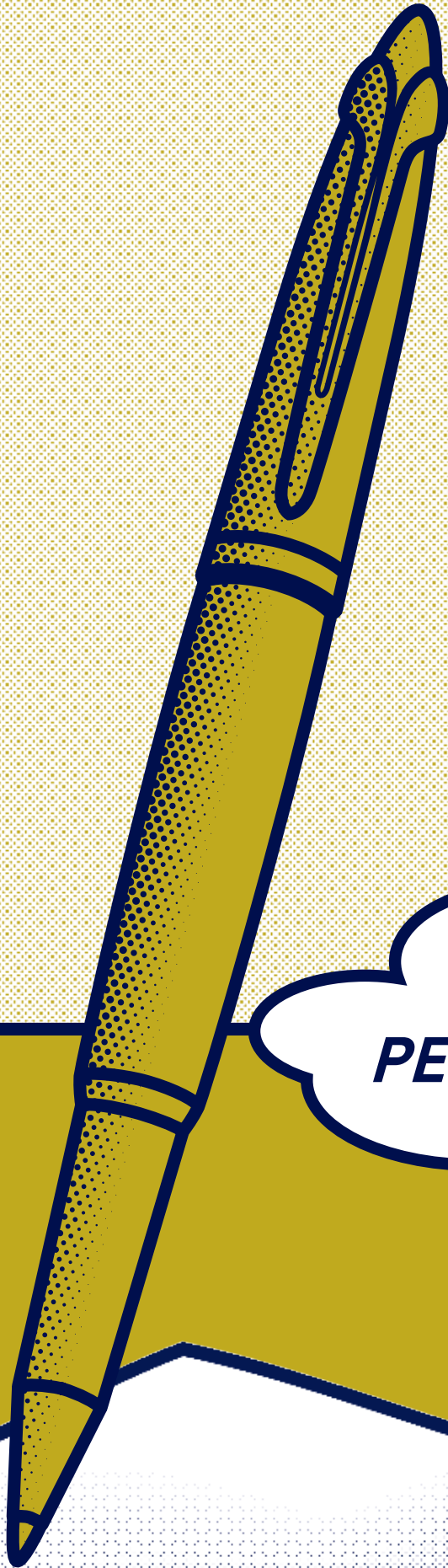




BIRMINGHAM CITY
University



***WRITING YOUR
PERSONAL STATEMENT***

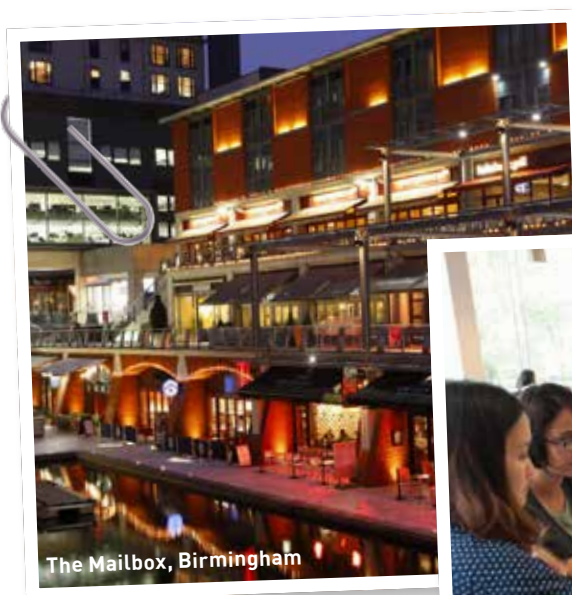
Birmingham City University

With around 23,500 students from 80 different countries, Birmingham City University is one of the largest universities in the UK and our popularity has grown significantly in recent years. We became a university in 1992, but our history dates back to 1843 and we have a proud record of widening access to higher education.

Our four academic faculties offer over 350 courses, from foundation level, through undergraduate degree programmes, to taught Master's courses and research doctorates. About a third of our students study part-time, combining employment with our professionally relevant courses, improving their career prospects.

Our courses are designed to prepare you for the world of work. Many of our lecturers have real-life experience of working in industry, our facilities match those you could experience in the workplace and you get the opportunity to go on placements with leading employers. We even employ our own students for temporary and part-time roles at the University!

Living in Birmingham offers you the chance to live in an exciting, diverse city with world-class restaurants, entertainment and shops. We rival the capital in excitement but not in cost.



Key fact:

Our £260 million investment plan includes a major expansion of the City Centre Campus, providing students with an enviable range of facilities.

