

DEGREE COURSE APPLICATION GUIDES:

HUMANITIES

English
Geography
History
Law
Psychology
Interview Guide
Personal Statement Guide

Degree Course Applications – Humanities

A step-by-step guide 16-19

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Published 2016

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Published by Senior Press

ISBN 9781905371426

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data. A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

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Degree Course Applications

A step-by-step guide 16-19



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APPLYING FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject pointers

Competition English is one of the most competitive and popular university subjects with around 6 applicants for each place. You will need to achieve At least AAA or AAB or equivalent in most cases although you will find some lower offers. A*AA will be asked for at some of the top universities such as Cambridge.

Types of Course Be careful when doing a course search because there are three 'English' A levels: English Literature, English Language and Literature, and English Language.

Career Prospects It is a myth that English Literature graduates do not get jobs. English graduates find careers in a wide range of fields like publishing, teaching, advertising, human resources or management in various public and private organizations. There are also lots of opportunities for further study and academic work. If you want some re-assurance on this and to find out about the range of occupations English Literature graduates go into in a typical year go to this link:

http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/WDGD_Sept_2013.pdf

What is an English Degree Like? Go to the link to find out what studying English at university is like

<http://www.whystudyenglish.ac.uk/you-will/index.htm>

Video Profiles Go to this link to see video profiles of graduates with English talking about their jobs:

<http://www.whystudyenglish.ac.uk/you-can/english-entrepreneurs.htm>

First Rate Advice on applying for English can be found on the English Faculty website:

<http://www.theenglishfaculty.org/>

HE Course profile:

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/english-language-and-literature>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The Russell Group (most of the leading universities) advice on A level choices for English Literature is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: English Literature or combined English Language & Literature

(some courses will accept English Language).

USEFUL: History, Religious Studies, a foreign language.

Read Someone who is going to be a strong applicant for English Literature is someone who genuinely enjoys reading and does so because they want to not because they have to. Start broadening the scope of the literature you read, explore new authors and more books by authors you have already read.

Early in Year 12



What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Begin to Gather Key Information

Visit www.ucas.com and begin to gather information about the sort of grades you will need to get to go to particular universities that attract you.

WhyStudyEnglish website. Start using this first rate website to find out about such things as choosing a university, entrance requirements, what you study and the job skills you will acquire

<http://www.whystudyenglish.ac.uk/index.htm>

Early in Year 12:



‘Work’ Experience Experience of actual jobs is probably not always directly relevant to English although a placement in a theatre or a publisher or at a local arts centre could be very useful. However, you can go to theatres, poetry reading and literature festivals to broaden your understanding of literature:

- If you have a local theatre that puts on serious plays rather than West End Musicals go

regularly eg Bristol Old Vic, Birmingham Rep, Liverpool Everyman

- Go to the National Theatre, Royal Court, Almeida, Tricycle or Old Vic theatres in London
- Go to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford
- Go to literature festivals. There are now literature festivals all over the country with the biggest ones at Cheltenham, Bath, Hay, Edinburgh and London. They are an excellent way to listen to contemporary authors talking about their work. Find a literature festival near to you on the Literature Festival calendar at:

<http://www.literaryfestivals.co.uk/>

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means its harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar

as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some medical schools, Warwick for example, also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12: The Personal Statement

Start Early Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement early in Year 13 that you have something relevant and interesting to write about by this time in your

A level career. See enrichment activities below. At least 75% of your statement should be about English related issues

Check the course requirements and selection criteria: This will give you a good idea of what is being looked for

Check the course details: many students do not do this and make false assumptions about what they will study on the courses they have chosen

Review your reading:

Southampton University have some very good advice on this:

‘What books or writers have you found particularly interesting or significant, and why? What have you read outside the syllabus (or following up other works by authors on the syllabus), and why? Does your reading include poetry as well as prose? Have you explored pre-20th century writers? Selectors like to see evidence of wider reading, and an account of your interests on the UCAS form may help to guide the discussion if you are interviewed (this is also a good reason not to claim knowledge you don't have!). Don't just say: ‘I have a passion for literature’ (this is a terrible cliché which makes us suspect your sincerity as well as your ability to write and think precisely and with supporting evidence). Specific description of your interests is more convincing.’

Analytical Reader Provide evidence in the comments you make about books you have read that demonstrates you are an analytical reader and not just someone who enjoys reading.

Excellent Advice There is further excellent personal statement advice from Southampton University as well as an amusing example of how not to write your statement at this link:

http://www.southampton.ac.uk/english/undergraduate/ucas_application.page

The Why Study English site also has advice on the personal statement:

<http://www.whystudyenglish.ac.uk/you-are/personal-statements.htm>

About You The English Department at Royal Holloway College, University of London say this: ‘Many personal statements become (under the strain of the occasion) solemn mini-essays about the importance and validity of the study of literature, with testimonials to various authors and attempted epitomes of what they teach their readers. As a department of English Literature, we do not need to be persuaded of these things, but want the main part of the personal statement to be about you: your tastes in reading, your cultural activities, your aspirations, and some of your relevant personal experiences.’

Avoid Clichés Don’t begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original.

Do Not List It is better to write about fewer things but in more depth

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of English, a particular text or author maybe that has grabbed your interest. Make sure you have something to say about it if asked at interview.

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Personal Statement Advice You will find some sound personal statement advice for English at this link:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-english-students>

Personal Statement Examples The Student Room website has useful advice on and examples of personal statements for English:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/personal_statement:english_literature_1

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests

Oxford Selection Test If you are applying to for English or any joint degree that includes English at Oxford you will need to sit the ELAT selection test in November of Year 13. This will contribute to the decision about whether to offer you an interview at this university

Use the link below to begin to look at sample tests, practice them and to get feedback from your English teachers before you actually sit the test.

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/subject-specific/elat/about-elat/>

Test Support Oxford Applications offer courses for those taking the ELAT:

<http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/our-support/admissions-test-support/elat/>

One the above website there is also a free down-loadable book about applying to Oxford.

October in Year 13:



UCAS Oxbridge Deadline If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge for English make sure you have finished your application well before the 15 October deadline for submitting Oxbridge applications so that your advisers can check it and write a reference.

October to March in Year 13: The Interview

Most Do Not Interview Although Oxford and Cambridge will interview for English many universities including some of the top ones like Durham and Nottingham do not. If there are no interviews your Personal Statement becomes even more important because this is all that the university will see of you.

Analyse a Text At many interviews you will be presented with a text, a poem or prose extract and be asked to comment on it. You might then be asked to: Read and date this short, anonymous poem. Who do you think wrote it? Comment on use of imagery used and its effect. Does this poem remind you of anything else that you have read?

Oxford Sample Questions Oxford University have some sample questions with suggested approaches at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/applying_to_oxford/intervIEWS/sample_questions.html#amedicine

Cambridge Interview Questions You will find some examples at this link:

<http://www.cambridgeinterviewquestions.com/questions/arts/english/>

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and beyond



- Go to the theatre to see serious plays
- Watch arts programmes on TV and iPlayer: *Imagine*, *Newsnight Review*, *the South Bank Show*
- Use the Guardian *Book Club* website for a access to interviews, podcasts, and talks on literature.
- Use the *Poetry Archive* website which has recordings of poets past and present reading their work with background material to help understand the context of their work. There are also filmed interviews on the writing lives of poets.
- Look at the websites of contemporary authors such as Ian McEwan, Julian Barnes
- Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you

What should I be reading?

- Read more texts by authors you are studying: novels plays and poetry
- Explore new authors
- *English Literature: A Very Short Introduction* by Jonathan Bate, Oxford University Press
- *Doing English: A Guide for Literature Students* by Robert Eaglestone
- Subscribe to the *English Review* magazine published by Philip Allan Updates and look at the back-numbers if they are in your school library
- Subscribe to *emagazine* which is aimed at A level students and use its website *English and Media Centre*
<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/emag/>
- Read authors from different historical periods
- Read book, theatre and poetry reviews in the 'quality' press and on their websites

Which websites will be useful?

- The *Why Study English* site is a very important website and gives excellent pointers about applying for English degrees and studying English at university: Why Study English Literature? Choosing a University, Entrance requirements, Personal Statements, What's Studying

English Like? What You Study - Literature, What You Study - Language, What Do You Do All Day? A Student's View.

