

HEO's 2025 Guide to **WRITING YOUR UK PERSONAL STATEMENT**

This guide includes

- Key Application Information
- Important information for those with NS
- What makes a good personal statement
- Final tips and reminders

**HAPPY
READING! :)**

KEY APPLICATION INFORMATION

Essential to-dos and deadlines



The application portal: UCAS

- All students apply via RI as your centre. Refer to our UCAS guide, available in IVY HEO (Y6s) and open web (alumni), from mid-Jul, for how to set up your account.
- Do **not** create accounts prior.
- Students applying for UCAT/LNAT: you can register for these without a UCAS account first, and go back to your UCAT/LNAT account in Jul, to put in your UCAS ID. This is fine.



The deadlines to adhere to

- Oct deadline (Oxbridge/Med/related): **Sunday, 5th Oct 2025, 2359h.**
- Jan deadline (non-Oxbridge/Med): **Sunday, 4th Jan 2026, 2359h.**

Headsup: the deadlines are especially tight this cycle. We seek your **strict adherence to the above please**. This is as a UCAS app is only complete after both student & teacher are done, and your teachers can only do their parts *after* you have submitted. Please help us help all of you. **HEO is unable to guarantee that any app put in after the internal deadlines can reach your universities in time.**



Additional tests

- All students register for tests independently.
- LNAT for law, UCAT for Medicine. Oxford-specific tests can be registered for via Pearson Vue. There are also other tests, such as TMUA, ESAT (for maths/econs or engineering/sci majors), etc.
- Refer **carefully** to your specific major/universities for the relevant tests to take.
- Ensure you register **on time** for these tests. Be as early as possible!
- **Important for Y6s:** your test date may clash with the A-Level Science Practicals. Counsel: as far as possible, take your test on a different date if an option is available. Should it be the case that it is unavoidable, please email us **early** at colletheadmissions, so that we can see what can be done to help you, if possible.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE WITH NS



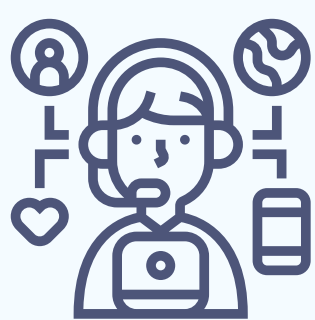
Indication of deferral for National Service

- State explicitly in UCAS when, exactly, you can enrol (Fall 2027 or Fall 2028?)
- Refer to our UCAS guide (mid-Jul) for how to do this.
- Be cautious in checking your app prior to submission, that this indication is done rightly.



Majors & universities that do NOT grant 2 year deferrals

- **Medicine:** invariably no deferral, max one year. Check carefully on each university's website, on your year of application, as things do change annually.
- **Mathematics:** invariably does not grant 2 year deferrals. Check directly with each university.
- **LSE:** All majors do **not** grant 2 year deferrals.
- This means that all Y6s interested in these majors/university should **not** be putting in apps this year.



I have NS and am interested in these majors/university. What should I be doing then? OR: I have NS and I'm not fully prepared to put in apps this year.

- Avoid FOMOing and putting in needless apps.
- Focus on completing your A-Levels well. Should you have the bandwidth, explore **academically** beyond the H2 syllabus, in your areas of interest.
- With NS, you are in **no rush** to apply. Hence, take the time to discover which majors you really want, and strengthen your academic mastery of the relevant subjects, in this and the next year.
- Applying in NS with firm results in hand can be helpful as it clears up the picture on where your strengths and interests lie. You can also take the time to prepare for the necessary tests. You do **not** need to take additional tests this year hence -the results are only valid for the year of application.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PERSONAL STATEMENT

TL:DR

The UCAS statement is **academically-focused**. Your aim is to demonstrate **interest and ability** to pursue your desired major.

Interest is shown via the **range of activities and experiences** you have taken part in, **related** to your desired major. This can be from Sec 3 to now. The more recent the better.

Ability comes through in the **academic analysis** of your activities and experiences, and in the **real-world awareness** you demonstrate of the subject/field of work.



YOUR FOCAL POINT: SUPERCURRICULUM

This refers to any activity of learning done, beyond the H2s. They may be formal or informal. E.g.:

- Further, independent learning: readings, podcasts, journals, etc.
- Seminars, workshops, sessions, online courses.
- Academic competitions, subject presentations, symposiums, etc.

In all that you may raise, what is critical is the **analysis of the specific academic concepts mentioned**. Avoid laundry-listing.

INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJORS

If you are writing for an interdisciplinary major (e.g., Politics, Philosophy and Economics; Economics and Management; Computer Science and Mathematics): your focus should be on **why and how** the disciplines intersect, and on elucidating the relationship between the disciplines. How does A underpin B, for instance, or how does A impact B, and vice versa?



THREE PARTS TO THE NEW UCAS STATEMENT

Refer to:

[UCAS official guide to the personal statement 2026](#)



The new UCAS statement has **three** questions. The character count (4,000) is unchanged. Each question has a minimum count of 350 characters.

The three questions are:

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

HEO'S ADVICE

Q2 should be the main focus of your statement. Use the most of your character count for this section (i.e., up to 3,300 characters), as this is where you have the opportunity to demonstrate your **academic interest and ability**, thereby demonstrating fit for the major of interest.

