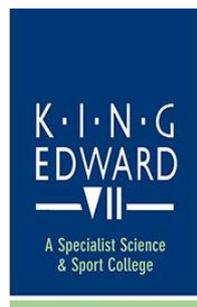


Name:

TG:

King Edward VII Student Guide

Preparation for University or Employment



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Writing a Personal Statement /Letter of Application

Helping to build you a *brilliant* future

Preparing for your next stage.

Hopefully you have found year 12 a/ the place of challenge and excitement in terms of discovering new talents and experiencing new opportunities to 'broaden your horizons'.

Now that your AS examinations have finished, it is important that you utilise the time before and during, the summer holiday to seriously consider your next stage.

Some of you are fortunate already know or have a clear indication of your next stage. Some of you will be undecided about the most appropriate course to study at university and for some it could still be a question as to whether you apply to university or move onto an apprenticeship or look for employment!

Whatever your personal circumstances you all need to start compiling a structured and well-crafted personal statement that can either be used in your UCAS application or as part of a supporting statement in an apprenticeship or employment application.

You will be given step by step guidance from your tutors in the next coming weeks and you should aim to have your first draft completed for your tutor to review before the summer holiday.

Researching into your next stage:

Researching University Courses	Researching Apprenticeship/Employment Opportunities
<p>Ask yourself basic questions such as ...</p> <p>What do I enjoy studying? What are my target grades at A2? What are the entry requirements at different universities for the course I want to study? Think grades, but also experience and skills. Should I be thinking about Russell Group Universities? <i>Be aspirational!</i> Am I a more introverted or extroverted character? In other words do I want to work with people or prefer to work on small team projects? What skills do I have that I would like to develop e.g. communication or problem solving skills Do I want to live at home or with new people? Do I want to stay local or move far away? Do I want to study at a campus university or a city university?</p>	<p>Ask yourself basic questions such as ...</p> <p>What do I enjoy/what am I good at? Do I want to stay in the area or am I prepared to move elsewhere? If I have science and Mathematics A levels do I need to consider level 3 engineering apprenticeships? If I study the arts / social science A levels do I want to find an apprenticeship that allows me to work with people? Do I want to train in a 'trade' such as plumbing or electrician? Are all apprenticeships offered at level 2 for a trade or can I start at level 3? Do I know somebody who is working in the trade? Can I talk to them for more information?</p>
<p>Using UCAS 'find a course' you can research all the institutions and all the courses offered in the country that offer your desired course...</p>	<p>There is an excellent logbook provided by the National Apprenticeship Service that keeps you updated of new apprenticeships and helps you to make an informed choice about applying for the most appropriate ones.</p>

Using the link you can search courses here: http://search.ucas.com/	Using the link set up your own account www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
From this point you can research individual university entry requirements	From this point you can research / investigate regular apprenticeship updates

Applying to University OR Preparing a Letter of Application

1. Why do you want to go to university?

This is a difficult question. As a starting point highlight the key terms that appeal more to you.

Arts	Sciences
Home	Away
Academic	Vocational
University straight away	Gap Year
Full Time study	Part time study
Big and busy	Small and cosy
Essay	Exam
Campus	Self-catered

This should give you a ‘university identity’ or some idea of the type of experience you want to have at university, and what you want to get out of going...

Write down your top three reasons for wanting to study at university:

(Some words/phases that might help trigger some ideas ... independence, personal growth, academic challenge and rigour, enter professional work that will offer much job satisfaction, improve your life chances and life opportunities, develop resilience, experience a ‘new life’ in a completely different area of Britain, develop lifelong relationships, make your family proud as you are first generation university attendee etc)

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3.
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2. Starting Your Personal Statement / Letter of Application

Your personal statement / letter of application should be seen as an opportunity in which you can sell yourself and your achievements. It is a positive statement with the aim of making your personality 'stand out from the crowd'. It is also the place on your UCAS application form where you explain your course / degree choice, your personal situation, your aims and your goals. You also need to show what YOU WILL BRING to the university that chooses you.

