

Applying to Competitive Courses



Let's start by standing up...

University



Competitive courses



Applications and Offers

In 2022 UCAS received around **610,000 applications** by the January deadline for around **560,000 places** each year

Universities make more offers than there are places available because not everyone will accept an offer and not everyone will get the grades required

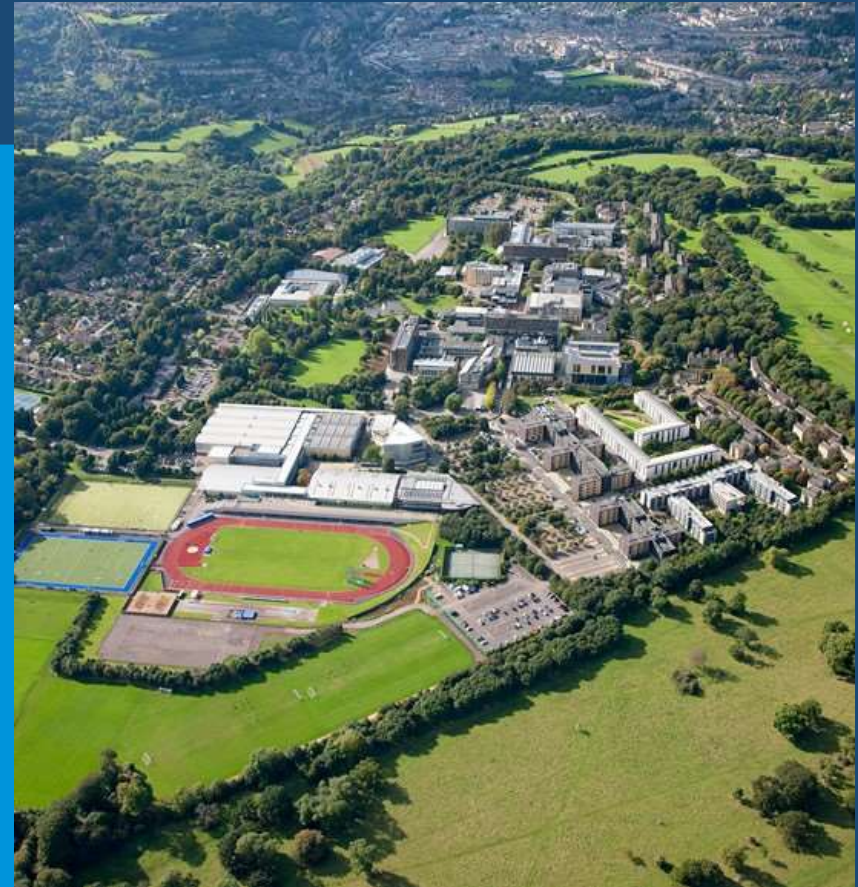


Applications and Offers

At Bath for 2022 entry we had c. 4,000 places:

- received c. **31,000 applications** (8 applications per place)
- made c. **18,000 offers** (4.2 per place)

These figures vary significantly between courses and institutions



Features of competitive course

High entry requirements

High volume of applications

High standard of applications

Graduate Prospects

Rankings and reputation



Applying to a competitive University

Research

**High entry
requirements**

**Effective personal
statement**

**Strong Academic
performance**



A photograph of students in a library or computer lab. In the foreground, a young woman with long dark hair is sitting at a desk, looking towards the right while typing on a laptop. In the background, another student is visible, also working on a laptop. The scene is dimly lit, with a blueish tint. A large orange rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "Your research".

Your research



Bath or Barbados?





How to research

Make a long list

- Use virtual open days or online resources
- Consider locations
- Course pages
- UCAS course finder
- Unifrog

Then shortlist

- Understand what's important to you
- Visit in person open days
- Speak to current students
- Understand course content



Academic factors/considerations

Course content

Methods of
assessment

Teaching style

Size of cohort

Entry
requirements

Course rankings



Non academic factors/considerations

Accommodation

Facilities

Placements

Student satisfaction

Location

Clubs/sports



Real or no real courses

Chemistry with
Management



Real – University of
Bath

Viking and Old Norse
Studies



Real – University
College London

Applied Golf
Management Studies



Real – University of
Birmingham

Maths and French



Real – 17 unis including
Lancaster

Tennis Coaching &
Management



No Real – but you can
combine Rugby and
Cricket with coaching

Baking Science &
Technology



Real – London South
Bank



Applying



What are university offers based on?

