

# Applying to University 2021



UCAS

# UCAS Application process (11th May 2020)



Dear Year 12,

term 5 in Year 12 is the post exam period, you would have been receiving feedback on your recent exams and a first indicator of your predicted grades. However, this year we will have to run things differently.

I have put together these slides to guide you through the process, they cannot replace the excellent support your mentors and subject teachers give you, and they will prompt more questions and further research. When we return there will be time to give you guidance on your applications and give you 1:1 support, but by using this time in lockdown to shortlist what you want to study and where you might go, you will put yourself in an advantageous situation on our return to school.

Please work through the slides and contact Mrs Linton or your sixth form mentor with any questions.

Best wishes,

The Sixth Form Office

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# University application timeline



|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>MAY 2020</b>       | Planning your personal statement<br><b>19th May registering on UCAS using the buzzword danecourt2021</b>                          |
| <b>JUNE 2020</b>      | Drafting your personal statement and share with your sixth form mentor  |
| <b>JULY 2020</b>      | Completing work experience (in person or virtual)   |
| <b>AUGUST 2020</b>    | Completing work experience (in person or virtual)   |
| <b>SEPTEMBER 2020</b> | Completing your personal statement with your sixth form mentor.<br>Reading your mentor references.<br>Attend university open days |
| <b>OCTOBER 2020</b>   | <b>15th October Oxford, Cambridge, Medics, Vets, Conservatoires deadline</b>  |
| <b>NOVEMBER 2020</b>  | Higher and degree level apprenticeship applications start   |
| <b>DECEMBER 2020</b>  | <b>11th December in school UCAS deadline</b>  |

# Researching universities



All the latest information received at Dane Court is compiled here: University

Google Classroom code: **qukojer**

**University Virtual Tours** (directory provided by UCAS):

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/open-days-and-events/virtual-tours>

**Unibuddy:** Chat to university students about their university and course experience: <https://www.ucas.com/chat-to-students>

**Career specific guidance:**

- Medics <https://www.themedicportal.com/>
- Law <https://www.thelawyerportal.com/>
- Oxbridge applications: <https://oxbridgeapplications.com/> **and** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C0Hra-hSQ2pSkF1-jBwHGXDREmIt\\_7U7/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C0Hra-hSQ2pSkF1-jBwHGXDREmIt_7U7/view)

**Student perspectives:**

- That Oxford Girl <https://www.thatoxfordgirl.com/>
- That University Student <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVffFzxIGDZGEIb1Othyiw>

# Researching universities - worksheets



Choosing the right course and university worksheet



Course analysis worksheet

# Researching courses



Looking for direction:

- Take the 'Careers Quiz' on SACU: <http://sacu-student.com/>
- Take the **Buzz Quiz** on UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz>

Looking for a course:

- Use the course directory on UCAS: <https://digital.ucas.com/search>

Looking for comparison of courses at universities across the UK:

- [www.university.which.co.uk](http://www.university.which.co.uk) provides excellent information about subjects/ degree courses/ graduate employability and offers advice about writing personal statements; you can download a free 'Getting into Uni' guide, browse all universities or see how many applicants received an offer for your course last year.
- [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk) gives you university/subject league tables and graduate prospects, and offers advice on a wide range of matters from student finance to Oxbridge applications.
- [www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk) has all the information you need about the 24 RG universities - but do not limit yourself to these. Remember that institutions such as Bath and Loughborough are just as competitive, popular and prestigious.

# Writing your personal statement

Used for:

University applications, Apprenticeship applications,  
Employment applications

# What is a personal statement?



A personal statement supports your application to study at a university or college. It's a chance for you to articulate why you'd like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field. **It is your university ambition in 4000 characters.**

You're telling admissions staff why you're suitable to study at their university or college.

It's important to remember **you can only write one personal statement** – it's the same for each course you apply for. So, avoid mentioning any universities or colleges by name.

If you've chosen similar subjects, **talk about the subject in general**, and try not to mention courses titles. If you've chosen a variety of subjects, just write about common themes, like problem solving or creativity.

Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Look at course descriptions and identify the **qualities, skills, and experience it requires** – you can use these to help you decide what to write about.
- Tell the reader why you're applying – **include your ambitions, as well as what interests you about the subject**, the course provider, and higher education.
- If you took part in a **higher education taster course, placement, or summer school**, or something similar, include it.
- Think about **what makes you suitable** – this could be relevant experience, skills, or achievements you've gained from education, work, or other activities.
- Include any **clubs or societies you belong to** – sporting, creative, or musical.
- Mention any relevant employment experience or volunteering you've done and write about your experiences from **CAS or Service Learning** and the skills you developed.

**You cannot write a personal statement in an afternoon, preparation is the key**

# Structure of your personal statement



1. Your reasons for wanting to study the course
2. A paragraph of independent research (EE/RP)
3. Course related academic studies
4. Extra-curricular activities

**4000 characters**

**80% Academic**

**20% Extra curricular**

**80 | 20**

Focused topic of interests, universities like...



History: **analysing** a particular argument

Geography: **examining** a case study

Physics: **analysing** a recent research development

Law: **analysing** a recent case

Medicine: **analysing** a work experience interaction

# Dos and Don'ts of personal statements



## DOS

Do show you know your strengths and can outline your ideas clearly.

Do be enthusiastic – if you show you're interested in the course, it may help you get a place.

Do expect to produce several drafts of your personal statement before being totally happy with it.

Do ask people you trust for their feedback.

## DON'TS

Don't exaggerate – if you do, you may get caught out in an interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.

Don't rely on a spellchecker, as it will not pick up everything – proofread your statement as many times as possible.

Don't leave it to the last minute – your statement will seem rushed, and important information could be left out.

Don't let spelling or grammatical errors spoil your statement.

**Universities use plagiarism checkers and it is up to their discretion if they accept an application from a student who has been found to have copied another student's application.**

# Four common problems with personal statements



1. Failure to show academic suitability and motivation for a specific degree
2. Not developing and analysing wider reading or work experience
3. Over-emphasis on extra-curricular activities
4. Poor editing and the use of an inappropriate language and register

## 1 (Natural Sciences)

*Since I was a child, I have found myself to be utterly fascinated by how science works. I do not have to look far to find the source of my love for science. Just glancing around the living room my eyes fall upon a whole host of fascinating organisms, seen and unseen they create a brilliant miniature ecosystem with billions of tiny processes and reactions for me to sit and unpick.*



## 1 (Natural Sciences)



*My main reason for wanting to study Natural Sciences is the enjoyment I get from grappling with new and complex ideas. In Physics, I like studying the atomic scale and have developed an interest in quantum models which move beyond my current syllabus. In Biology, I enjoy analysis on a larger scale, particularly experimental questions such as how to model the distributions of species on islands.*

# UCAS materials for writing a personal statement



Typically students don't like writing positively about themselves, this will help you overcome that.

UCAS - Minding mapping for a personal statement, to start generating ideas.

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CEjcdbrqyn-joEfYRnFr0ae03qIB\\_Xyp](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CEjcdbrqyn-joEfYRnFr0ae03qIB_Xyp)

Link to UCAS guide to personal statement writing:

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

UCAS worksheet: <https://www.ucas.com/file/4251/download?token=KIC9IMqH>



Student self evaluation form

# OSCAR (Online system for completing applications and references)



OSCAR supports you in developing competitive, subject-focused personal statements. OSCAR provides you with an activity based process that enables you to display your academic personality and potential:

- Provide evidence about key motivations for wanting to study a subject
- Showcase a piece of independent research (said to enhance the chances of receiving an offer)
- Analyse relevant academic activities and work experience effectively
- Report on a selection of extra-curricular activities