<http://www.whystudyenglish.ac.uk/index.htm>

- The *After English* link on the above website looks at opportunities for English Literature graduates after university.
- The *English Faculty* website provides an excellent library of short films and podcasts of university lecturers talking about literature in a way that is directly relevant to topics you will be studying at A level. All the content is free to stream:

<http://www.theenglishfaculty.org/a-levels>

- Kings College Cambridge has a virtual classroom which gives an insight into how English is studied as well as suggested reading

<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/classroom/index.htm>

- The *Converse* website is a collection of multimedia resources, games and essay to help students of English Literature resulting from a project between Cambridge University and schools across the country:

<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/converse/>

- *Bookseller World* has links to websites of and about authors past and present:

<http://www.booksellerworld.com/author-websites.htm>

- Interviews with and talks by contemporary authors at the Hay Festival archive:

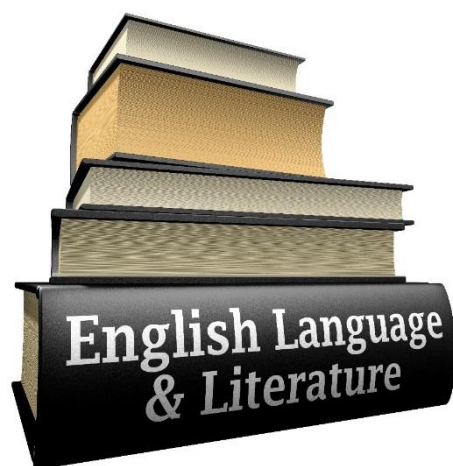
<https://www.hayfestival.com>

- Interviews with and talks by contemporary authors on the Clive James website:

<http://www.clivejames.com/>

- The Cambridge Authors discusses writers who have been to Cambridge over the centuries:

<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors/>



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do

- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

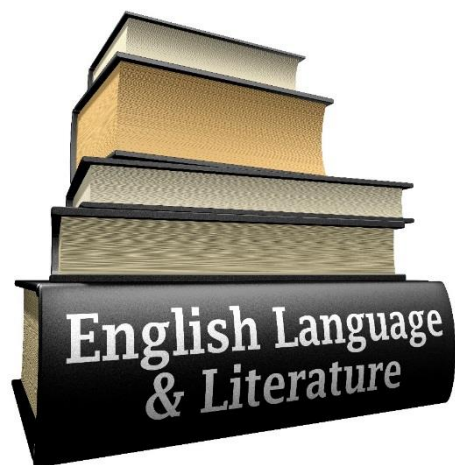
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR GEOGRAPHY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

Why Geography? For a wide range of useful resources which attempt to answer this question go to this link on the Royal Geographical Society website:

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Study+Geography/Study/Why+study+geography.htm>

Types of Degree You can follow BA or BSc degrees in Geography depending on the combination of A levels you have studied. For Physical Geography courses, A level science subjects are preferred. There are many combined courses e.g. Politics, Economics, History, Business, Modern Languages and Geology, Biology, Oceanography, Earth Science

Grades Needed The competition for degrees is high. The best universities will be asking for at least three As at A level, AAA* in the case of Cambridge and Oxford and some other competitive universities. However you will find many courses with lower offers.

Be Careful Although there is a tremendous variety of courses with the title Geography, they may have very different content. It is important to look closely at what you will be studying over the full length of the course before you make your choices. Content of courses will vary with some putting greater emphasis on human, physical, economic or social geography

Good Employment Prospects Although Geography is a non-vocational subject the graduate employment pattern is encouraging. Mathematics graduates have good career prospects in education, finance, government, research IT, insurance. Go to the *What do Graduates Do?* website to find the evidence about this:

http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Wdgd_arts_humanities_2013.pdf

Useful Videos Go to this link to hear students talking about studying Geography at a range of universities:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=geograph+at+university

HE Course Profile:

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/geography>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The advice from the Russell Group (most of the leading universities) for Geography is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: Most degrees require Geography.

USEFUL: Some Geography BSc (science) degrees prefer one from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics.

Look at Informed Choices Look at the document and video 'Informed Choices' on the Russell Group website which has some more very good advice on A level choices:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/188915625/Informed-Choices>

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means it's harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar

as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some universities also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Work Experience Work experience is not as directly relevant for Geography as for some other subjects, but any that is relevant can only help. At the link Aberystwyth University have work experience suggestions for their

undergraduates but which may give some ideas which would help A level students:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/careers/subject-information/geography-earth-sciences/useful-resources/>

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:

The Personal Statement

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you have applied to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement. In most cases you should include the following:

- How your interest in Geography developed?
- What you have done to develop your interest
- Are there any particular areas of Geography that interest you and why.
- What personal qualities do you have that would make you a good student of Geography? Do not simply make claims about yourself but support them with evidence that demonstrates these qualities

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Useful Personal Statement Advice You will find some sound personal statement advice for Geography at this link:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/dec/18/personal-statement-geography>

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests



Applying to Oxford If you are applying to Oxford all candidates must take the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Oxford test in October of Year 13 Test Further information and sample papers can be found at:

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/thinking-skills/tsa-oxford/about-tsa-oxford/>

Test Support Oxford Applications offer courses for those taking the TSA:

<http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/our-support/admissions-test-support/tsa-oxford/>

Applying to Cambridge There is no admissions test at Cambridge for geography.

The Interview

Chances of Being Interviewed You will not always be interviewed for a Geography course. More universities do not interview than do, so the Personal Statement is even more important if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.

Oxford and Cambridge will interview. There are some sample Cambridge Geography question at:

<http://www.cambridgeinterviewquestions.com/questions/arts/geography/>

Sample Oxford questions can be found at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/applying_to_oxford/interviews/sample_questions.html#ageography

Reading and Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



What should I be doing?

- Travel and experience as wide a range of environments, climates, urban and rural settings as you can.
- Take opportunities to do as much fieldwork as you can. There will be opportunities to write about your fieldwork experiences in your personal statement or at interview
- Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you
- Become a student member of the local branch of the Geographical Association or a member of the Royal Geographical Society and use their services and websites: <http://www.geography.org.uk> and www.rgs.org
- Use the 11-19 and University Geography sections of the Royal Geographical Society website for ideas and resources
- Keep up to date with current events relevant to Geography on the BBC especially the Weather and the Science and Nature webpages
- Keep up to date with daily TV and radio news coverage, as well as the BBC's *Horizon*, *Question Time*, *Newsnight* and *Panorama* for issues relevant to Geography. The BBC News website is very useful.

What should I be reading?

- Subscribe to the *Geography Review* magazine published by Philip Allan Updates and look at the back-numbers if they are in you school library
- *National Geographic* magazine www.nationalgeographic.com
- Kings College, London have a very useful reading list on their website at: <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/offerholders/reading-lists/geography.html>
- *Geography: A Very Short Introduction* by John A. Matthews, David T. Herbert
- *Global Catastrophes: A Very Short Introduction* by Bill McGuire
- *Globalization A Very Short Introduction* by Manfred Steger
- *An Introduction to Physical Geography and the Environment* by Joseph Holden
- *Atmosphere, Weather and Climate* by Barry, Chorley and Chase
- *An Introduction to Coastal Processes and Geomorphology* by Masselink and Hughes
- *Study Skills for Geography: A Practical Guide* by Pauline Kneale
- *An Introduction to Human Geography: Issues for the 21st Century* by Peter Daniels, Michael Bradshaw, Denis Shaw and James Sidaway.

Which websites will be useful?

- *The Royal Geographical Society* especially the *Geography in the News* link and the *Geography Today* link:
www.rgs.org

At this link the RGS direct you to a range of articles, resources and videos relevant to geography on other websites:

https://delicious.com/rgs_ibg

- *The Met Office*:
www.metoffice.gov.uk
- *The Ordnance Survey*:
www.ordnance-survey.co.uk
- *The Environment Agency*:
www.environmentagency.co.uk/floods
- Econet:
www.econet.org.uk/weather/floods

- *The Power of Geography* is very good on the applications of Geography in the world of business:

<http://www.thepowerofgeography.co.uk/>

- *People and Planet:*
www.peopleandplanet.org.uk
- *United Nations:*
www.un.org
- *Oxfam:*
www.oxfam.org.uk
- *Internet Geography:*
www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk
- *Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs:* www.defra.gov.uk
- *Food and Agricultural Organisation:*
www.fao.org/
- *GeoResources:*
www.georesources.co.uk



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do

- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

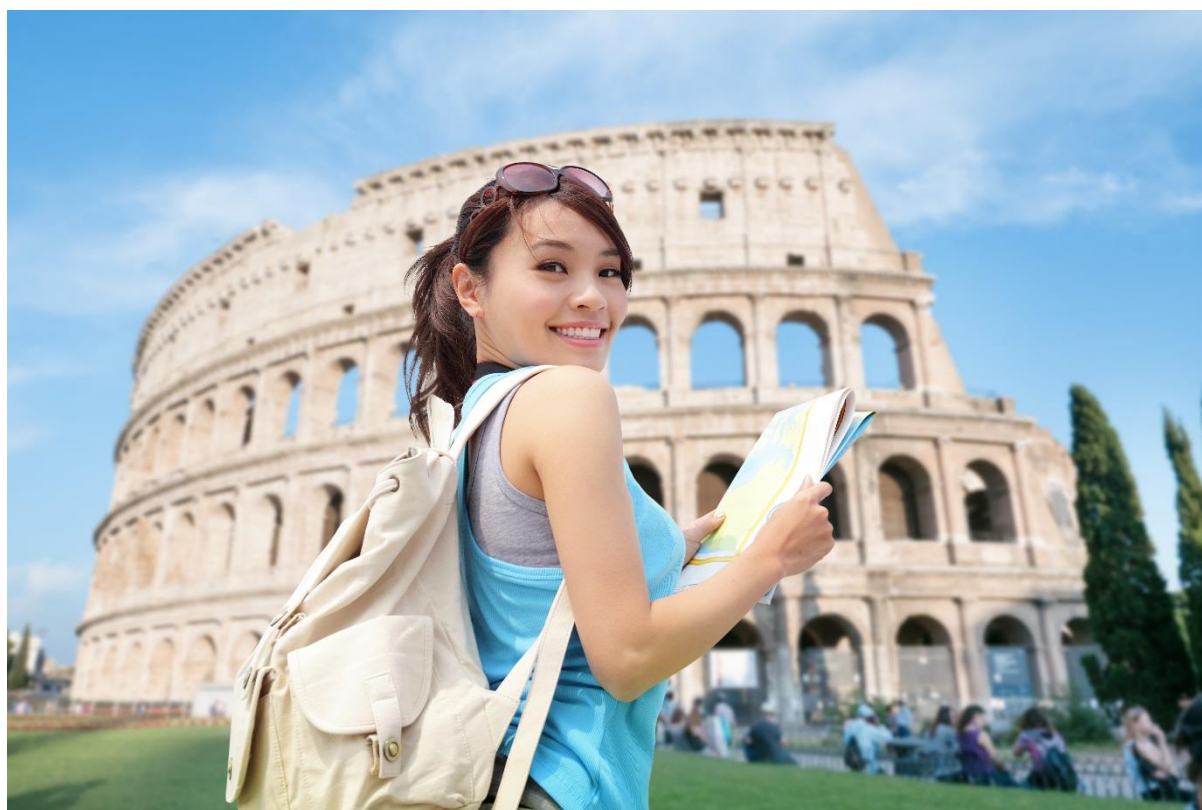
The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR HISTORY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

Grades Needed The competition for degrees is high. The best universities will be asking for at least three As at A level, AAA* in the case of Cambridge and some other competitive universities, but still only AAA at Oxford. However you will find some courses with lower offers.