Prior academic performance

Predicted academic performance

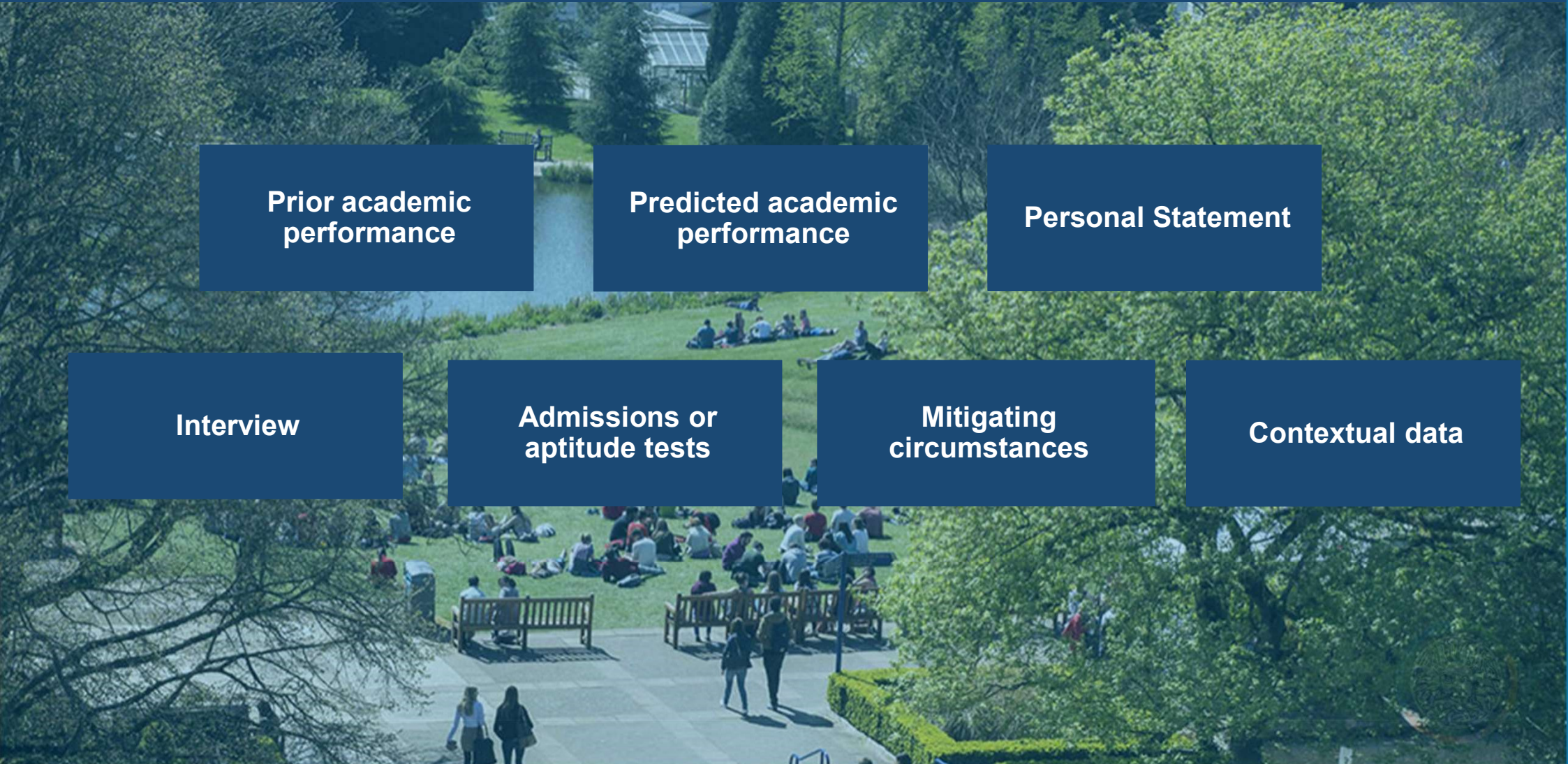
Personal Statement

Interview

Admissions or aptitude tests

Mitigating circumstances

Contextual data



Personal Statements



A personal statement is a maximum of **4000** characters, or around **47** lines