What to include in your personal statement:

Subject related Information

WHY do you want to study this subject / course?

WHY are you suited to study this subject / course?

- Demonstrate a passion for the subject
- Reading around the subject (*TOP TIP look at the course content in the university prospectus and read around some of the areas so you can discuss this further in an interview!*)
- Interested in a particular aspect/topic at level
- What are your career aspirations
- Show you've thought about the future
- For example in your History personal research project you used evaluation and analysis skills by ...

Skills and Qualities

Analysis and Evaluation skills
Synthesis and application skills
Critical thinking skills
Problem solving skills
Academic potential
Organisational skills
Communication skills
Focus
Creativity
Passion for the subject

Interests and Experience

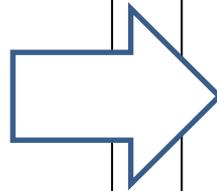
- Work experience – especially important for competitive courses e.g. medicine/midwifery/nursing/dentistry
- Field trips / project work linked to subject?
- Volunteering experience
- Academic mentoring
- Engineering/science schemes
- Attended summer schools
- Outside interests such as sports clubs, scouts, music, dance, performing arts, book clubs

Skills and Qualities

Enthusiasm Reliability
People skills (interpersonal skills)
Responsibility Maturity
Leadership Teamwork
Co-ordinating Communication
ICT Problem Solving
Independence Using initiative

Achievements

- Won any awards – in or out of school?
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Positions of responsibility
- What are you proud of?



Skills and Qualities

Independence
Dedication
Motivation
Self-discipline
Ambition
Confidence

Remember to use your 'employability' log book to refer to all the experiences and achievements you have undertaken this year and the skills that you have developed as a result. Your employability booklet list many skills in detail!

Contextual factors

- First generation in your family?
- Special circumstances that have hindered progress?
- Overcome particular barriers?
- How has that developed you?
- Anything that you feel that the admissions tutors should be aware of when considering your application
- Remember BE POSITIVE. Admissions offers do not want to read an X Factor 'sob story'! Use your experiences to explain how it has helped you both grow academically and as an individual.

"The strongest applicants are those who can link their extra-curricular activities to their proposed course of study"

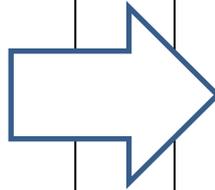
Assistant Registrar for Undergraduate Admissions at the University of Warwick

Activity:

Fill in the boxes below that are relevant to your personal statement

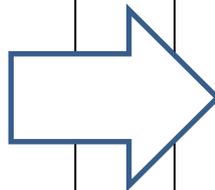
Subject related Information

Skills and Qualities



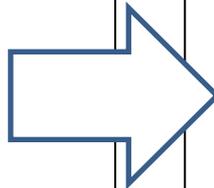
Interests and Experience

Skills and Qualities



Achievements

Skills and Qualities



Remember to use your 'employability' log book to refer to all the experiences and achievements you have undertaken this year and the skills that you have developed as a result. Your employability booklet list many skills in detail!

Contextual factors

3. Putting your personal statement together

Link your skills and qualities with your knowledge, interests and experiences and relate this to your course/career

For example:

NOT 'I have good teamwork skills. I play football every Saturday.'

But 'My commitment to playing football every Saturday has help me to develop excellent teamwork skills.'

AND 'This will help me throughout my course as it is important I work well in a team on group project assignments.'

Now practice writing succinct statements by considering the following very carefully. Remember to use your employability booklets to support you with the skills you have acquired from a range of experiences...

Activity:

For the following statements, explain why that particular interest, hobby or experience is useful and what it shows about you.

a. I volunteer every week at a local nursery.

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b. One of my hobbies is reading; I enjoy everything from magazines and novels to academic journal articles.

