WRITING YOUR UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT

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Welcome

The University of Aberdeen is the **UK’s fifth oldest** university with an academic reputation spanning over **500 years**. We have a commitment to enhancing learning not just on our campus but throughout our local, national and international communities.

This guide has been compiled with the undergraduate application process in mind. As you would expect from a university dedicated to excellence in learning and teaching we are committed to helping our students achieve the best at all levels of interaction with us, including the application process. Using this guide will help you with the structure and content of your personal statement, however it is important to keep in mind that selectors will be looking for a clear, correct and persuasive piece of writing.

Writing a personal statement can be difficult but we will assist you in this process. Working through the following pages will help you to discover how you can join us and make a difference.

University at a Glance

- Founded in 1495
- 16,000 students and 120 nationalities in our student body
- Ranked in the world top 1%
- 5 Nobel Prizes have been awarded for work begun or carried out at Aberdeen
- 90% of research activity is ranked of international quality
- 91% of our graduates enter directly into work or further study within 6 months and top companies headhunt our graduates
- Over 650 degree programmes, many with industrial or work placement opportunities
- Over 250 ERASMUS links throughout Europe and study abroad exchanges worldwide to North America, Hong Kong and Japan
- Investment in excess of £270 million including a world-class £57 million flagship library and Olympic standard sports village
- Ranked in the Top 10 in the UK for student satisfaction in the 2012 National Student Survey
- Brand new curriculum, unique in the UK, to produce graduates for the 21st Century

Want to find out more?
Visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/about/facts](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/facts)
There are many myths surrounding writing your personal statement and the following exercise will dispel some of these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the statements below True or False?</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is no maximum limit to a personal statement</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A personal statement can be written in paragraphs</td>
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<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The UCAS apply software has spelling and grammar checks</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. You can write a different personal statement for each of your five choices</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You can use <strong>bold</strong>, <em>italics</em> and <em>underlined</em> characters</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. You should keep a copy of your personal statement</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. UCAS uses plagiarism detection software</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. There is a link to “A Personal Statement Guide” on Apply</td>
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Thinking About the MACK Acronym...

Below are three extracts from different personal statements, each one represents a different part of the “MACK acronym” (Maturity, Ability, Commitment and Knowledge). Can you tell which is which?

As the Head Girl at my school I am responsible for organising prefect rotas, and liaising with both the school management team and fellow pupils. I also have to represent the school at events both in school and in the community. This has helped me to build on a whole range of skills including communication and team-working skills.

Working part-time has given me vital work experience and the chance to expand my skills but most importantly it has enabled me to enhance my time management though organising study for a full school timetable and my work outside of school. This is something I feel would be beneficial for student life.

I have been an avid swimmer since starting secondary school, sometimes practising up to six times a week. Swimming has shown me the importance of sticking to a task. I recognise that through constant practice, evaluation and improvement I can make sure that I am performing to the best of my ability.

To find out if you got the answers right visit [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/ugrad/pswb/](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/ugrad/pswb/)
A Closer Look

Look at the three examples of personal statements below, once you have read each one, write down some comments as to how you think it could be improved before submission.

Personal Statement A

I want to study English at University. I got an A in my Higher English this year and I am doing an Advanced Higher English this year. I am enjoying it and my teacher recommended I study English.

I have a part-time job twice a week. I also do some swimming, horse riding and like playing games. I am a prefect at school and have been involved with the school yearbook.

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Personal Statement B

I want to study English at University. I did really well in my Higher English as I got an A, so I decided to do the Advanced Higher English. We have English 4 times a week and I am top of the class. I got an A in all of my last 3 essays. One of the essays was on 19th Century Poetry, something I am really interested in. My teacher said I was really good at English so I should do it at University. I think I could be a Professor of English later and make lots of money, or maybe work in the Civil Service, I am not really sure.

I work hard at a part-time job twice a week. I work in our local Spar on Don Street. I am there from 5 till 7 in the evening on Fridays and then 8 till 3 on Saturdays, although sometimes I take another shift to help out. I am a stand-in supervisor now so if somebody is off sick, I will cover for them. I stand at the checkout most of the time, but sometimes I stack shelves which means that I check what is needed and put things out and price them. I have lots of responsibility and do really well.

I am an excellent swimmer and horse rider and am very good at playing games. I am in the School swimming team, which means training early in the morning 3 times a week. So I have to get up at 6.00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and my mum drives me into school. There are 10 of us on the team but I am the fastest at Crawl and Backstroke.

I am one of the top students in the school so was chosen for prefect. This means that this year I have greeted 3 guests to the school and twice a week I supervise the Year 2 and 3 at their lunch from 12.30 till 1.15 in the dining hall. There are many other things I do as a prefect.
I want to study English at University. I very much enjoyed my Higher English so have decided to continue with it this year and do the Advanced Higher. As well as enjoying reading all kinds of literature, but particularly 19th Century novels and poetry, I like discussing and analysing the works of literature. I think by studying English at University I will have the chance to do this at a deeper level and also specialise in my particular interests. I have discussed English at University with my English teacher to find out more about what is involved and she has encouraged me to pursue this.

I have not made any decisions as yet about possible careers, but I am considering a career in the Civil Service and I know that they accept graduates from all areas who have done well in their degrees. I have a part-time job in a local supermarket. I have been working there twice a week, mainly on the checkout, for the last year. I have recently gained more responsibility as I have been asked to be a stand-in supervisor when needed. I am in the Swimming team at school and have taken part in a number of competitions around Scotland. I train early mornings 3 times a week.

I am a prefect at school this year, which involves supervising the younger students in the lunch queue, greeting outside visitors and other tasks. I enjoy the responsibility and was pleased to be chosen by the Head Teacher for this position.
An opening sentence can set the tone for a personal statement, and getting it right is difficult. There are many ways you can attract the attention of the reader and make yours stand out. Some ways to do this are through using:

> Anecdotes

> Facts

> Opinions

Use the space below to try out some different types of opening sentence. Feel free to use any of the techniques above or to think of something new or unique!

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The closing statement should sum up the rest of the personal statement and is an opportunity to create a good lasting impression of you with a selector.

Use the space below to write a closing sentence to your personal statement.
One of the hardest parts of writing the personal statement is deciding what you should include. You can use the following table to categorise different aspects of your life and help develop the content of your personal statement. Remember at the University of Aberdeen we look for our students to have exciting and diverse experiences and interests, so add everything that you can think of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>Hobbies</th>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

But I Don’t Think I Am That Interesting, What Can I Put In?