The screenshot shows the OSCAR application process interface. At the top, there is a progress bar with six steps: Overview, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Step 1 is currently active. Below the progress bar, there is a yellow box with text: "Research shows that admissions tutors from many different universities look for roughly the same stages of a personal statement. Using the sections below, you can write strong material for each stage, and then construct it using Stage 5. Your Reasons and Topic of Interest are the most important sections. Extra-curricular Activities is the least important section." Below this, it says "Subjects chosen: Accountancy, Banking/Finance" and "Change subject choices". There are three green boxes representing sections: 1. "Your reasons" with a checkmark and description "This section focuses on your reasons for wanting to study the subject." 2. "Topic of interest" with a checkmark and description "This section helps you show off your ability within the subject you've applied for." 3. "Course-related activities" with a checkmark and description "This section helps you discuss activities you've completed which relate to your subject." Each section has an "Add" button on the right.

# OSCAR Ctd.



OSCAR Login: <https://oscar.causeway.education/>

- Check your emails for a registration email from OSCAR.
- Use OSCAR to create the structure for your personal statement.
- Have your subject's SOW to hand to reflect on what areas of your courses you enjoyed.
- Remember activities from CAS/Service Learning, TOK/PPS, EE/EP
- Ensure you use your suppercurricular activities.
- OSCAR will create a 'rough' personal statement for you to edit.

# Completing your UCAS registration

UCAS is the university and colleges admissions service used to apply to the majority of universities in the UK

# Completing your UCAS registration



Sign up to UCAS from the **19 May 2020**. Use the buzzword **danecourt2021** and link to your house from the registration email.

Some key points to remember for your registration:

- Under personal details enter your **personal email account**, for post school communication
- Your student support code must be **02** and enter **Kent** in the field below
- You will have 5 university courses you can apply for, **you do not have to apply to 5 courses**
- Education, enter your GCSEs and the qualification date of **August 2019**

# Completing your UCAS registration: **IBDP**



## International Baccalaureate - Creativity, Action, Service

### International Baccalaureate - Creativity, Act

Grade:

Date: July 2020

Awarding body:

**Grade:** This is 'pending' on your application form.

## International Baccalaureate Diploma

### International Baccalaureate Diploma

Grade:

Date: July 2020

Awarding body:

**Date:** this is the date you will receive your exam results: **July 2021**

| Module name                          | Module date | Module value |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Physics                              | July 2020   | Higher lvl   |
| Geography                            | July 2020   | Higher lvl   |
| French B                             | July 2020   | Higher lvl   |
| Chemistry                            | July 2020   | Stand lvl    |
| English A Lit. (first exam May 2013) | July 2020   | Stand lvl    |
| Math.Studies                         | July 2020   | Stand lvl    |
| Theory of Knowledge                  | July 2020   | Th of Know   |
| French B                             | July 2020   | Ext Essay    |

**Under your IBDP include TOK and EE, because these will contribute to your final point score.**



# Entrance exams



A full list of admissions test is here: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests>

The most common UK admissions tests are:

**STEP:** STEP (Sixth Term Examination Paper) Mathematics is a well-established mathematics examination designed to test candidates on questions that are similar in style to undergraduate mathematics. STEP is used by the University of Cambridge and the University of Warwick. Other universities sometimes ask candidates to take STEP as part of their offer – in such cases, the university can advise on which papers to take.

(<https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/step/about-step/>)

**UCAT:** The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is an admissions test used by a consortium of UK Universities for their medical and dental degree programmes. The UCAT helps universities to select applicants with the most appropriate mental abilities, attitudes and professional behaviours required for new doctors and dentists to be successful in their clinical careers. It is used in collaboration with other admissions processes such as the UCAS application and academic qualifications. (<https://www.ucat.ac.uk/>)

**BMAT:** The BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) gives you the chance to stand out from the crowd and show your potential to succeed on medical and health-related courses. It tests your ability to apply scientific and mathematical knowledge, as well as problem solving, critical thinking and written communication skills that are essential to university-level study.

(<https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/>)

**LNAT:** The LNAT is used by universities to help them select people for their undergraduate law courses. (<https://lnat.ac.uk/>)

# Oxbridge process

Mrs Linton will be contact with students who had expressed an interest in applying to Oxford and Cambridge during term 5.

