



HEON
HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH NETWORK

Personal Statements (Y12)

Carshalton Boys Sports College 10/03/16



ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

UCA
University
for the
Creative Arts

C UNIVERSITY
CENTRE
FARNBOROUGH



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY

Part of
NNCO
National Networks
for Collaborative
Outreach

About us



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Four universities working in partnership to inform
young people about university, and how to get there



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Today's session



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Information

- Personal Statements and the UCAS process
- What to include and how to structure it. How to gain more experience

Activities

- Personal Statements for different subjects
- You'll play the role of an Admissions Tutor and decide which one would be given a place

In your own time...

Planning

- What good tips and examples will you use?
- Starting a draft – using templates, getting advice

Before you start



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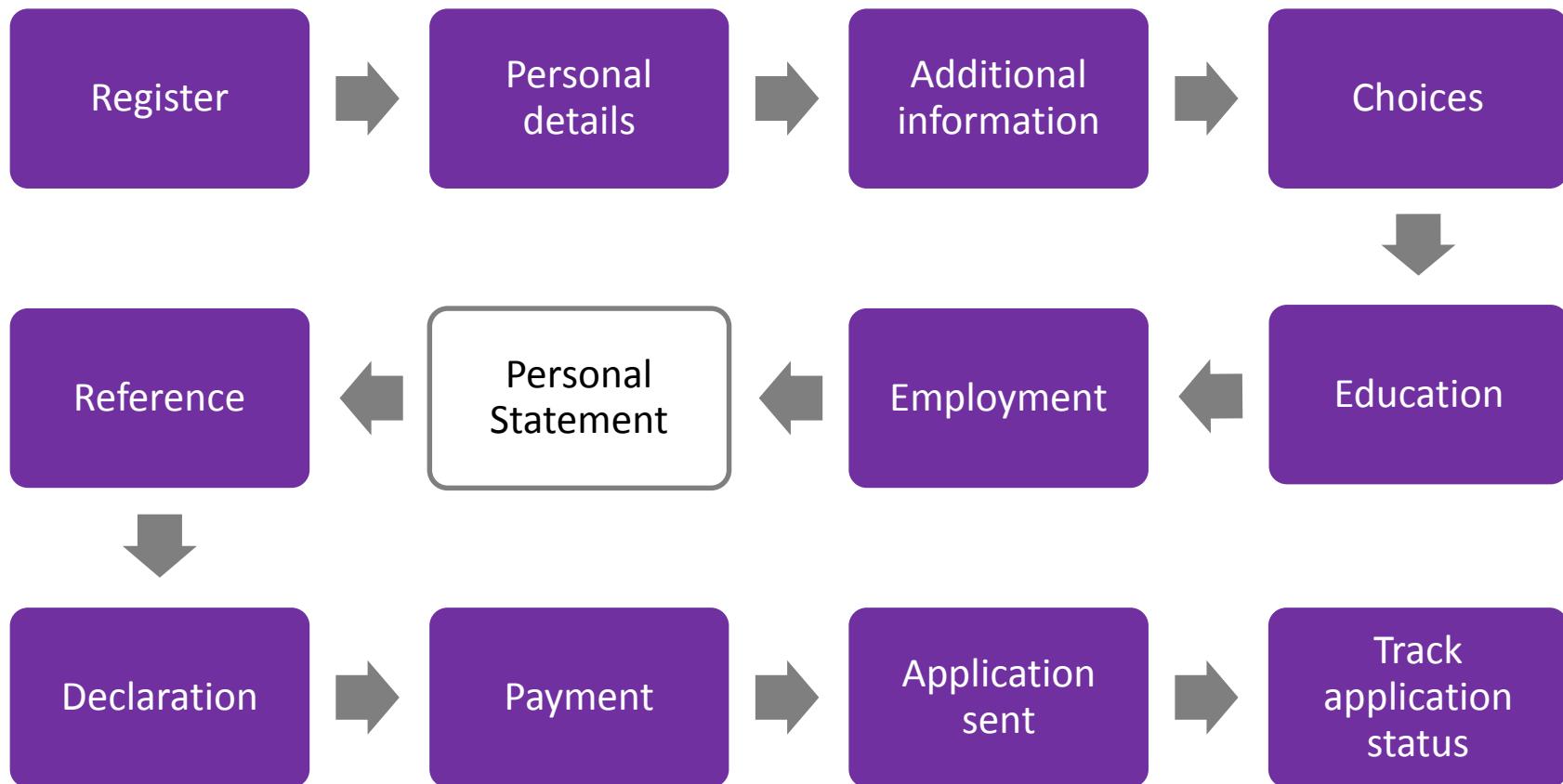
Why?