Be Careful Although there is a tremendous variety of courses covering different historical periods and the history of different countries, courses with the same title may have very different content. It is important to look closely at what you will be studying over the full length of the course before you make your choices.

A Good Training History is a good training for learning how to evaluate evidence to arrive at a considered and well-argued judgements. The skills that people acquire when studying History can be used in all sorts of jobs and are valued by employers.

Good Employment Prospects Although History is a non-vocational subject the graduate employment pattern for historians is encouraging. Go to *the What do Graduates Do?* website to find the evidence about this:

http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Wdgd_arts_humanities_2013.pdf

This link on the Cambridge website also gives a very clear picture of the careers possibilities after a History degree:

<http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/prospective-undergrads/careers>

Further Advice and Pointers There is some good general advice about applying for History degrees on the Student Room website at:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/history_degree

Qualities Needed to be a Good Historian

The ability to gather, organise and use evidence, data and other information

Analytical ability and the ability to solve problems

Good written and oral skills.

The ability to understand how people have lived, acted and thought in the past.

The ability to read and analyse texts and other primary sources, critically and empathetically.

The ability to construct a written or oral argument.

The ability to think critically about evidence, ideas and arguments:

Useful Videos Go to this link to hear students talking about studying History at a range of universities:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=studying+history+at+university&page=2

Oxford University have produced a video about studying history there:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UqjQ3PUQGc

Another video about History at Cambridge can be found at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MsMc8xWW_Y

HE Course Profile

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/history>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The advice from the Russell Group (most of the leading universities) for History is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: Most degrees require History.

USEFUL: Economics, English Literature, Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, Theology/Religious Studies, a modern or

classical language

Look at Informed Choices Look at the document and video 'Informed Choices' on the Russell Group website which has some more very good advice on A level choices:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/188915625/Informed-Choices>

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Visit Start visiting as many sites of historical interest in your area and further afield as you can.

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means its harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar

as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some universities also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Work Experience Work experience is not as directly relevant for History as for some other subjects but placements in museums, at sites of historical interest or experience on archaeological digs is always going to be an advantage and will strengthen your application

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:

The Personal Statement

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you have applied to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement. In most cases you should include the following:

- How your interest in history developed?

- What you have done to develop your interest: reading , work experience, visits to museums sites of historical interests and archeological sites .
- Are there any particular areas of history that interest you and why.
- What personal qualities do you have that would make you a good student of history? Do not simply make claims about yourself but support them with evidence that demonstrates these qualities

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Useful article There is a useful article on History personal statements at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/18/writing-a-personal-statement-for-history>

Personal Statement Advice You will find some sound personal statement advice for History at this link

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/history-personal-statement-advice>

Good Advice From Durham University ‘The department prefers that the largest part of the statement should be given over to historical and reading interests, rather than other extra-curricular activities.

‘We are not looking for you to list every history book that you have read, but rather we are looking for you to explain and reflect upon what you have found worthy of admiration and the kinds of qualities associated with your enjoyment of particular works.

We prefer to hear about books you have read recently, rather than childhood favorites (like the Horrible Histories series). We expect clarity and accuracy in your style and use of English and an ability to write engagingly and with insight.’

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests



Applying to Oxford If you are applying to Oxford all candidates must take the History Aptitude Test (HAT). Further information and sample papers can be found at:

<http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/prospective/undergraduate/applying/the-history-aptitude-test.html>

There is no selection test for Cambridge

Test Support Oxford Applications offer courses for those taking the HAT:

<http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/our-support/admissions-test-support/elat/>

Applying to Cambridge A small number of Cambridge colleges will ask you to do a college test or the Thinking Skills Assessment Test (TSA Cambridge) at the time of interview: Details at this link:

<http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-tests>

Details of the TSA can be found at this link:

<http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/tests/tsa.html>

The Interview

Chances of Being Interviewed You will not always be interviewed for a History course. More universities do not interview than do, so the Personal Statement is even more important if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.

History interviews may well involve your response to a historical document you have been asked to read. So make sure you practise this

Oxford and Cambridge will interview. You will find a video of a mock Cambridge History interview at:

<http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/admissions/videos/interviews/?showvideo=37>

Sample Oxford Questions There are some sample Oxford History question at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/applying_to_oxford/interviews/sample_questions.html

Sample Cambridge Questions There are some sample Cambridge History question at:

<http://www.cambridgeinterviewquestions.com/questions/arts/history/>

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



- Read more texts by authors writing about the periods of history that you are studying – do not rely solely on those textbooks written specifically for the A Level market but aim to read more widely referring to the work of at least one professional historian
- Explore periods of history that are new to you; if you have studied twentieth century history at both GCSE and A Level, widen your historical horizons by reading about ancient Rome or Greece, the Crusades, the Renaissance, Tudor England, the Scramble for Africa.
- Understand that there are different kinds of history: History as the study of ‘great’ individuals, history as ‘progress’, history as a social science, the Annales school, Marxist history, Anti-Marxist history, Feminist history, Post-modernist history

- Read about what history is and how it has changed through time; think about the value of a study in depth in contrast to a broader more thematic study of the past.
- Visit sites of historical importance. You will probably have visited many historical sites already as part of school / family trips. Think about their value as windows into the world of the past; think about what they reveal about the culture, values and social mores of a bygone era.
- Get work experience in a museum
- Go on archaeological digs
- Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you
- Try the online extension activities for AS and A2 students on the Villiers Park Educational Trust website:

<http://www.villierspark-online-extension-activities.org.uk>

What should I be reading?

- The Historical Association website has suggested reading for a range of A level topics:

http://www.history.org.uk/resources/student_resource_3213_94.html

- The Cambridge University website has excellent advice about how to go about wider reading:

<http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/prospective-undergrads/virtual-classroom/suggested-reading>

- *History a Very Short Introduction* by John H Arnold, Oxford University Press
- *In Defence of History* by Richard Evans
- *The Uses and Abuses of History* by Margaret Macmillan
- Subscribe to 20th Century *History Review* magazine published by Philip Allan Updates and look at the back-numbers if they are in you school library
- Read the magazine *History Today*
- Read reviews of new history books in the ‘quality’ press and on their websites

Which websites will be useful?

- The Historical Association has a great deal of useful advice and resources including good material on how to develop historical skills at A level and beyond:

http://www.history.org.uk/resources/student_resources_94.html

This website also has a collection of podcasts:

<http://www.history.org.uk/podcasts/>

- The History Faculty website provides an excellent library of over 70 short films and podcasts of university lecturers talking about historical periods and methods directly relevant to topics you will be studying. All the content is free to stream.

<http://www.thehistoryfaculty.org/>

- The Cambridge University website has a virtual classroom on it which will help you develop your history skills and is well worth looking at:

<http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/prospective-undergrads/virtual-classroom>

- Oxford University *History off the Shelf* website:

<http://hots.history.ox.ac.uk/>

- The Schools History website has a wide range of resources and materials to support History students:

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/>

- The BBC History website and history documentaries on iPlayer

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/0/>

- Channel 4 History website and history programmes on 4oD

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/categories/history>

- The *Reviews in History* website which reviews recent books and other resources which have been published

<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/>

- The websites and web archives of any of the major museums such as the British Museum covering periods of history that interest you



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do
- what it is like

- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

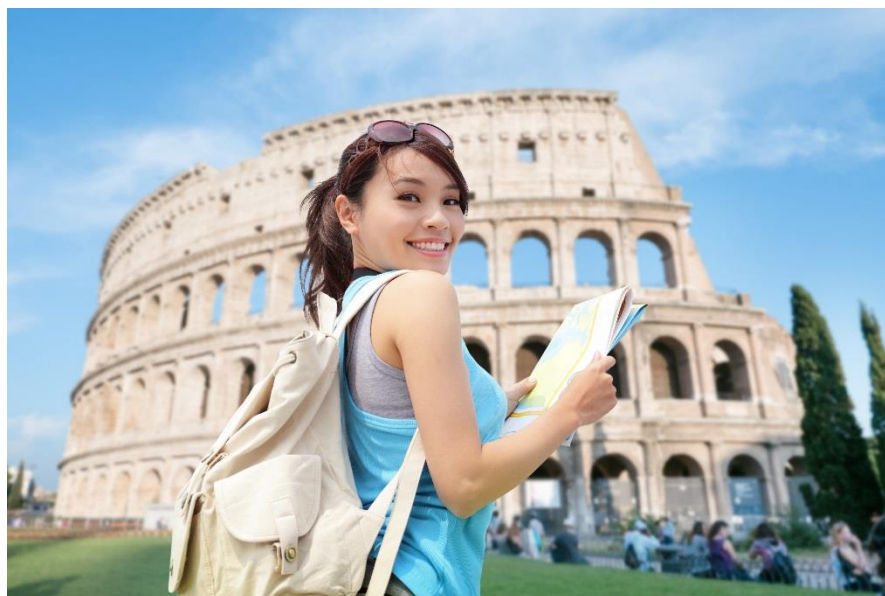
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR LAW DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject Pointers

There are two main routes into Law as a profession:

A Law degree plus law training;

At least a 2.1 in a law degree and then further training and qualifications.

