



The personal statement section of your UCAS application is your opportunity to tell universities about your suitability for the course that you hope to study and demonstrate your interest and commitment to your chosen area of study.

This guide will help you to write an effective personal statement

What should be included:

- The reasons why you are applying for your chosen course
 - Why the subject interests you?
 - Evidence that you understand what is required
 - Why you want to go to university generally
- Why you are a suitable candidate for the course
 - The skills and experience you have which will help you succeed
 - How your current and previous studies relate to the course
 - Activities that you have taken part in which demonstrate your commitment to the subject area and any transferable skills you have gained

Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do...**
 - Organise your material so it is an informative and interesting read
 - Use examples
 - Expect to produce several drafts before you are totally happy
 - Ask people you trust for feedback
 - Check university prospectuses, websites and entry profiles for the qualities they want students to demonstrate
 - Be enthusiastic
- **Don't...**
 - Say that you prefer one university to another
 - Repeat material already on the application form
 - Quote books, magazines or publications – the personal statement is about you
 - Start every sentence with "I"
 - Use words/vocabulary you don't normally use
 - Leave it to the last minute!





Structuring your personal statement:

The content of your personal statement needs to have a structure that allows you to include everything that you need to, whilst making it easy to read.

It is important to remember that YOU are the focus of the personal statement. It can be useful to focus your content in themes:

Academic achievement

- Reasons for choosing the course
- Background to your interest in the subject
- Particular interest in current studies

Key Skills and Experience

- Key skills developed
- Details of non-examined subjects
- Work experience and employment
- Voluntary work
- Other experience

Personal attributes

- Personality traits
- Career Aspirations
- Other Achievements
- Hobbies and Interests

TASK 1 – Mind-mapping

Use the mind-map templates provided at the end of this workbook as a guideline to help you structure your ideas into themes.

- The 'Me' map focuses on your personal attributes – everything that makes you, you. You can use this map to categorise all of the ideas that you want to include in your personal statement
- The Skills map helps you to identify the skills you will need for your chosen course/profession. These will be different from course to course, so it is important that you identify them through your own research.





As easy as ABC:

You can use your personal 'me' mind-map and your skills map to match up your skills

The key to a good personal statement is to make it skills-focused, so this technique might help:

Activity ➡ Benefit ➡ Course

A statement is much more convincing if activities, experiences, and interests show why an applicant would make a good candidate for the course or university generally. For example, the following statement:

“I enjoy badminton and play twice a week.”

Could be expanded to read like this, using the ABC technique:



TASK 2 – Activity Benefit Course

Use the ABC template provided at the end of this workbook to structure your content into a skills-focused statement





Create a template:

Using a template is a useful way to create a plan for your personal statement. Writing in sections can make the writing process less daunting and can help you get started rather than staring at a blank page.

- Group the points you want to cover under sub-titles as this will break your statement into manageable pieces
- Organise your list under the relevant headings, and hey presto, you've got a Statement Plan.
- Delete the headings once your statement is finished, and you should have a clear, structured piece of writing

We've included some examples for headings below and some suggestions for what you can include under each one.

Paragraph 1 – Course choice

- Why that degree?
- Where did your interest stem from?
- Which specific parts / modules interest you?
- Career plans?

Paragraph 2 – School / college experience

- What have you enjoyed about post 16 study?
- What parts of your current course can be related to your chosen degree?
- What academic skills have you gained to prepare you for higher level study?

Paragraph 3 – Wider experiences

- Hobbies and extra-curricular achievements
- Part time work/work experience
- Link to skills gained e.g. Teamwork, Leadership, Time Management

Paragraph 4 – Concluding statement

- Sum up why you would make a successful student
- Always end on a positive
- E.g. *“University will offer me the challenge of a demanding degree choice and I am confident that I have the academic ability, determination and personal qualities to make a success of it”*

TASK 3 – Template it

Use the template provided at the end of this work book to begin writing your personal statement.





Personal Statement Top Tips:

- UCAS requires your personal statement to be a maximum of 4000 characters or 47 lines
- Write your drafts on Word or similar so you can save drafts. Don't write directly on to the application form
- Check spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Expect to produce several drafts
- Don't repeat material already on the application form
- Keep your content focused
- Justify everything you include with examples
- Don't say that you prefer one university to another
- Try not to start every sentence with "I"
- Try not to use words/vocabulary you don't normally use
- Be enthusiastic!

Further Information:

The University of Chester website has lots more resources and articles about writing your personal statement and completing your UCAS application which can be found via the following links:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/outreach/resources>

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/news/tips-writing-your-personal-statement-pro?list=5517>

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/news/ucas-writing-your-personal-statement-0?list=5517>

UCAS has a section dedicated to applying to university and where you'll find everything you need to know about writing your personal statement.

