

Writing your personal statement





What is a personal statement?

To apply to study at UCR, you will need to write a personal statement which is your opportunity to tell us:

- **Who you are**
- **Why you want to study a degree at UCR**
- **Why you believe you should be accepted onto the degree you want to study**
- **Your unique talents, experiences, personal qualities and hopes for your future**
- **Your most important, impressive and relevant information should be written first.**

Preparing to write your personal statement

The personal statement is split into the following three questions which you need to answer:

- **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**
- **How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?**
- **What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?**

Understanding the entry requirements of a degree is essential for you to assess your suitability for the course. You should also read the course description on the UCR website and note the key features.

If you are applying for multiple courses, try to find common features underpinning each of the courses you are interested in.

Then, take some time to think about the key things you want us to know about you and get them down on paper.

Writing your personal statement

When planning your personal statement, it could be helpful to think about answers to these questions:

- **Why have you chosen this course?**
- **What excites you about the subject?**
- **Is your previous or current study relevant to the course?**
- **Have you got any work experience that might help you?**
- **What life experiences have you had that may help you with your studies?**
- **What achievements are you proud of?**
- **What skills do you have that makes you perfect for the course?**
- **What plans and ambitions do you have for your future career?**

Remember...

Do not copy a personal statement from someone else, or use AI to write it for you, as if this is detected action could be taken and you may not be offered a place on your course.

Your personal statement should show your enthusiasm for the subject you are applying for, as well as your knowledge, understanding and ambitions of what you want to achieve in the future.

You can use the 4,000 character count limit across all answers in any way you choose, and the amount you write for each question can vary depending on your chosen course or experience.

The three sections will be reviewed as one by universities and colleges, so make sure you don't repeat information across your answers.



Write about your reasons for applying – why do you want to study this course?

Here you can showcase your passion and knowledge for the subject you are applying for, showing why the course is a good fit for your future ambitions.

You could think about whether you have been inspired by a key role model or moment in your life, or maybe you have taken inspiration from current events you see in the news, and link this to why you are interested in the subject. You should also mention what your future plans are and how studying this course will help you get there.

Write about your current or previous studies – how have your qualifications helped you to prepare?

Where your previous or current studies are relevant to the degree you wish to study, share examples of how it will help you on the course.

Talk about all your education that is recent and relevant to the course you have chosen. You could mention particular modules you have studied, that helped you discover where your interests and strengths lie.

Where your studies are not directly relevant, talk about the skills and knowledge you have which will help you through your degree, such as your communication and study skills.

Write about your personal skills and achievements – what have you done to prepare outside of education?

In your personal statement, you'll need to write about your personal achievements and skills you have developed in your life.

Here you can talk about activities you have undertaken outside of your education which demonstrate suitability for the course, and can include work experience, employment, volunteering, personal life experiences, hobbies and outreach activities.

You could also link this to any transferable skills you have developed as a result, for example managing your college studies around part-time weekend work would be a great way of demonstrating good time management.

Universities want to know the skills you have to create a unique picture of who you are and why you will be a successful student studying your chosen degree.



What we look for in Wildlife Conservation and Ecology and Environmental Conservation degree applications

A background in science is essential for the Bachelor degree and very beneficial for the Foundation degree, as well as:

- **Relevant experience, through either voluntary work or paid employment**
- **A passion for your subject and a willingness to learn, as well as the ability to manage your time and study independently**
- **Knowledge of the latest developments in the world of conservation and wildlife management**

We welcome applications from mature students or those from different careers. If this applies to you, tell us what you have done and why you want to re-focus your studies.

Conservation science is a multidisciplinary subject meaning the degree will develop not only your knowledge and skills in environmental or wildlife management, but it will also develop your understanding of communication methods, animal and plant ecology and biology, research and analysis skills, to name a few.

Consider what have you done already, why do you want to do this course, and share your enthusiasm with us!



What we look for in Canine Behaviour and Training degree applications

- **A keen interest in working with canines**
- **A clear passion for working in this rewarding sector**
- **Some experience in handling canines is encouraged, either in a kennel environment, dog sitting service or dog training role**

If you don't have prior experience, then undertaking some suitable experience is strongly recommended. Please contact UCR admissions if you have questions regarding the type and length of experience that is suitable.

Consider what have you studied previously and how this relates to the Canine Behaviour and Training programme or more broadly any biological sciences. If your previous studies are not directly relatable then think about the transferable knowledge and skills which could be applied to your degree studies.

Consider answering the following questions:

- **Do you have an awareness of the Animal Behaviour and Training Council or other relevant professional bodies?**
- **Have you attended Crufts or other renowned shows or exhibitions?**

Most importantly remember that the personal statement needs to reflect you as an individual.





What we look for in Animal Management, Zoo Management and Applied Zoology degree applications

If you are unsure whether you have enough UCAS points or if you do not have a good science background, your personal statement becomes all the more important.

Tell us about the experience you have working with animals, whether it is paid or voluntary. Make sure you are clear and precise about the type of work you have done and for how long. If your academic studies do not show a clear commitment to Animal Science, it is important that your statement does.

If you are lacking in an animal science background, there are a number of additional features which you can include in your personal statement. Have you completed any recognised online biological science courses or engaged in any animal science events which may be relevant?

If you fall short of the required UCAS points, consider how you can demonstrate a strong work ethic and a desire to improve. What other achievements do you have which have required commitment and determination? Preferably these would involve work with animals, but other achievements can also be important.