- For barristers, the one-year Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) followed by at least a 12-month pupillage in a barristers' chambers costs in the region of £10,000-15,000.
- Solicitors take the one-year Legal Practice Course (LPC) followed by a two-year training contract, usually with a firm of solicitors, or the legal section of a commercial firm or government department. LPC costs in the region of £5,000-£12,000

A degree in a subject other than Law degree plus lengthier law training

- A degree in subject other than Law can still lead to qualification as a solicitor or barrister by taking the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) before embarking on the LPC/BPTC although this entails an extra year's study and more expense. GDL fees range from £3,500 to £8,000, not including living and other expenses.
- The GDL prepares non-law graduates for a legal career as it covers the foundations of law, contract, tort, criminal law, equity and trusts, EU law, property law and public law.
- Around a third follow this route but 50% of lawyers who have been to Oxbridge

Qualities Needed Make sure you have and are developing the qualities needed for law include the ability to: work intensively, be analytical, be logical, draw fine distinctions, communicate and listen effectively.

Strong Competition The competition for Law degrees is high. The best universities will be asking for at least three As at A level, AAA* in the case of Cambridge and other competitive universities such as UCL and Kings, London, but still only AAA at Oxford. However you will find some courses with lower offers such as three Bs

Useful Videos There is good short video of Graham Virgo, a law professor at Cambridge called *Why Study Law?* which will answer a lot of the questions about Law as a university subject:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvgu918yFcM>

Oxford University have produced a similar video about studying law there

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub_aMJ1dY0c

Useful Website The Get Started link at the doortothelaw website has some good answers to typical questions asked by students considering Law as a degree subject:

<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/getstarted.html>

HE Course profile:

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/law>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The advice from the Russell Group (most of the leading universities) for Law is as follows:

ESSENTIAL: Usually none, although a few universities require English.

USEFUL: History; other facilitating subjects (see 'Informed choices' below) There really are no essential subjects for Law. Maybe one choice should involve an **essay based subject** or report writing. History gives you good relevant skills for Law but is not essential.

The above advice means you do not have to do Law as an A level subject even if you want to do Law at university

Look at Informed Choices Look at the document and video 'Informed Choices' on the Russell Group website which has some more very good advice on A level choices:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/188915625/Informed-Choices>

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Visit the local Crown Or Magistrate's Court and sit in the public gallery to get a feel for how the law operates.

Work Experience Get some work experience with a local solicitor, barrister or a company with a law department

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means its harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar

as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Virtual Open Days Some medical schools, Warwick for example, also have virtual open days on their website. This does not mean you should not go on the actual open day.

Work Experience

- Make some further regular visits to your local Crown or Magistrates Court with an eye to being more analytical about what you see There is a very useful guide to court visiting at the doortothelaw website which will help you to do this:

<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/workexperience/court.html>

- The same site has excellent advice on maximising your chances of getting and making the most of work experience placements with solicitors and barristers:

<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/workexperience.html>

Early June in Year 12 - UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:



The Personal Statement

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you have applied to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement. In most cases you should include the following:

- How your interest in law developed.
- What you have done to develop your interest: reading, court visiting, work experience, mock trials.
- Are there any particular areas of law that interest you and why.
- What personal qualities do you have that would make you a good student of law? Do not simply make claims about yourself but support them with evidence that demonstrates these qualities
- You are applying for Law so make sure that you show that you can make a reasoned, well argued case for yourself supported by evidence and examples. Do not just make claims about yourself.
- **Writing about your Work Experience** It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Useful Websites

Personal Statement Advice You will find some sound personal statement advice for Law at this link:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-law-students>

- **The All About Law** website has some thought provoking advice as well as examples of law personal statements

<http://allaboutlaw.co.uk/stage/law-personal-statement>

- It is also well worth looking at the advice on the doortothelaw website

<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/ucas/personalstatements.html>

- There is a good Guardian article which summarises some of the advice on Law personal statements at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/jul/26/writing-a-personalstatement-for-law>

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests



LNAT Test Around 10 universities, including some of the most competitive such as Oxford will require you to take the LNAT selection test. Different universities will use the results of LNAT in different ways. Check this with the universities to which you are applying.

Students can sit the computer-based test at a time and test centre convenient to them, choosing from **over 500 test centres** in 165 countries around the world. Further information and sample tests can be found on the LNAT website

<http://www.lnat.ac.uk>

Cambridge Law Test Cambridge no longer use LNAT and have their own Law test used by nearly all the colleges and taken when you go for interview around December time in Year 13. Further information and downloadable sample tests at the link below:

http://ba.law.cam.ac.uk/applying/cambridge_law_test/

The Interview

- You will not always be interviewed for a law course. More universities do not interview than do, so the Personal Statement is even more important if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview

borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities. Oxford and Cambridge will interview.

- Law interviews may well involve your response to a document you have been asked to read.

- Go to this link at doortothelaw for some sound law interview advice:

<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/interviews.html>

- You will find a video of a mock Oxford Law interview at:

<http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/admissions.php>

- There is a podcast which discusses the Oxford Law interview at:

<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/oxford-interview-law>

- There are some sample Oxford Law question at:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/applying_to_oxford/interviews/sample_questions.html#alaw

- There is advice from a student about how to prepare for a Cambridge Law interviews at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSNjT-PirNE>



Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



- Visit a Magistrates' and Crown court in your area
- Visit the Supreme Court and Royal Courts of Justice in London
<http://supremecourt.uk/>
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/rcj-rolls-building>
- Do work experience with a solicitor or barrister or in the legal department of a large company or local council
- Find out about the branches of law other than criminal law
- Follow some current trials in the media especially the court report pages of the quality press and think and read about the issues they raise
- Get as much debating experience as you can
- Sign up for free copies of *Young Lawyer* magazine:
<http://www.solicitorsjournal.com>
- Attend one of the Exploring Law student conferences courses at Nottingham University run by The Workshop for students interested in applying for Law at university:
<http://www.workshop-uk.net/>
- If you are not already studying it read some books about Critical Thinking which provide a very useful background for the analytical skills needed for law
- Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you
- Try the online extension activities for AS and A2 students on the Villiers Park Educational Trust website: <http://www.villierspark-online-extension-activities.org.uk>

What should I be reading?

- *Progression to Law*, UCAS Books
- *What About the Law: Studying Law at University* by Barnard, O'Sullivan and Virgo
- *Law: A Very Short Introduction*, by Raymond Wacks, Oxford University Press
- *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*, by Andrew Clapham, Oxford University Press
- *The Rule of Law*, by Tom Bingham
- *The Justice Game*, Geoffrey Robertson and *Just Law*, by Helena Kennedy offer critical views on the British legal system
- *Defending the Guilty*, Alex McBride is a very readable account of the realities of being a barrister
- Subscribe to the *A Level Law Review* magazine published by Philip Allan Updates and look at the back-numbers if they are in your school library
- If you want to go into more depth Oxford University recommend:

How to Study Law by A Bradney et al

Understanding Public Law by C Ganz

Understanding Law J Adams and R Brownsword

Understanding Contract Law by C Clarkson

Understanding Criminal Law by C Clarkson

Modern English Legal System by Smith and Bailey

Which websites will be useful?