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

Templates:

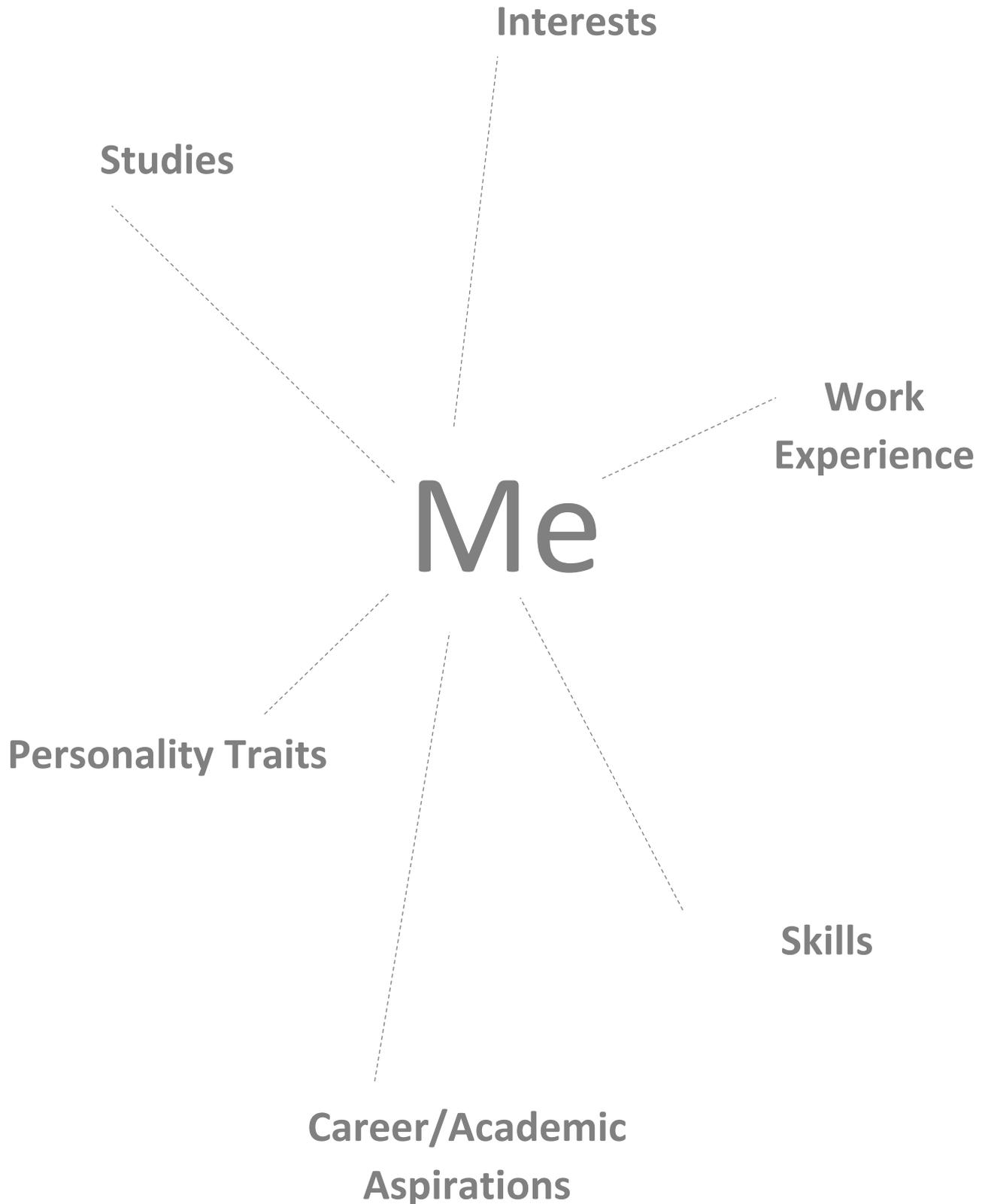
The following pages of this workbook contain mind-map and personal statement templates that can be printed out (or used as a format to copy if you don't have access to a printer) for you to complete the tasks.





Writing your Personal Statement

Task 1 – The 'Me' Map





Writing your Personal Statement

Task 1 – Skills Map

Skills

A central word 'Skills' is surrounded by seven dashed lines radiating outwards, forming a star-like shape. These lines are intended for students to write down specific skills they possess or are developing.

Writing your Personal Statement

Task 2 – Activity Benefit Course

Activity

Benefit

Course





Section 1: Course Choice – What are the reasons for choosing this degree choice? Be specific, clear and relevant.

Section 2: School/College Experience – What have you enjoyed/learned from your post-16 studies? Link to your choice of course where possible, either in content or skills, or both. You can include any extra reading you've done here.

Section 3: Work Experience – What voluntary or paid work experience have you had? Use your skills map to link experience to skills you've gained.

Section 4: Extra-curricular Activities – What activities do you do/have you done? Use your skills map to link to your choice of course.

Section 5: Conclusion – Summarise why you would make a great candidate. Leave them with something positive!