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c. I attended a week long summer school at the University of Nottingham.

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d. I have a part time job at Tesco.

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Activity:

Rearrange the following sentences so that they don't start "I....."

a. I am an ambitious and enthusiastic individual who has always enjoyed Maths during my time at school.

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b. I find business and finance fascinating and with everything I learn I find I want to know more.

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c. I have chosen to study a degree in Economics because I intend to further my studies towards developing a career in business consultancy.

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d. I could say that my love of Geography started in school, but in fact holidays to foreign lands have had a more significant impact on me.

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Activity:

Turn negatives into positives

a. Although I did not do very well in my AS levels.....

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b. Even though I have only volunteered in one work experience setting

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c. While I understand that my A levels are not in essay writing subjects.....

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Activity:

Write your first sentence(s) for your personal statement

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Activity:

Seven words to describe me

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Examples of Personal Statements.

Activity:

Highlight where students have linked their extracurricular activities (enrichment) to skills they have developed and how they have linked all of this to proposed courses of study

Standing 1085 meters above sea level at the summit of Mt. Snowdon; walking through the National Forest in which I live; watching the tide draw in from Holy Island; and seeing a rocket in the launch pad at the Kennedy Space Centre are just a few of the times when I realised I wholeheartedly wanted to study the environment.

I could say that my love for environmental sciences started in school, but in fact holidays to foreign places have had a more significant impact on me. Traveling many different landscapes, from arid volcanic terrain across Timanfaya National Park, Lanzarote where the black beaches intrigued me, to the eroded Durdle Door on the Dorset coast, have furthered my passion to learn more about the effects and processes of the environment.

An aim of mine is to travel and expand my knowledge, whilst making a difference to our planet. I strongly believe that in our ever industrialising world there are environmental issues that must be addressed. Are we going to continue at a business-as-usual rate predicted by the IPCC? Can we defer the effects of global warming? Is extreme weather going to worsen? These are endlessly alluring questions, in which I hope the study of Environmental Sciences will give me a better understanding, whilst being relevant in the current world due to the media demonstrating more global environmental issues.

I am fascinated by the study of the atmosphere, such as how catastrophic events like Hurricane Katrina are developed, which I discovered when researching extreme weather, and learning how to read isobars on weather satellite maps added to my desire to learn more about meteorology. Studying Statistics in Maths was rewarding as is integrated into various subjects, even my Geography fieldwork to calculate probabilities of questionnaires assessing flood defense systems along the River Trent, Nottingham.

At school I've become a leading member in the Art of Brilliance, a positive psychology project, run in conjunction with academics of Loughborough University to spread positive thinking. This involves working in partnership with local businesses and as team of students holding presentations and conferences, even one at Leicester Tigers Stadium, which has given me the confidence to plan events and present.

I was appointed team leader in my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition which developed my leadership, teamwork and communication skills. Being a founding and current member of my Explorer Scout Unit, is due to being in Scouting since the age of seven and wanting this to continue in my local area. Within Scouting I've had the opportunity to take part in many adventurous camps and hikes, fundraising events and volunteering at my local Cub Scouts, improving my leadership and planning skills, whilst enhancing my love of the outdoors.

During the Education Engineering Scheme I worked with Caterpillar UK engineers, on the 'Design and Development of a Learning Aid for a Caterpillar Backhoe'. The project advanced my research skills, extended my knowledge of mechanics, and developed my skills in planning, design and fabrication, while showing me how environmental engineering is working to improve and sustain the natural environment. When working in the Design School at Loughborough University, I saw the critically monitored use of materials, to restrict waste due to expense and environmental impacts. Presenting our prototype and dissertation level report to highly achieving engineers, contributed towards achieving a Gold Crest Award.

During my weeks work experience with FPCR Environment and Design, I saw how people work daily to protect the environment. My experiences included traveling with a botanist to Blackpool to survey a potential residential area, searching for bat roosts, and watching an architect's designs for an environmentally friendly building develop. My interests and experiences have convinced me that Environmental Sciences are going to be as important to my future as they are to this planet.