- Legal Problems: Professor Graham Virgo & Dr Janet O'Sullivan 2013
This is a 42 minute video on the Cambridge website which is extremely useful
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiYBKGRy4VQ>
- The doortothelaw website is very useful for all phases of the application process
<http://www.doortothelaw.co.uk/home.html>

Explore these websites to deepen further your knowledge of the Law legal issues and debates and law related coverage in the news and media in general

- Oxford University have an excellent selection of podcasts which allow you to explore a very interesting range of legal issues at the following link:
<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/units/law-faculty>
- BBC *Law in Action* web-pages

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tgy1>
- Guardian website Law pages
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tgy1>
 - Brightside website law pages for careers, studying law, famous cases and Spotlight on Law
<http://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/law-and-politics/spotlight-on-law>
 - TimesOnline: *100Cases that Changed Britain*. This link shows how case law works in British Times
<http://abluteau.wordpress.com/law/times-online-archives-200-years-of-legal-drama/the-cases-that-changed-britain/>
 - *Pathways to Law* website to put you in touch with law specialists who will mentor you.
<http://www.suttontrust.com/students/pathways-to-law/>
 - Prospects.ac.uk website ‘Careers Advice’ link to find out more about careers and jobs in this area of work
<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do

- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



APPLYING FOR PSYCHOLOGY DEGREES: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE 16-19



Key Subject pointers

- Psychology is now one of the most competitive and popular university subjects. You will need at least AAA or AAB grades in many cases. A*AA at Oxford and Cambridge.
- You do not need to have studied Psychology at A level to be accepted on a degree course in the subject
- Good numeracy skills are important because statistics figure heavily on courses
- Some BSc courses require at least one science A Level (or evidence of the applicants' scientific ability at GCSE level if no science A Levels taken). There are also BA courses for which non-science A levels will be acceptable
- It is recommended to take a degree accredited by the British Psychological Society. Even if you have no current plans to become a professional psychologist you will need an accredited course if you do decide and need to become a member of the BPS.

- There are well over 12,000 psychology graduates a year but relatively few opportunities to work as a professional psychologist in areas such as Educational, Forensic, Clinical or Occupational Psychology. You will need to get at least a Masters degree after your first degree and in the case of Clinical, a PhD, as a basic requirement.
- Psychology will equip you for a wide range of other careers including teaching, nursing and personnel management **Career Prospects**

The British Psychological Society website gives extensive information on careers in Psychology:

<http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-in-psychology>

HE Course Profile:

<http://university.which.co.uk/subjects/psychology>

In Year 11



A Level Choices Think carefully about your A level choices in the Sixth Form. The Russell Group (most of the leading universities) advice on A level choices for Psychology is as follows:

ESSENTIAL A few courses ask for one from Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics. Psychology itself is not essential

USEFUL Biology, Mathematics, Psychology, Sociology, Computing/ Computer Science.

What you Need to Start Doing as Early as You Can

At the end of Year 12 and beginning of Year 13 you will be required to write an A4 length Personal Statement to accompany your university application. Find out more about the Personal Statement here:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement that you have something relevant and interesting to write about. There are suggestions for activities you should start and websites you should visit as early in Year 12 as you can towards the end of this guide. Use them to enrich your knowledge of your chosen course and to get involved in what universities call super-curricular activities.

Early in Year 12



Begin to Gather Key Information Visit www.ucas.com and begin to gather information about the sort of grades you will need to get to go to particular universities that attract you.

Early in Year 12:

Work experience is not essential for Psychology but any experience you can get relevant to your A level course is useful and will strengthen your application. You could organise placements in a research lab in a university or industrial setting. This website offers some very good advice:

To find out about other students ideas about work experience and to get some ideas go to:

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=1513684>

The booklet at this link is aimed at Psychology graduates but may well generate some good ideas for A level Students:

http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/_data/documents/careers/work-experience-psychology.pdf?go=1

Volunteering is also a good way of getting relevant experience:

http://slvolunteers.com/placement_abroad/psychology-work-experience-placement/

From January of Year 12:



Open Days Look at www.ucas.com from January in Year 12 as the Open Days often go live from this point. You can secure the most favourable dates e.g. weekend dates so that you don't miss lessons (missing lessons means it's harder to get the grades). <http://www.opendays.com/> is a very useful website which provides an open days calendar

as well as advice on choosing your visits.

Plan Open Days Early Don't leave your open days planning till May or June in Year 12, the best dates may have been and gone.

Clear Aims Make sure that you have some clear aims and key questions before you attend an open day.

Record Keep a record observations and insights in a journal/diary as well as questions you might want to ask at the time or at interview.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY OPENS UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12: The Personal Statement

Start Early Make sure that when you write your UCAS Personal Statement early in Year 13 that you have something relevant and interesting to write about by this time in your

A level career. See enrichment activities below. At least 75% of your statement should be about Psychology related issues

Check the course requirements and selection criteria: This will give you a good idea of what is being looked for

Check the course details: many students do not do this and make false assumptions about what they will study on the courses they have chosen

Avoid Clichés Don't begin your personal statement with clichés. Ask yourself whether this is something anybody could have written. If so write something original.

Do Not List It is better to write about fewer things but in more depth

Area of Interest You may want to write about a particular area of interest in Psychology. Make sure you have something to say about it if asked at interview.

Writing about your Work Experience It is important to say what you learnt from your work experience and to write about the insights which were gained. For some good advice on how to do this go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Personal statement Advice at:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-advice-psychology-students>

Personal Statement Examples The Student Room website has useful advice on and examples of personal statements for Psychology at:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Psychology_Personal_Statements

From July in Year 12: Selection Tests

Oxford You will be required to take the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) for Psychology (Experimental)

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/about-tsa-oxford/>

Cambridge Some colleges will ask you to sit a test which may be the Thinking Skills Assessment Test (TSA) Check with the college website

<http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/tests/tsa.html>

October in Year 13:



UCAS Oxbridge Deadline If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge for Chemistry/Natural Sciences make sure you have finished your application well before the 15 October deadline for submitting Oxbridge applications so that your advisers can check it and write a reference.

October to March in Year 13: The Interview

Most Do Not Interview Although Oxford and Cambridge will interview many universities including some of the top ones like Durham and Nottingham do not. If there are no interviews your Personal Statement becomes even more important because this is all that the university will see of you.

Oxford Sample Questions Oxford University have some sample questions with suggested approaches at:

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/interviews/sample-interview-questions>

Cambridge Interview Questions At Cambridge you would study Psychology either as part of the Human, Social, and Political Sciences course or on the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences degree course.

Help with preparing for the interview can be found at this link:

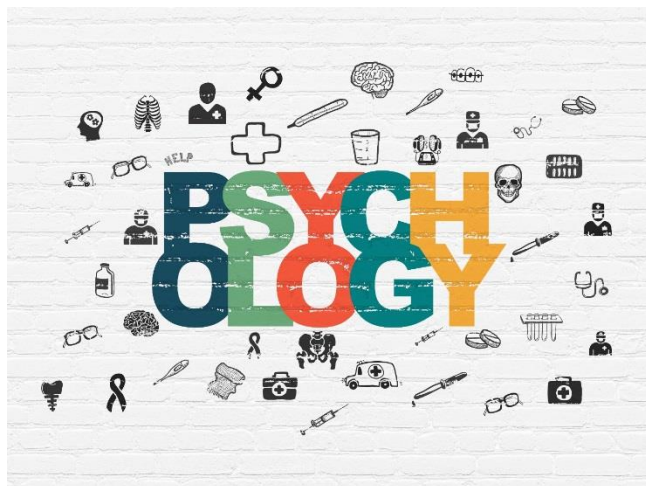
<http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/interviews>

You will find some examples of questions at this link:

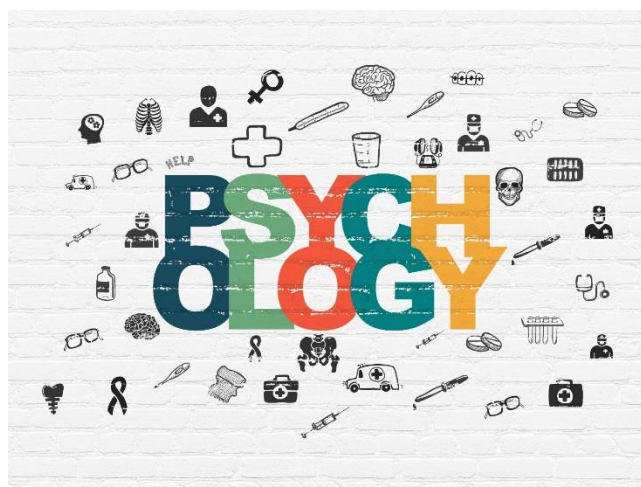
<http://www.cambridgeinterviewquestions.com/questions/sciences/>

Cambridge Mock interview You will find videos of a Cambridge mock interview in a range of subjects at this link:

<http://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/admissions/video/interviews/>



Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and beyond



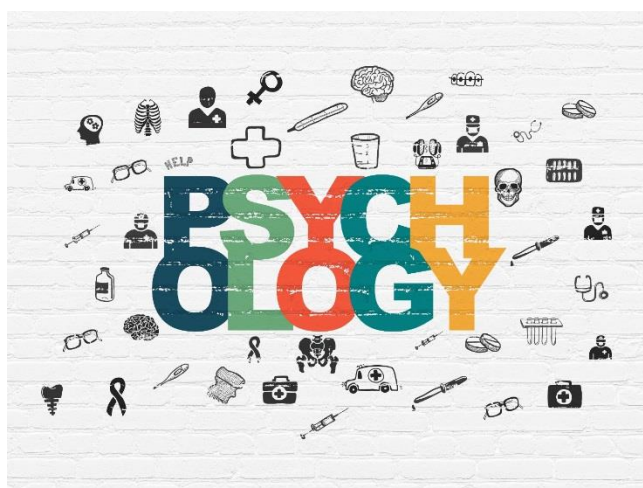
- Do some work experience which is not always easy to organise because of confidentiality issues but you may be able to:
- Talk to and perhaps shadow an educational psychologist who works in your local authority or a psychologist who works in a prison
- Talk to and perhaps observe a psychologist working in a children's unit in a hospital
- Contact children's charities who may employ psychologists eg Barnardo's or NSPCC
- You could also support special needs children in your own school/college on a regular basis
- The BPS has a Directory of Chartered Psychologists on its *Find a Psychologist* page on its website which will give you contact details for psychologists in your area.
- Consider doing an EPQ into an area of the subject that interests you Perhaps you could undertake some form of research that shows that you have developed your independent learning and understanding of research methods
- Attend one of the Psychology student conferences courses at Nottingham University run by The Workshop for students interested in applying for Psychology at university: <http://www.workshop-uk.net/>
- Explore the videos articles and podcasts on the psychology section of the *Podology* website: <http://www.podology.org.uk>
- Join the British Psychological Society's Student Members group (SMG) which entitles you to copies of The Psychologist magazine every month as well as issues of the newsletter *PsychTalk* and discounts on books, journals and events.