Q1 and Q3 should be dealt with succinctly. View Q1 as a means of launching into Q2, and Q3 an opportunity to elaborate on any relevant experience or transferable skill, that does not fit neatly into Q2. Try not to exceed 800 characters overall for Q1 & Q3.



UCAS STATEMENT: Q1 AND Q3



1) WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

Consider using this prompt as a means to segue neatly into Q2, by demonstrating your interest, passion and/or understanding of the major. You can also include a brief explanation of your motivations for pursuing your desired course. **Keep this succinct, and avoid generalisations.**

For instance:

- What do you understand about the discipline? If you had to encapsulate it succinctly in 1-2 lines? E.g., *Economics is....?*
- What sparked your interest in this field, and what made you more interested in it? Any specific event/experience/book etc?
- Your motivation for pursuing this major?
- If your course is interdisciplinary, it's possible to highlight succinctly in 1-2 lines what the relationship between the disciplines are, to you, or your understanding of why and how they intersect.

3) WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION, AND WHY ARE THESE EXPERIENCES USEFUL?

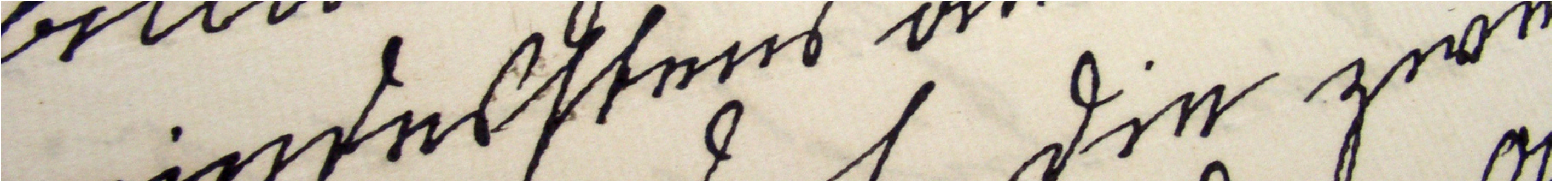
This question can be used to demonstrate your **suitability for the major**, beyond the academic and related skills you will talk about in Q2.

For instance:

- What are some **relevant** transferable skills you've gained from non-academic activities (which you did not raise in Q2: **avoid repetition**)
- What qualities of yourself did you develop that are essential to the course?
- **Contextualise** your skills and qualities to your chosen course.



UCAS STATEMENT: Q2



2) HOW HAVE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND STUDIES HELPED YOU TO PREPARE FOR THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

The bulk of your character count is focused on this (up to 3,300 characters).

To do:

- Demonstrate your **understanding of, and aptitude** to study your chosen course.
- Consider: from Sec 3 to now, what are the activities and experiences you have participated in, that are **relevant** to your desired major?
- In general, 3-5 activities are sufficient--avoid spamming or overgeneralisation.
- From the activities you've chosen: it is a three-step process of analysis. For each activity/experience:

a) Highlight a **specific academic concept/theory/model learnt**. Alternatively, a key tension/issue that can be discussed.

b) **Analyse this**. E.g., what is so important about the concept raised? How does it affect the field, or real-world impact? Or: Does it expose some key tension or limitation in conventional theory or perhaps is limited/instrumental in real world application? Why so?

c) **Pull out into a further insight, if possible**. E.g., after your analysis: Is the concept applicable in one scenario but not another? Why? Or: Any further implications thus on the field? Or broader insight you have gained into the discipline as a whole, or in particular niche areas?

HEO'S COUNSEL:

Don't be afraid to go deep into academic analysis and explication. The sharper and clearer, the better. Please balance this however. Write to the level you are capable of explaining in an interview.

Given how academically specific the statement is, it is wise go for majors with commonality. E.g., it is fine to have 5 choices that sound like two PPE courses, two Econs courses, and a final course of Politics & Economics. Your statement then focuses on Economics, weaving in threads of Politics and Philosophy where relevant. Avoid however, choosing majors that sound like Economics; Business. Likewise, selecting Law and Political Science will not work. The statement will lack academic specificity for both majors.

FINAL TIPS & REMINDERS



ON USE OF AI AND GENERATIVE SOFTWARE

- Read UCAS' official stance on use of [AI software such as ChatGPT here](#)
- As well, [their statement on fraud](#)

Be aware that UCAS uses a fraud detection system, Copycatch. Your universities will be notified if similarities are detected. Also be aware that some universities consider the use of AI to generate parts/all of a statement as cheating, which constitutes fraud.

HEO's counsel: In line with what UCAS says: avoid putting in all or even parts of your statement into any open-source model. What you feed becomes fodder for the machine. AI may be useful if you need to brainstorm some ideas, or a line, or if you need help in making your writing more succinct. Be careful however to **fact-check everything. Above all: Only you write your own statement. What you write becomes your responsibility.**



Time management

The deadlines for submission are:

- **Oxbridge/Med/related: Sunday, 5th Oct 2025, 2359h.**
- **Non-Oxbridge/Med: Sunday, 4th Jan 2026, 2359h.**
- Starting early on decision-making and statement-writing will help keep you on track.
- For Y6s: be aware that all offers are **conditional** based on actual A-Levels. Thus, consider well what you can take on. It is **not necessary** to apply to Oxbridge/overseas Medicine, if you find the A-Levels heavy-going as things stand. Do things healthfully.

All the best!