3995 characters.

Science has always intrigued me, in particular the human body and the way the cells interact and integrate. This interest developed in High School when first observing dissections of an eye, the heart and lungs; meaning that during my GCSE studies I was always eager to participate in the dissections myself. Personally dissecting a rat was an incredible experience seeing how the organs were arranged and how they connected to other parts of the body. This has fuelled my passion for biology and further fired my imagination for the human body.

Pharmacology offers a deep insight into the human body and how drugs can affect it on a molecular and cellular level. It has helped to push advancement in medicine, thus leading me to aspire to discover more effective treatments for a variety of illnesses. Studying Chemistry and Biology at A level has allowed me to gain some knowledge on the human body, yet Pharmacology will give me the opportunity to develop my knowledge further. It will also enable me to further understand how different chemicals can affect the different parts of the body.

Studying Maths has allowed me to have a very systematic and methodical method when carrying out tasks. This has helped to improve the way I carry out experiments so that they are accurate and reliable. Calculations also are a part of experiments, so with my knowledge of maths I will be confident in working these out.

I have a particular interest in the current methods and drugs that treat cancer. In support of research into effective treatments I have helped to organise and taken part in many charity fundraisers, for charities such as Cancer Research. At school I organised a cake sale, a non-school uniform day and a staff vs. students football match in order to raise money. I have also volunteered to help run multi-skills festivals at local schools, which involved working with a range of children including those with special needs. This involved setting up stations, involving the children, and motivating everyone. These stations involved activities such as throwing beanbags into the corresponding hoops and the shuttle run.

'The Art of Brilliance' is a group I am involved in that focuses on implementing positive psychology into society in order to create happier people. This has given me a positive outlook and has taught me about perseverance. Being a member of this group has involved delivering assemblies to peers, presenting workshops to primary schools, working with world renowned businesses such as CEVA and organising conferences for over 500 people. As a result I have become more confident, experienced working as part of a team and experience of being a team leader.

Dancing has always been a strong interest of mine from the early age of three; I currently take part in ballet, tap, modern, acrobatics, national and contemporary lessons. This demonstrates my ability to adapt to new ideas and shows how I can work effectively under pressure. As a result of my interest and commitment to dance I was offered a job at my dance school as an assistant teacher which has allowed me to develop certain skills further such as team work, punctuality and essential communication skills.

Last year I took up the role of maths mentoring alongside my studies. This involved working as a support teacher in a year 10 lower set maths class. In the lessons I would work with students who may be struggling and helping to ensure the whole class was on task. I am also part of the college's netball team and I have been for the last three years as I love to stay active and team sports are my favourite way to achieve this. Netball has improved my coordination so I have the ability to do several things at once and also improved my communication within a team.

My aim is to be at the forefront of medical advancement; Pharmacology will give me the knowledge and skill to reach this goal, giving me the potential to make a difference to someone's life.

Dos and Don'ts for Personal Statements

Do:

- Create a list which includes all of the things you want to include in your personal statement
- Draft, re-draft and draft again!
- Remember that your reasons for wanting to study the course and why you're suited to it should cover 60%+ of your statement
- Mention summer schools and masterclasses that you've attended, and where you attended them (this won't show favouritism)
- Ask for feedback on your personal statement from parents/carers, teachers etc.
- Refer to any current issues in your subject area, but remember you might be asked about these at interview
- Be enthusiastic and allow your personality to shine through
- Ensure your statement is in a logical order and flows well

Don't:

- Copy anything from elsewhere. UCAS uses similarity detection software
- Just focus on your academic abilities (but make sure you explain how everything you say relates to your course)
- Make your personal statement specific to one university
- Rely on spellchecker as it can often miss things e.g. from and form
- Use flowery/academic language that you wouldn't usually use
- Use humour. You risk alienating admissions tutors
- Lie. You will get found out
- Use quotes in your statement. Universities much prefer your own words
- Repeat things stated elsewhere on your UCAS form e.g. the subjects you are studying
- Just list your qualifications, experience etc. Say what you learnt from them and why this will be useful

Personal Statement Checklist

When you've completed a first draft of your personal statement, use this list to see if you've included all of the relevant information.