- Why do you want to study further?
- What subject(s) you want to study?
- You only get one personal statement)?

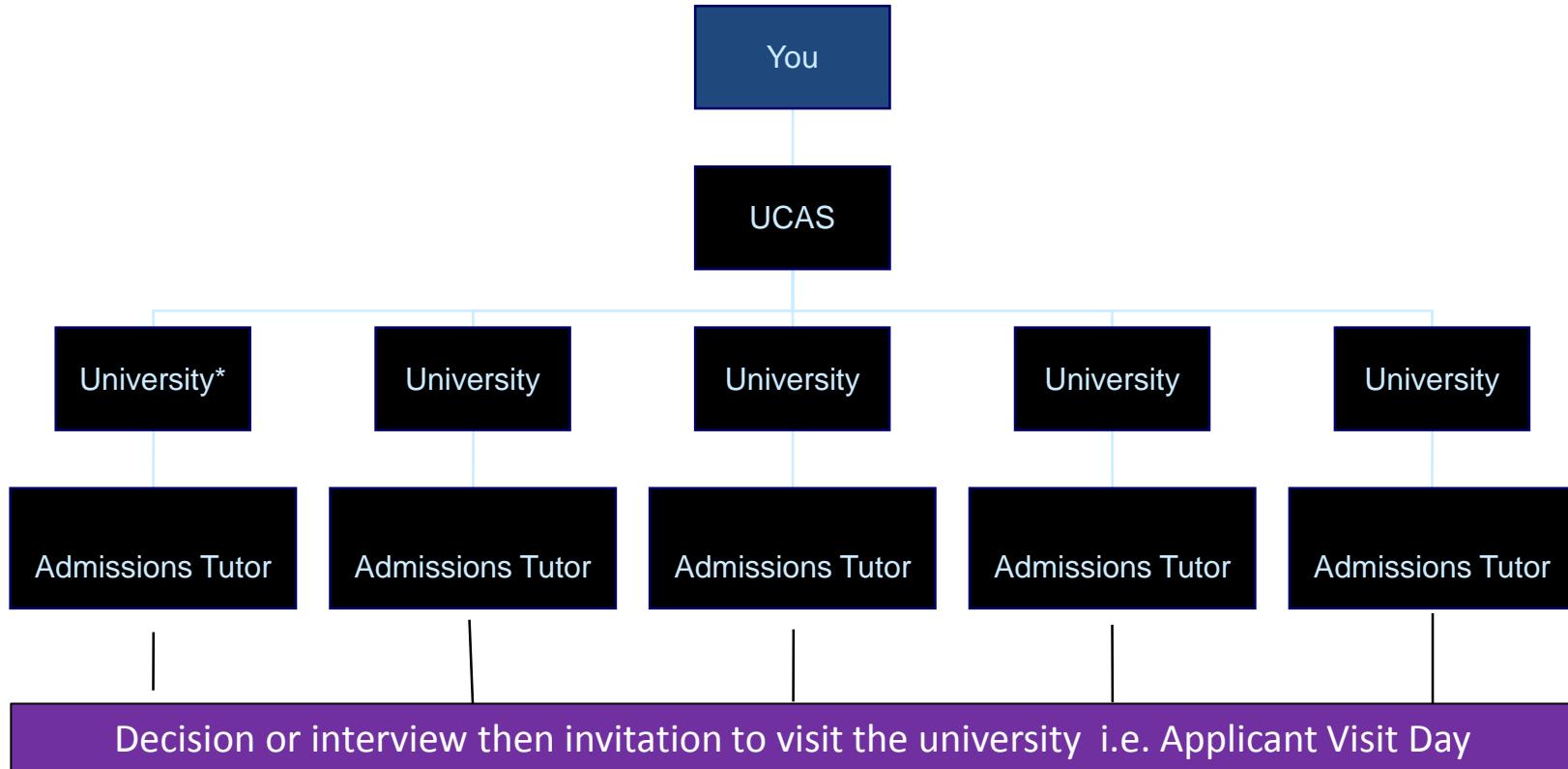
The UCAS process



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What happens to your UCAS form?



* You can apply to more than one course at the same university: Remember though that you only have 1 personal statement

Your time to shine



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Your Personal Statement is your chance to...