What should I be reading?

- Read *Psychology: A Very Short Introduction* (and other psychology titles in this series) by Gillian Butler, and Freda McManus , Oxford University Press
- *Progression to Psychology*, UCAS Books
- Subscribe to the *Psychology Review* magazine published by Philip Allan Updates and look at the back-numbers if they are in your school library
- Read more about topics on your A level course and about aspects of Psychology that you are not currently studying such as the different branches of the subject

Which websites will be useful?

- The British Psychological Society
- The A level Psychology website: <http://alevelpsychology.co.uk/>
- The *All in the Mind* Radio 4 programme archive on the BBC website
- The *Simply Psychology* website
- *Psychology Today* <http://www.psychologytoday.com/>
- The *Psychology Faculty* provides free, short films of university lecturers on topics on the A-level curriculum.
- *Prospects*: www.prospects.ac.uk Very good on Psychology careers



Find out about Post-Graduate Employment



To get some sense of where you might be going with this degree. The following websites are very useful:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful
- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

The icould website

<http://icould.com/>

has over a thousand videos of individuals talking about their careers with hundreds of supporting articles giving an insight into:

- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do
- what it is like

- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

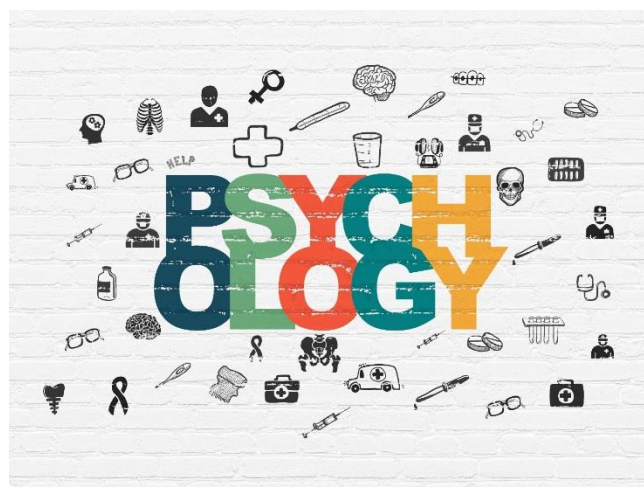
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.



PLANNING AND WRITING AN OUTSTANDING UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

HOW DO YOU WRITE A
UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT?



Key Pointers

How Important is it? The Personal Statement is a very important part of your university application which will be made in the first term of Year 13. Many courses do not interview so the Personal Statement may be your only chance to impress selectors. The London School of Economics (LSE) say: 'The Personal statement is the most important way we decide between applicants.'

Many universities will score you statement because they are looking for quite specific things.

How Much Do I have to Write? It is around an A4 side in length.(47 lines maximum, 4,000 characters maximum, 1,000 characters minimum, 12 point

Times New Roman font)) In most cases it will be written between July of Year 12 with a final version in September/ October of Year 13

What is it for? The Personal Statement gives you an opportunity to:

tell the universities and colleges why they should choose you

tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study.

demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd

Start Early If you get the big picture of the application process early and understand what will be needed for the Personal Statement you can begin to collect experiences, evidence of reading and other activities which can be written about when the time comes to write your statement? These are the things you need to start thinking about, doing and keeping on the back burner to make your eventual application a stronger one

Give Yourself an Edge It will give you a head start compared to many students who are applying nationally and will give you a competitive edge over other students who have left things till the last minute

In Year 11



Know Where You are Going? If you think you know where you are going with possible university course choices in Year 11 it will help if you to begin to collect experiences and engage in enrichment activities so that you have something significant to write about when the time comes.

Super-curricular activities are particularly important, things which show you have taken the initiative to find out more about and deepen your knowledge of subjects in which you have a particular interest or which are going to be important for your future course choices

From January of Year 12:



How can I show my commitment to a university subject I want to study?

The first priority is to be on top of the subjects you are studying at A level (or equivalent) because without achieving the required you will not get a place at university. You need to be:

- Up to date with assignments
- Cover the specification thoroughly
- Clear about the assessment criteria for each subject
- Have a good revision programme in place

The second priority is to enrich the A level subject you wish to study at university and any other related A levels by engaging in a range of activities to broaden and deepen your knowledge and to persuade university selectors of your commitment.

If the subject you want to study is not one of your current courses, Engineering or Vet Science for example, the same applies. Engage in activities to show that you have made a substantial effort to find out about the subject and that you have a genuine commitment to it.

Activities to Get Involved in

- Attend summer schools
- Work experience
- Public lectures
- Voluntary work
- Read (serious) newspapers
- Read journals (eg scientific)
- Enter academic competitions

Above All Read widely

- Textbooks quickly get out of date and have a narrow focus. Read more about topics you are studying and about other areas of the subject that interest you.
- Get a breadth of understanding beyond what is in the specification.

- Read subject magazines and journals to keep in touch with the latest developments.
- Philip Allen Updates subject review magazines are worth subscribing to and will keep you up to date with new research and ideas in your subject:
<http://magazines.philipallan.co.uk/>

Get relevant experience

- This will depend on the subject you want to study. Some university subjects like Medicine or Vet Science will require extensive work experience and it is also expected for subjects such as Nursing, Teaching or Social Work. Watch this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-Fkrz8ms5w>
- For other subjects you should try to gain relevant experiences in the world outside school such as theatre visits for English, industrial and business experience for subject such as Economics, Business Studies and Engineering, voluntary work for caring careers
- A useful website is:
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/Workexperienceandvolunteering>.

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

- You can now start thinking about the sort of things you will want to write about in your Personal Statement

July to September in Year 12:

You now need to begin to think about the Personal Statement in earnest and start writing preliminary drafts

What Should go into the Personal Statement?

Some of the best advice on the Personal Statement comes from UCAS who suggest that **at least two thirds of your personal statement should relate to the course you wish to study at university and your suitability for it.**

For a mind-map and worksheet to help you use the links:

<http://www.ucas.com/documents/statement/mindmap.pdf>

<http://www.ucas.com/documents/statement/worksheet.pdf>

UCAS also give the following important pointers about how you should include in your Personal Statement:

(1) Why you are applying for the course you have chosen?

- Why does the subject interest you?
- Include evidence that you understand what is required to study the course
- What got you interested in the subject?
- What have you learnt about the subject?
- Any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s)

(2) Why you are suitable for the course:

- Which skills and experience do you have that will help you succeed on the course.
- What have you done to develop your knowledge of the subject?
- What evidence is there that you have read, studied, gained experiences outside the confines of your A level courses?

From July in year 12



Important Things you Should Do

Make sure that you check to see if the universities you are thinking of applying to have any particular requirements for the Personal Statement.

Useful Personal Statement Advice

This section of the Which University website gives specific subject focused Personal Statement advice:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statement-subject-guides-admission-tutor-tips>

For £5 subscribe to Personal Statement Builder on the SACU website which guides you through each section of your Personal Statement. The final re-draft section automatically scans your statement for potential issues and reports back on items including: clichés, overuse of intensifier words (Amazing! Enthralled! Captivated! etc), number of sentences starting with I, american spelling errors, repetition, overall structure.

<http://sacu-student.com/?product=personal-statement-builder-student-license>

What Makes a Good Personal Statement Videos and Podcasts

These videos and podcasts from UCAS and different universities give very sound Advice:

UCAS: <http://www.ucas.tv/ucas/video/WXSch>

Birmingham: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6wGWIIOxpw>

Imperial College: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_mlyruYQ24

Leicester: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zESqEAXqX-Y>

Kings College: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtm2xtsqMLU>

Bangor: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH_mAYnqn0I

Oxford:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/why_oxford/podcasts/t hird_episode_the.html

Make Sure You Know about the Course You are Applying For

Look them up on university course websites

Use the UCAS entry profiles web-pages which you will find when you begin to search for courses

Redrafting is Essential

- First, start by looking at the Personal Statement Mind-map on the UCAS APPLY website :

<http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement>

- Use it to help you construct a mind-map focused on your personal aims and aspirations
- Second, use the excellent four page Personal Statement worksheet on the UCAS APPLY website to plan your statement in detail:

<http://www.ucas.com/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement>

- The worksheet gives you very clear indications about how much to write for each section Remember: at least two thirds on the course
- Next write out your statement in full and read carefully what you have written and don't be satisfied until you have re-worked it several times
- Your Personal Statement will need **to go through many drafts** before it is right. Read it to others to see what it sounds like and get them to comment on it too.