Make sure you've done/included these things:

To do	Tick
Mention that you've attended a summer school (and any masterclasses)	
Refer to current issues in your subject that you're interested in	
Spellcheck your personal statement	
Ask at least two people to look over your work	
Include your reasons for wanting to do the course	
Write about work experience and what you've learnt from it	
Mention extra-curricular activities and what they show about you	
Show that you understand what your course involves	
Mention awards you've won/completed eg Dof E, Sports Leaders, Young Enterprise	
Discuss future plans	
Use a variety of sentence openers (not just I.....)	
Write in a logical order	
Include at least some of the skills listed on the next page	

Make sure you haven't done any of these things:

	Tick
Just listed your qualifications/experience without explaining why they're relevant	
Copied ANYTHING from somewhere else	
Made your application specific to just one place	
Used any words you don't understand	
Used humour	
Used slang	
Lied	
Used a quote	
Been negative - try and put a positive spin on everything	

When you're happy with the final version of your personal statement make sure you:

To do:	Tick
Print out a copy for your own reference	
Send a copy to your referee	

Time Line 2015 / 2016 :

- May: AS Examinations begin
- June: UCAS/Apprenticeship/Employment preparation and writing of the personal statement (1st draft)
Teachers to write student UCAS reference statements for students.
Students can register on UCAS apply
- July Tutors to write initial references for all year 12 students
Students continue working on their personal statement over the holiday.
UCAS Evening. Support for parents.
- August: Results available on **Thursday 13th August 2015**.
Final decisions re: Yr13 choices made today!
- Sept: Students to register on UCAS apply and start to complete sections of the application.
UCAS Personal Statement 2nd draft due into tutors.
References attached.
- October: Oxford, Cambridge and medical /dentistry/ veterinary science applications deadline is the **15th October 2015**.
- Oct-Nov: Applications completed during Sept-December.
Offers arrive November onwards!
- December: Internal school deadline for sending UCAS applications is **Friday 18th December 2015**. This is so that we can provide you with the advice and guidance you need.
- Jan/Feb: UCAS final deadline for most courses is **6pm 15th January 2016**
Universities and colleges make final decisions on student offers.
End of February - Extra opens for students who are not holding any offers.
- March Deadline for Art and Design subjects (where the deadline is not Jan 15th) is **24th March 2016**. You need to check on individual university websites.
- May Unless you have received late offers, by **early May** you need to have accepted your firm and insurance places. Try to do it earlier if you can, as you will be holding places that can then be offered to other students in Extra.
- August Your A2 Results – University – Clearing-Apprenticeships- Work.

Apprenticeships:

We will advertise any apprenticeship or employment opportunities that we are made aware of, but individual students should also be looking at the official apprenticeships website which can be found at www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship. Remember you need to finish your A2 courses first, so only apply for opportunities starting after the completion of your exams in 2016.

AS and A2 UCAS point scores.

You can refer to this when looking at entry requirements for universities of your choice.

A Levels			BTEC Nationals			
UCAS tariff points	AS Level (GCE/VCE)	A Level (Full GCE/VCE)	UCAS tariff points	BTEC Nationals: Award	BTEC Nationals: Certificate	BTEC Nationals: Diploma
140		A*				
120		A	360			DDD
110			320			DDM
100		B	280			DMM
90			240		DD	MMM
80		C	200		DM	MMP
70			160		MM	MPP
60	A	D	120	D	MP	PPP
50	B		80	M	PP	
40	C	E	40	P		
30	D					
20	E					