Only place to focus on relevant skills, achievements and work experience

Personal Statements

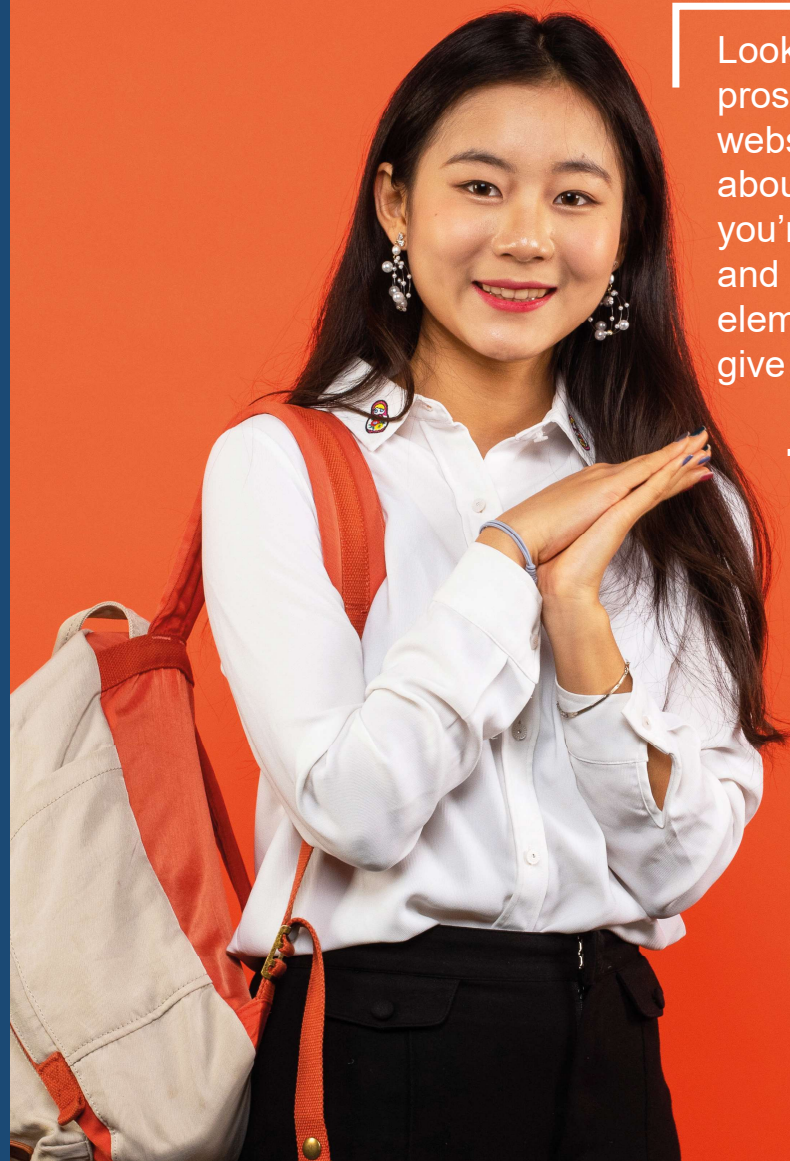
Sent to all of your choices - may be read by 2 or more university staff at each university

Could be the difference between a 'yes' and a 'no' or used in a 'near miss' situation



