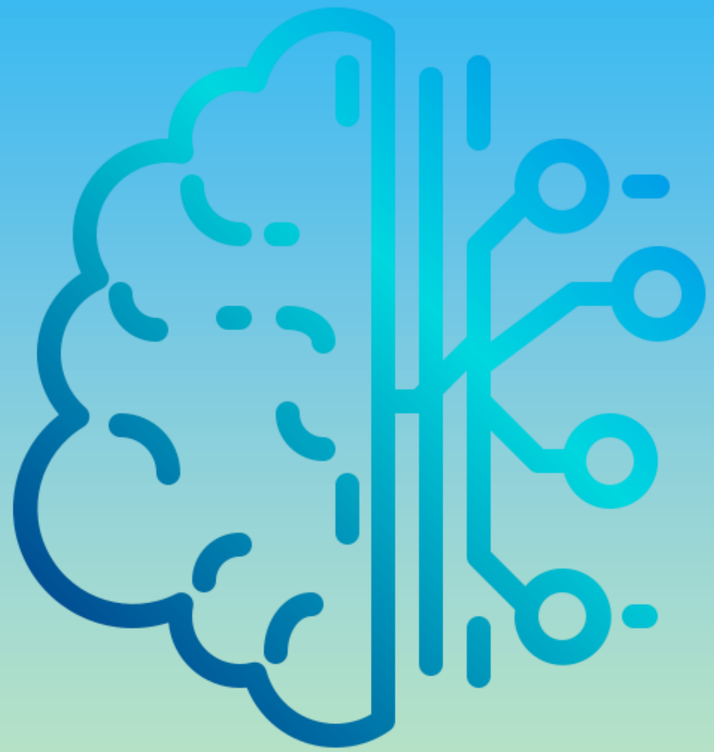
## Review and Edit

After using AI, review the draft carefully and make edits.

Avoid generic language and overused phrases.

Ask a teacher or mentor for feedback before finalizing.



## Stay Honest

Use AI as a tool to help you, not to replace your own writing.

Make sure the statement truly represents your thoughts and work.

## Don’t Rely Too Much on AI

Balance AI assistance with your own creativity and ideas.

Practice writing on your own to build your skills.

## Keep It Consistent

Make sure your personal statement matches your other application materials, like your resume and letters of recommendation.

# New Development 2025

UCAS is changing the personal statement for students applying to university from September 2025 onwards, for 2026 entry. The new personal statement will be **split into three sections**: **motivation, preparation, and extra-curriculars**. Each section will have a question prompt to be answered through the UCAS application.With the new process, you will **answer three questions. These questions will allow you to present yourself in a way that has more structure than the previous version.**

**1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?**

This is where you can show your passion for the subject as well as your existing knowledge. It will show universities you understand the course and you're enthusiastic to push your understanding!

**2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?**

Here you can show more of your academic skills such as essay writing, as well as transferable skills such as team work, communication, and organisation.

Student can highlight his/her learning from his subjects at high school.

Talk about his/her learning from super curricular activities that make him more suitable to pursue the major he/she is choosing.

**3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences helpful?**

This is a chance to talk about extracurricular activities. Whether this be your hobbies, sports clubs, or further reading. It will, again show your passion for learning and some of the great qualities you have.

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