Do Not Use Pretentious Language Write in a natural way using vocabulary you would normally use but don't be chatty either. You are not texting.

Avoid Cliché Opening Sentences

UCAS say the 10 most common opening sentences are such things as:

1. I am currently studying a BTEC National Diploma in...

2. From a young age I have always been interested in ...
3. From an early age I have always been interested in ...
4. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding career...
5. For as long as I can remember I have been fascinated with
6. Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only ...
7. Nursing is a profession I have always looked upon with ...
8. For as long as I can remember I have been interested in..
9. I am an International Academy student and have been studying since....
10. Academically, I have always been a very determined ...

Avoid Empty statements about Yourself

- I have been interested in philosophy all my life (all???)
- I feel global warming is a really important issue (which aspects?)
- I feel that genes are fundamental in shaping human behaviour (say something original about genetics)
- You need team work and communication skills and I have got them (where is the evidence?)
- Maths is important for helping us understand all sorts of things (give examples)

Avoid Mentioning Cliché Books

- Show that you have explored beyond the obvious in your reading and say something original about the books you do mention. Everyone will write about 'Fermat's Last Theorem' for Maths or 'A Brief History of Time' for Physics, for example
- Make sure they are books you can talk about if interviewed
- Anticipate the interview question: 'What have you read since you wrote your Personal Statement?'

Avoid Exaggerated Language

For example, Maths is.....

'amazing'

'incredible'

'fantastic'

'unbelievably interesting'

'captivating'

Say something more thoughtful

What Sort of Language should I use?

- Persuade them that you are like this don't just claim it?
- 'This shows that I am/can.....'
- Use evidence from work experience
- Use evidence from achievements
- Use evidence from voluntary activities BUT not, for example 'I am a good at team work because I play in a team'.

Writing About your Work Experience

- Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). Try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course
- Make it clear how long was spent on each placement
- Think about how they demonstrate your personality, skills and abilities. Try to link them to the skills and experience required for your course(s).
- UCAS give this example:

NOT

'I spent two weeks working at a department store. I enjoyed speaking to customers and helping them with their enquiries'

BUT

'I spent two weeks managing customer enquiries at a department store. I learnt how to interact with customers and handle complaints. The experience highlighted the importance of positive communication between a business and its customers, and taught me how to manage difficult enquiries effectively. I would like to develop this skill further by studying a degree in public relations.'

For some good advice on how to write about your work experience go to:

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements-how-to-make-your-work-experience-really-count>

Skills you May Need to Write About

Depending on the nature of the course you may need to write about skills such as the following:

- Practical

- Problem solving
- Caring
- Enthusiastic
- Teamwork
- Good communicator
- Using own initiative
- Work under pressure
- Self motivated
- Working to deadlines
- Organisation
- Leadership
- Self-expression
- Scientifically literate
- Artistic/creative

Writing about Interests and Activities Relevant to the Course

The Assistant Registrar for Undergraduate Admissions from University of Warwick says that:

‘The strongest applicants are those who can link their extra-curricular activities to their proposed course of study. Your statement will be more convincing and personal if you write about why an experience, activity or interest makes you a good candidate for the course. Include enough additional information to make it interesting and to demonstrate your own interest.’

- Don't just list them
- Say what you got from the activity
- Use telling examples
- Be precise about time was spent on the activity
- Show how it helped to develop your thinking
- Emphasise skills and qualities you developed eg team work, commitment, caring
- Mention particular insights gained

The EPQ

- If you are involved in this mention it in your
- Personal Statement
- Show how it has helped you to develop intellectually with examples
- Show how it has helped you learn new study and research skills
- Show how you think it has helped you prepare for university

Applying for Multiple courses and Joint Degrees

- You only write one personal statement to all your choices. Try not to mention a university by name, even if you are applying to only one university - your personal statement cannot be changed if you apply to a different place later.
- If you're applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme.
- If you're applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices.

Do Not Plagiarise

One year 234 UCAS personal statements contained the following: 'Ever since I accidentally burnt holes in my pyjamas after experimenting with a chemistry set on my eighth birthday, I have always had a passion for science.'

BEWARE UCAS Copycatch Plagiarism Software

- Your PS is checked against 1,500,000 statements past and present on the UCAS website, those on other websites and in books
- 30,000 students 'caught' in a typical year
- 10% were identical to other applicants personal statements or online examples eg Student Room
- Universities applied to informed so that they can take appropriate action
- Student told by email with details on Track
- Flagged up on Adviser Track for school staff as well

The Most Common Reasons for Unsuccessful Applications According to UCAS

- Your personal statement does not strongly support your desire to study your chosen degree.
- Your personal statement did not show sufficient understanding, relevance or knowledge about the course you are applying for.
- You failed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and interest in the subject in your personal statement.
- There is a lot of competition for places on this course and your personal statement and experience was not as strong as other applicants this year.
- Application form (including personal statement, reference and predicted grades) does not evidence accurate understanding of or motivation for subject.
- Not expressed a strong enough interest in the subject .

Using Example and ‘Model’ Personal Statements

- The danger of model answers is that you imitate them, risk plagiarism, sacrifice originality and get caught out
- There are similar issues with commercial websites which offer to ‘coach’ you. It stops being your work.
- The Student Room website has a library of personal statements:

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/personal_statement_library

- Be very careful with this website
- Uploaded by students some will be good some bad
- **No monitoring by Student Room** although some have been commented upon
- Not model statements
- Don’t copy. You will be caught!
- Best approach: use them to analyse with other students
- Most useful section of this website is the **Reviewed** Personal Statement Advice for different subjects section

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/category:reviewed_personal_statements

5 key Characteristics of an Excellent Personal Statement

- At least two thirds should be about the course(s) and your suitability for it.
- Make it personal and original
- Do not plagiarise
- Provide evidence and examples to back up claims you make about yourself
- When you write about things you have done show what skills you have gained and what they demonstrate about your character and/or personality

Applying to Oxford: Personal Statement Advice

- Remember that tutors will be most interested to read about your academic achievements and your commitment and motivation for your chosen degree course.
- Extra-curricular activities may help demonstrate how well you have managed your time, but they do not form part of the selection criteria in any subject.

- Do bear in mind that your UCAS personal statement will be seen by all the universities to which you are applying
- Extra-curricular is secondary
- Honesty is key! Anything included could be a talking point in the interview
- Read PS aloud.
- Students could read each other's statements in pairs
- Read the last paragraph first
- Starting early in Year 12 keep a notebook for anything relevant: books, programmes, lectures, conversations that inspired them about the subject.

Applying to Cambridge: Personal Statement Advice

- Students are advised to follow the UCAS advice Admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability, commitment and potential). We are looking for an applicant to:
 - explain their reasons for wanting to study the subject
 - demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment for chosen course
 - express any particular interests within the field
 - outline how they have pursued their interest in the subject in their own time
- Such information is often used as a basis for discussion at interview.
- Students are advised to follow the UCAS advice Admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability, commitment and potential).
- Applicants can if they wish make additional comments particularly relevant to their Cambridge application on their Supplementary Application Questionnaire . This is an opportunity to highlight particular features of the Cambridge course that attracted them. This additional personal statement is optional.

<http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/saq.html>

- Applicants will not be disadvantaged if they add nothing to this section of the SAQ but should not to repeat information in their UCAS personal statement

Extra-Curricular Activities and Cambridge

- Participation (or not) in extra-curricular activities is not taken into account (unless relevant to the course) and does not affect the chances of an offer.
- We look at how extra-curricular activities demonstrate characteristics that will aid students' transition to life at university, such as the balance of academic and personal commitments, and the development of skills or qualities (perseverance, independence, leadership or team-working).
- However, other university may place more importance on extra-curricular activities.
- Cambridge are much more interested in **super-curricular activities** which show how you have deepened your knowledge and understanding of the subject you want to study.

Interviews and Personal Statements

- **Chances of Being Interviewed** You will not always be interviewed. More universities do not interview than do, so the Personal Statement is even more important if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.
- If you are interviewed make sure to read through your personal statement before hand and that you can justify everything that you have written

Subject Enrichment Activities in Year 12 and Beyond



Find out about the historical development and scope of the subject

- It helps to know how your subject has developed over time and how people approached it in the past. This will give you a better sense of what it is about and a clearer insight into how it has reached its current position.

- Understand that in all subjects there is not just one way of looking at things. There will be different perspectives, schools of thought, different views about how the subject should be studied. Be clear where you stand in relation to these debates.
- Oxford University Press (OUP) have a very useful series of books called *Very Short Introductions* which give you excellent background to academic subjects and topics within subjects.
- Wikipedia also has some useful articles on different academic subjects, their scope and historical background.

Be clear why the subject is important and worth studying

Think about what the subject has to offer.

- It may help to bring economic and technological benefits to society.
- It may help us to understand how humans behave.
- It may simply be worth studying in its own right

Understand the importance of argument and evidence

Serious academic debate revolves around argument or attempts to persuade others to your point of view using evidence and examples to support your case. It is important to:

- Ask yourself how convincing is the evidence you are using to support your views
- Ask others what evidence they have to support theirs and challenge it.
- Familiarise yourself with terms such, as argument and counter argument and be aware of the dangers of misrepresenting, insufficient or unrepresentative evidence
- Understand the common fallacies in argument that others might use such as correlation not causation or restricting the options.
- Be aware of the criteria we should use to decide whether sources of evidence are reliable.
- If you are not already studying Critical Thinking which deals with these issues, any Critical Thinking A level textbook will help you with all this or the website:

<http://www.criticalthinking.org.uk>

Use radio, television, newspapers and their websites productively

- Use the media to keep in touch with issues and debates relevant to your subject: news, documentaries, arts programmes, reviews.
- Radio and television programme and newspaper websites will have archives of programmes and articles which you can search for relevant material. Radio 4, for examples has extensive archives of broadcasts relevant to a wide rang of academic subjects.