- Show that you are suited to the course
- Demonstrate you are hardworking and committed
- Show that you have researched, and are dedicated to, your chosen course
- Show that you will be able to adjust to your new university environment



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► Showcasing your skills

Academic skills



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- Personal statements – 70% academic and 30% extra curricular content
- How can you **develop** and then **show** your academic interests to universities?

Knowledge

- Further Reading
- University reading lists
- Ask a university student

Passion

- Dedicate time to your favourite aspect of the subject for fun
- Outreach/ work experience

Independence

- Study buddy
- Time management
- Challenge yourself – in any way

New experiences- Sixth Form and Summer



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- Travel
- Work (balance!)
- Volunteering
- Duke of Edinburgh, leadership schemes
- **Sports** – team games or individual fitness. Also relaxation in Year 13 - yoga or pilates?
- **Clubs and Societies** – similar to those at universities. Film Club, Islamic Society, Amnesty International, learn new language...
- Student Course Rep, Student Governor-?





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Think like an Admissions Tutor - Part 1

Getting into the mind of an Admissions Tutor...



Activity – Think like an Admissions Tutor



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- What is good or bad about these extracts?
- How might you have communicated the information differently?

Under 10 minutes, then feedback



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Personal Statement toolkit

Finding the balance...



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70%

Academic, focusing on your chosen course

- Why have you chosen this subject?
- What particularly interests you about it?
- Where has this interest come from?
- What independent reading or research have you done?

30%

Extra-curricular

- Relevant work experience
- Subject-related activities
- Career aspirations
- Unrelated activities

EVIDENCE - always reinforce what you say in your statement with relevant examples

A possible structure...



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Part 1 - Introduction

- **Why** are you interested in this course? Why do you want to study it at degree level?

70%

Part 2 – Academic

- How do your current qualifications link to your chosen course? What independent reading or research have you done? What other course-related activities have you taken part in?

30%

Part 3 - Extracurricular

- What unrelated additional activities do you take part in? How could these show skills that are relevant for studying at university level?

Part 4 – Brief Conclusion

- **Close the statement**
- Career ambitions?

And
finally...

Remember...



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Make it yours

- It is a **personal** statement
- Admissions tutors read hundreds, possibly thousands of them
- It should read like **you** wrote it (not your parents or your teacher)
- **Your** enthusiasm, **your** commitment

Make it count

- You only have 4000 characters
- Draft and redraft - if it doesn't relate to being a successful university student, cut it out
- Get to the point!
- Spell check in Word – proof reading with others



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Think like an Admissions Tutor - Part 2

In this task...

1. You will be given two personal statements for the same subject area
2. Pretend you are an Admissions Tutor
3. Analyse the Statements in detail (like a teacher marking a piece of work).
4. Evaluate the two personal statements and decide which one you would give a place at university to
5. Be prepared to provide some feedback to the rest of the group

Use these criteria to ‘mark’ Personal Statements



Admissions Tutors are looking for the students they want to teach in the future!

Law Personal Statement 1

What?	How?
Displays strong historical and contemporary knowledge	'The recent case of three MPs trying to use Article Nine of the Bill of Rights 1688 to privilege their expenses and therefore protect them from prosecution...'
Legal experience	Junior Mock Trial Competition Bar National Mock Trial Competition Work experience in a Solicitors' firm
Proactive nature	'I took full advantage of the firm's extensive law library and [...] assist[ed] a paralegal'
Wider research on legal topics	Subscribes to The Economist and Legalweek, and can cite recent articles. Writing an EPQ on law.
Writes critically about what they've read	Writes own opinion on 'DPP Keir Starmer's proposals to introduce the US system of degrees of homicide'
Career focused	Aware of how to become a Barrister, and how his choice of degree links into that
Gets the balance right	Mostly about Law, with a smaller section about extracurricular activities

The student who wrote this personal statement got offers from all five of his universities!

In summary

Do

- Give yourself plenty of time to draft and re-draft
- Get other peoples' advice
- Focus on the academic side of things
- Back up everything you say with evidence
- Use themed paragraphs
- **Make sure it reflects you**

Don't

- Leave it to the last minute
- Use jokes (your sense of humour is unlikely to match the Admissions Tutor's)
- Make sweeping statements, especially about the subject you're applying for (remember they're experts and know far more than you do!)
- Use long words that you don't understand

Personal Statements



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- UCAS Personal Statement webpages (writing tool)
- National Careers Service - bit.ly/NCSjourney
- Bright Knowledge - www.brightknowledge.org
- Career Pilot - www.careerpilot.org.uk
- **University Open Days – summer of Year 12/ Autumn Year 13**

www.heon.org.uk