

## 8. Writing **personal statements**

Your personal statement is one of the most important elements of your application. It is your opportunity to sell yourself and secure an offer of a place. It's crucial that your statement reflects your personality, as well as showing your motivation and commitment to your chosen course.

### What do I write?

There are no right or wrong formats. Here are just some suggestions.

- **Your course**

Show you've researched your chosen course. Why are you interested? What sparked your interest? What specific topics do you enjoy? If you're applying for more than one course try to identify common factors.

- **Career path**

If you have an idea of the career path you would like to follow, explain how the course fits.

- **Work experience**

Both related and unrelated to your course choice. Be specific about what you learned. Refer to transferable skills gained, for example, communication, planning, time management and problem-solving.

- **Personal achievements**

Include any personal achievements and what they demonstrate, for example, participation in a fund-raising event may have involved: teamwork, research and organisational skills, commitment and perseverance. Describe any positions of responsibility you've held such as student mentor or team leader.

- **Extra-curricular activities**

You should include activities that support your course choice. Describe any visits you have made; for example, visits to art galleries for art courses or hospitals for nursing. Even if your interests aren't directly relevant it's important to give an impression of your personality, so mention any hobbies or gap year plans.

### Top tips

- Aim to get your applications in as close to the start of the UCAS application cycle (beginning of September) as possible.
- Start thinking about your personal statement weeks in advance – you'll need to write several drafts.
- As a rough guide, use half the space to write about your chosen course. Use the other half to write about your chosen career path, work experience, achievements and extra-curricular activities.
- Write in a positive style that you feel comfortable with, using simple words and clear sentence structures. Don't try to be funny as others may not share your sense of humour. Be analytical about yourself and the subject, rather than descriptive. Never start your personal statement, 'I have always been interested in...'.  
● Be honest! You may be asked questions on your personal statement at university interviews.
- Word-processed statements should be in 12-point type size as UCAS reduces the forms before sending them to universities.
- Don't rely on a spell checker – proofread as many times as possible. It can be helpful to leave a few days between drafts, as it's often easier to pick up spelling and grammar mistakes after distancing yourself. Ask your teachers, parents and friends to make final checks.
- Make sure all the details are correct – your address, email, qualifications and course code. Errors can delay your application.