Statement Preparation

- 80% academic 20% extra-curricular
- Research
- Evidence is key
- Spelling and grammar accuracy
- Be clear with your language
- It will take multiple attempts to write
- Don't overuse quotes



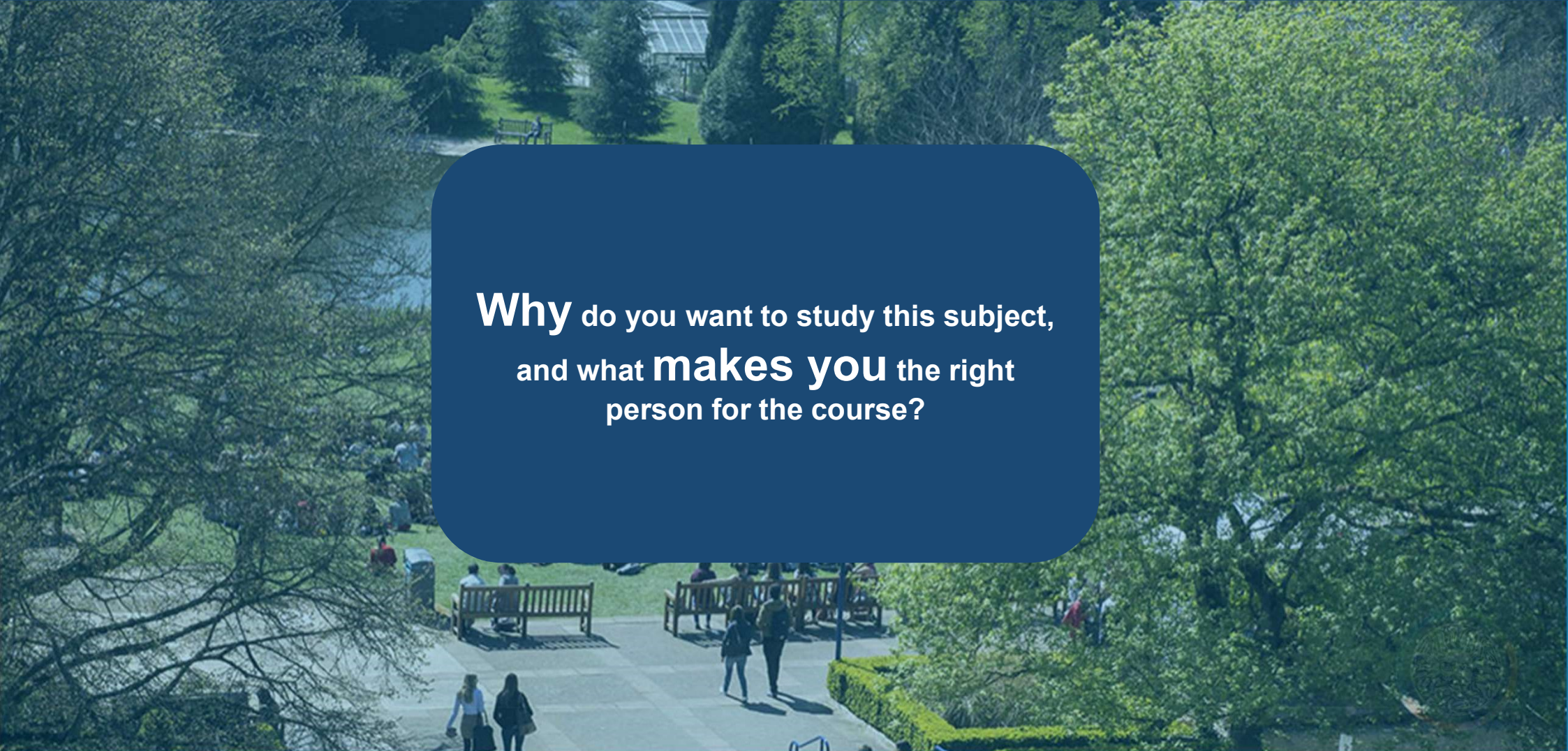
Look at university prospectuses and websites to find out about the courses you're applying for and pick out the key elements you need to give evidence for.