Involve yourself in serious talk and debate

- Be enthusiastic about debating with and expressing your ideas to other students. It is only in discussion and debate with others that we really clarify what we think.
- Test your views against others.
- Do not be defensive and get used to being relaxed about having your views challenged by others.

Above all do not believe all that you are told: learn to be sceptical

- Constantly question views, theories and opinions that you are faced with.
- Test every idea to destruction so that you can tell which ones really stand up.
- Understand that what we currently think is only the best knowledge we have at the time.
- Don't be too easily persuaded

Find out about Post-Graduate Employment

If you are applying for vocational degree which prepare you for a specific job such as medicine , social work of teaching it is very important to show in your Personal Statement that you know what the job involves. Here are some websites which will help you to find out about the realties of work:

Prospects.ac.uk website

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

Click 'Careers advice' link then click 'Options with your subject' link which will give you information on:

- skills the degree will give you
- job options related to your degree
- jobs for which your degree would be useful

- links to each of the jobs for further details
- career areas chosen by those with your degree
- where the jobs are
- other possibilities after your degree.

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- what each career involves
- what people who follow the career actually do
- what it is like
- how they came to be where they are
- their plans for the future.

National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

The service is freely available for people living in England. Links to organisations offering targeted advice for people living in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are provided on the website.

Help and support is provided to show you how to:

- develop your CV
- search and apply for jobs
- understand the job market
- search for courses and training schemes
- find funding to support any learning
- identify your key strengths and skills
- explore your career options
- choose training routes that fit your lifestyle
- develop an action plan to help you achieve your goals.

UNIVERSITY INTERVIEWS: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE



Key Pointers

Chances of an Interview More universities and university courses do not interview than do, so the **Personal Statement is even more important** if the university you are applying to does not interview. Some universities will interview every serious applicant, others none. Some will interview borderline applicants only. Check when you are choosing your universities.

Some Top Universities do not Interview In the case of two of the top universities, for example, LSE do not interview at all and Durham only interview for medicine and Education.

Who is More Likely to Interview? The following interview or are more likely to than not to interview **BUT this is not a definitive list:** Oxford and Cambridge, Medicine and medical professions, Vet Science/medicine, Dentistry, Teaching, Nursing and midwifery, Architecture, Classics, Computing, Drama and Theatre Studies, Engineering, Journalism, Music, Social work

Is a University Interview Always Selective? Interviews come in two main forms.

The 'selection' interview: A genuine attempt to assess suitability for a course: interviews for medicine and Oxbridge, teaching, nursing, midwifery are examples.

The 'recruitment' interview: The university has decided to make an offer and the interview is encouragement to accept. Interviews for less popular courses are examples of this. BUT be on your guard and present yourself as well as possible, it is not always as simple as this.

From January of Year 12:



General Interview Technique Find out as much as you can about what is good interview techniques. Look at these examples of a poor and a good economics interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snol9dIz6Ds>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzwxQ164FE0>

Begin to mull over the ways you would answer possible questions you might get asked in an interview and do this more systematically as the year goes on:

Typical General Questions

- Tell me about yourself?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Tell us about your current courses?
- What are you best at?
- What are your main interests?
- Do you have any weaknesses
- Prepare by thinking about:
 - Your key personality characteristics
 - Your general and study interests

- Try and be relevant and talk about those personality qualities and interests that match the course

Questions about your motivation for the course and the university

- Why do you want to study for a degree?
- Why did you choose this course?
- What do you think university can offer you?
- What else, apart from study, interests you about this university?
- Why do you want to study at this university?
- Why do you want to study in this town/city?

Find out What to Expect at the Interview If you know what course you want to apply for find out as much as you can from university websites about how likely you are to be interviewed, the form the interview will take, what sort of questions are likely to be asked and whether or not some sort of test or challenge will be presented to you at the interview.

Oxford or Cambridge Interviews

Go to the Oxbridge Step by Step Guide

Medical Interviews

Go to the Medicine Step by Step Guide

Dentistry Interviews

Go to the Dentistry Step by Step Guide

Vet Science Interviews

Go to the Vet science Step by Step guide

Nursing Interviews

Go to the Nursing step by Step Guide

Teaching Interviews

Go to this link especially the interactive interview tab on the left hand side.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/help-with-your-interview>

Other Subject Focused University Interview Guidance Interview Preparation

Mental Rehearsal Mull over answers that you would give to questions that topically come up at interviews:

Subject related questions

- Why do you want to study this subject?
- What do you know about the course? (very important that you prepare for this)
- What attracts you to this course?
- Are there particular aspects of the course that attract you ? Why?
- What have you read recently that is relevant to your interest in this course?
- What experiences /work experience/ visits/ independent study have you done which is relevant to this course?

Topical questions Interviewers may ask your opinion on something topical, that is in the news or related to your subject.

- Prepare for the interview by looking in the media to see what is current
- You can reading the national serious newspapers online or in hard copy and pick out current stories that seem linked to your subject.
- Collect them in a folder and think about how you could respond to a question on these topics.
- Watch TV documentaries related to the subject

Hypothetical situation or problem solving questions

- Be prepared to have to think on your feet and do not over rehearse prepared answers
- Give me an example of a time when... you dealt with a problem, or overcame some obstacles, or worked in a team to achieve an outcome etc
- If you were asked to....do something creative aboutwhat would you do?

Course-related questions: Aston University encourage applicants to think about the following:

- What are the employment prospects for graduates?
- What is the content of the second year module x?
- Is the focus of the course more practical or theoretical?

- Is there preparatory reading I can do?
- How many contact hours per week should I expect?
- How much independent study is expected?
- How much choice do I have with module selection?

Video Look at this video about interview techniques

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMYD6c9Z3z8>

Early June in Year 12



UCAS APPLY UCAS Apply system becomes available online.

July to September in Year 12:

Look at the excellent advice on Interviews from UCAS:

- The when's and where's: Make sure you know where you need to be and when. Make any travel and accommodation arrangements in advance. Visit university website for maps and directions.
- Knowledge is power: Read the prospectus and look on the university's or college's website. Make a list of questions you'd like to ask, things the prospectus doesn't tell you.
- Know your application: This is all your interviewer knows about you so far.
- Be familiar with 'hot topics' in your subject area
- Practice: A mock interview is a good idea.
- Dress appropriately: Show you are taking things seriously by dressing smartly (smart trousers and shirt or blouse)
- Arrive in good time: Take contact numbers in case you get delayed.
- Body language: Don't slouch or yawn; sit up and look alert. Make sure you are giving off all the right signals.
- Stumped? Ask for question to be repeated.

- Expect the unexpected: A surprise test or exercise isn't unheard of so stay calm and think clearly.
 - Ask questions: Use the interview as a chance to find out about things not on website or in prospectus.
 - Sit up straight, and lean slightly forward in your chair to projecting interest and engagement. Aligning your body's position to that of the interviewer.
 - Keep an interested expression. Nod and make positive gestures in moderation.
 - Establish a comfortable personal space between you and the interviewer. Invading personal space (anything more than 20 inches) makes the interviewer uncomfortable.
- If you have more than one person interviewing briefly address both with your gaze and return attention to the person who asked the question.
- If interruptions happen refrain from staring at your interviewer while they address their immediate business. Show willingness to leave if they need privacy.
 - According to research at Harvard **striking an expansive posture** with open limbs rather than one with crossed arms and legs raises testosterone levels by an average of 20% and lowers cortisol, the stress hormone by a similar amount.

September in Year 12:



Look at this UCAS video about university interviews:

<http://www.ucas.tv/ucas/video/pwHtR>

Get a Mock Interview! with a member of staff who knows about the subject you are applying for.

Explain to them what you can expect for the interviews you are going for because they may not know.

Get them to really challenge what you are saying with questions such as:

- What evidence is there for that?
- I disagree with that because.....?
- You are not taking account of?
- Doesn't that contradict what you said earlier.....?

- Wouldn't x's ideas/theories argue against that?
- Would you be able to apply that kind of thinking to.....?
- Can you explain how you came to that conclusion?
- On the other hand, couldn't you say that.....?
- The problem with what you are saying is.....?
- There are limitations to that argument aren't there.....?

What should I be reading?

University Interviews Guide, Andy Gardner and Barbara Hamnett

Which websites will be useful?

The University of Kent Careers Service offer some very good general advice about different types of interviews. It is aimed at undergraduates but is still useful to those applying to university or for a variety of careers.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/applicn.htm>

Which University? There are some interview tips on this website:

<http://university.which.co.uk/search/advice?utf8=%E2%9C%93&a%5Bq%5D=interviews&commit=Go>

Sample Questions This site has many examples of university interview questions and discussion of possible answers

<http://www.studential.com/interviews>



READ MORE **DEGREE COURSE APPLICATION GUIDES**