What we look for in Sustainable Agriculture degree applications

- Prior experience in agriculture is not essential, however if you can gain some experience prior to starting, it will help.
- **Where you do have experience, be sure to include this in your personal statement and be specific in the detail in what you have done and how it will help you in your future studies.**

If you don't have any relevant experience, show that you are dedicated, have an outstanding work ethic and are eager to succeed. You will have done things in your career to date, either at school, college, sixth form or even in employment which you can use to highlight these qualities. Similarly, you may be able to use some of these experiences to show some transferable knowledge.

Agriculture is a multidisciplinary subject meaning the degree will develop not only your knowledge and skills in production agriculture, but it will also develop your understanding of business management, animal and plant biology, and research investigations, to name a few.

Think to yourself, what have I done already that could help me with this?





What we look for in Landscape Architecture degree applications

- **A passion for the natural and built environment**
- **What inspires and excites you about this rewarding and vibrant sector**
- **Experience working in the sector is not essential and many of our previous students have come from a variety of different backgrounds, but let us know if you do have relevant work experience**
- **We recommend that you draw upon past experiences and consider transferable skills which can be applied to the study of landscape architecture**

The programme is focused on the landscape management and landscape planning areas of practice as defined by the Landscape Institute.

Landscape architecture is the study of the impact of urban regeneration on towns and cities and the array of benefits this can bring.

It is the challenge of urban expansion into the open countryside and the achievement of sustainable development. Landscape architecture plays a vital part in managing our existing parks and open spaces so they meet the needs of a changing population.



What we look for in Food Science Technology and Bakery and Pâtisserie degree applications

A background in science or food science is essential for the Bachelor's degree and highly beneficial for the Foundation degree.

- **Gaining relevant experience prior to starting your degree will enable your success on the course, either through voluntary work or paid employment.**
- **You must be keen to learn, able to manage your time and be prepared to study independently.**

We welcome applications from mature students or those from different careers. If this applies to you, tell us what you have done and why you want to re-focus your studies.

Food science is a multidisciplinary subject meaning the degree will develop not only your knowledge and skills in food science, but it will also develop your understanding of product development, research and analysis skills.

Bakery and Patisserie is a HE course with an emphasis on both practical and theoretical development behind food and new product design. Consider what have you done already and why you want to do this course.

Please share your enthusiasm with us!





What we look for in Veterinary Nursing degree applications

In your personal statement you should identify the roles of a veterinary nurse and understand the requirements and duties of this role.

- **Tell us what drives you to want to be a veterinary nurse.**
- **Do you have a specific interest, would you like to specialise in a particular area or have you any plans to engage in postgraduate courses?**

To secure an interview with us you **MUST** complete at least 2 weeks work experience in a veterinary practice shadowing a veterinary nurse, so you gain a better understanding of the role and appreciate what a day in the life of a veterinary nurse looks like.

Please ensure you gain references from practices to support your application. It is beneficial to complete work experience in any animal related occupation, this can be a kennels, cattery, physiotherapy, groomers or pet shops, as all of these will allow you to gain basic animal handling and husbandry across a range of species.

A guaranteed placement to support your application/qualification is not necessarily required because we have a practice liaison team who are willing to support this. However, if you have a practice you are working with then we are happy to support this.

If you wish to gain further support or help with whether you meet the entry requirements, then one of the team will be happy to help.



What we look for in Equine Science degree applications

- **A passion for horses is a must as well as lots of practical experience, particularly within the area of Equine you are most interested in.**
- **It is important for you to tell us where you think this degree will take you, for example what career field are you targeting, is the degree part of the bigger strategic plan for getting to your desired career?**

Our equine degrees cover lots of areas and part of your degree will require you to undertake additional work placements to consolidate your learning and to further develop your practical skills whilst on the degree programme.

Transferable skills are incorporated within the delivery of the modules and would further enhance your CV upon graduation from the course.

To be successful in higher education, you must be keen to learn, able to manage your time effectively to ensure that you can meet the assessment deadlines, and to study independently.



How to end your personal statement

The end of your personal statement should:

- Connect the beginning of your statement to the end
- Reinforce what you said at the start
- Finish in a way that will make the admissions team remember you and your application
- Emphasise the great points you've already made and answer the question of why you should be offered a place on the course

Once you've written your personal statement, you'll need to do a couple of final things before you submit it:

- Ask family, friends or your careers advisor to have a read through your personal statement and ask them to provide feedback
- Check your writing and spelling; don't just rely on spellcheckers
- Another great way to spot mistakes is to read it out aloud

Final tips to writing your personal statement

- Avoid cliches such as "thinking outside of the box"
- Keep it relevant and simple. You're limited on how much you can include so why use 20 words when 10 can make your point?
- Don't be tempted to copy. UCAS scans all personal statements with the Copyscape system, to compare them with previous statements. Any similarity greater than 30% will be flagged and action could be taken

More advice

If you would like some additional help, there is a personal statement builder available on the UCAS hub, which you can use alongside this guide to help you structure your ideas.

You can access this here:



Personal statement

What to do and what to avoid

Do



Sell yourself



Be enthusiastic




Be relevant



Be clear



Be positive



Get feedback



Don't



Be modest




Exaggerate




Quote others



Leave it late



Copy and paste



Worry



Writing your personal statement

ucreaseheath.ac.uk