	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE	EXPERIENCE
CHOICE 1			
CHOICE 2			
CHOICE 3			
CHOICE 4			
CHOICE 5			



Imagine you are being interviewed...

Why do you want to study this subject,
and what **makes you** the right
person for the course?



Wider Reading



New Scientist

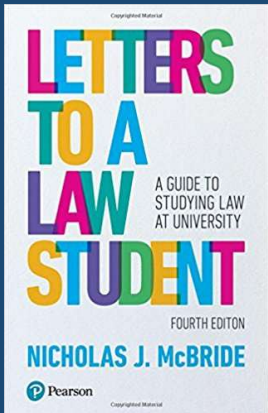
Very Short Introductions



THE NEW YORKER



The Economist



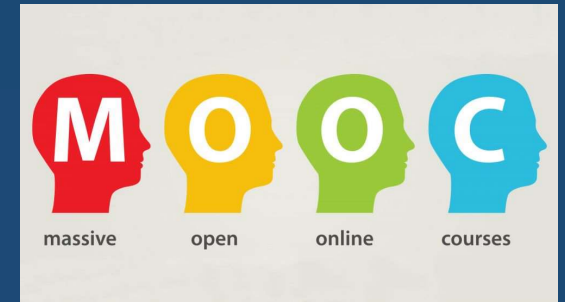
Psychology Today



History Today



Online Resources



Personal Statement Structure

1. Opening – why you are applying



2. Evidence that you are right for the course



3. Concluding Statements



Remember ABC

A = Activity/Achievement/Assessment



B = Benefit



C = Course



Remember your ABCs!



Activity

My school values the importance of a whole school president and I campaigned relentlessly to be part of this administration. It taught me that a clear manifesto and campaign is so fundamental to being successful.

Benefit

It taught me that a clear manifesto and campaign is so fundamental to being successful. I did not win, however I work closely with the successful candidate and it has taught me how challenging it is to lead and create an ethos where all students work happily together.

Course

This, however, only strengthened my love, ambition and drive to read deeply into the subject of politics. University is clearly the next logical step where I can debate all aspects of this discipline with people who share my enthusiasm.



Personal Statement Tips

DON'T - repeat information

DON'T - just list achievements & skills

DON'T – begin every sentence with 'I'

DON'T - be tempted to plagiarise

DO – Research your choices

DO – draft then re-draft until you are completely happy with it

DO - read it out loud to family & friends

DO – Think carefully about spelling, grammar and vocabulary

DO – Read around the subject



A photograph of a university campus with a blue text overlay. The background shows a paved path lined with trees, with a person walking away on the left and a woman walking towards the right. The text is centered in the blue overlay.

Other requirements for competitive courses



Interviews

Not all universities interview prospective applicants. A small number, such as Oxford and Cambridge, interview for all courses. Most medical schools will interview.

At most other universities, interviews may only take place for the **most competitive courses**, for vocational courses, or for specific groups of applicants (such as those with non-traditional qualifications).

Shortlisting takes place before interviews, so **an interview can never be guaranteed.**



Admissions or Aptitude Tests

Used **only by some universities** for some subject areas

Check the website or prospectus of the universities you're interested in

National admissions tests include the UKCAT or BMAT for Medicine, or the LNAT for Law

Some institutions run their own admissions tests

A test of **skills and potential**, not of prior knowledge or memory



Applying to multiple courses

Consider carefully whether to apply to multiple courses at the same institution

Check carefully with the university before applying for variations of the same course with the same entry requirements (e.g. Chemistry and Chemistry with Management)

You may wish to consider applying for related but different courses, e.g.

- Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering
- Business and Management



Strengthening your application

Additional qualification

4th A Level
Additional AS

Project Qualification

EPQ or IPQ
Skills Challenge
Certificate

Extra Maths study

Further Maths
STEP/MAT/TMUA

Relevant work experience



Final tips

**Research,
research,
research**

Ask questions

Evidence





Thanks for listening!

#BelongatBath



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