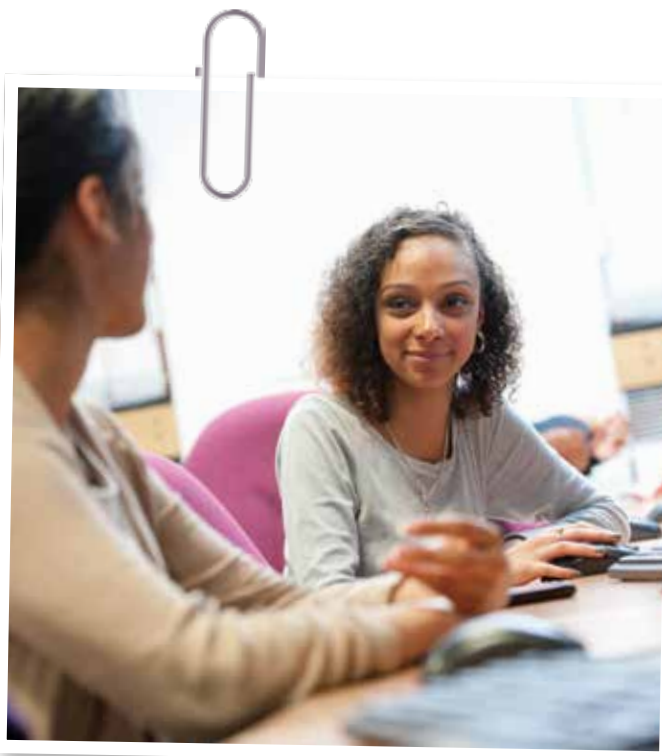
The UCAS process

As the majority of university courses in the UK have no formal interview requirements, most decisions on whether to offer you a place will be made entirely on the strength of your UCAS application form — particularly your personal statement.

The form consists of seven sections — your personal details, course choices, education, employment, personal statement and reference.

Of those, the personal statement offers you the best chance to 'sell' yourself, by explaining why you are applying for that particular course and why the university should want you to join them!

At first glance, being asked to write around 500 words about yourself may seem a little daunting, and you may find it easier to break it down into sections, considering what you want to say about different aspects of your personality and experience. This guide will show you how and there is also a wealth of information on www.ucas.ac.uk.



UCAS Timeline

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Mid September | Opening date for UCAS applications |
| 15 January | Main closing date for applications |
| 31 March | First deadline for universities to get decisions to UCAS |
| April | Deadline for applicants to accept one firm and one insurance offer UCAS Extra process for those without an offer to make an additional application |
| From July | Universities start to receive exam results, most are communicated by UCAS to universities in August |
| August | Clearing process commences for those who have not yet accepted or secured a place |

What to include

These are some of the main areas you should normally look to cover in your Personal Statement. You may find it helpful to make some notes in the spaces provided.

Your course choice:

Discuss why you have chosen to apply for the course(s) concerned. Admissions tutors want to see that you are enthusiastic about your chosen subject, that you can demonstrate interest in and understand the demands of the subject. They want to read that you have the right skills and experience necessary to succeed. Take a look at the course entry profiles on the UCAS website this may help you find out about the skills the University is looking for. If you are applying for a diverse range of courses it may be more difficult to cover all this but admissions tutors suggest you try to explain your reasons for each of them.

Your future plans:

Think about what you want to do in the future — whether you have a specific job in mind or just a general idea of the type of field you want to work in. It may be that the course is directly relevant to your intended career, or perhaps you have already studied the subject at GCSE or A Level and found it particularly enjoyable.

School and college life:

Include details of what you studied at school or college, and the skills you gained from this, as well as any sporting or extra-curricular activities, or positions of responsibility (eg prefect, librarian) that you held. This is a chance to show that you are ready for the academic rigours of the course, as well as being the sort of person who is able to fit into wider university life.

Work experience:

This could include the skills you gained through work experience placements or any part-time work you have done. Work experience shows your dedication and commitment to your future career, while part-time work proves you are disciplined and organised enough to hold a position of responsibility and balance the time spent working with your school or college commitments.

Interests and activities:

Highlight the skills you have gained through any other activities you are involved in outside of school such as volunteering in the community, music, team sports, and any other hobbies or leisure interests. If you are taking, or have taken, a year out, it is useful to state your reasons why and what you achieved or hope to achieve.

Activities in preparation for Higher Education:

Have you been to a conference at a university, summer school or masterclass activity? These activities are offered to give information and a taste of university life and would be great to include. Check university websites to see what activities they have for prospective students.

Key fact:

Birmingham City University works with companies like Apple, Cisco and Cartier to develop cutting edge curriculums and to collaborate on course projects

Things to remember

Good spelling and grammar is very important; it may be a good idea to ask a teacher, careers adviser or friend to take a look over it. Work in a draft version before inserting into the application form online.

Give evidence for all your claims — don't just say you have good organisational skills; provide an example of how you can demonstrate it.

It is the same personal statement for all five choices so do not include named institutions.

At Birmingham City University we have lots of courses that are competitive such as midwifery or teaching so ensure you make your application by 15 January.

Don't be tempted to copy parts of someone else's statement or lift ideas from the web — UCAS operates a Similarity Detection Service, which checks forms against a statement library and web sources to ensure all statements are personally written.

Make sure you keep a copy of what you've written as it may be referred to at interview, more and more courses at Birmingham City University include an interview as part of the selection process — or the information may be useful in future job applications.



Getting started on your personal statement

Your course choice:

Your future plans:

School and college life:

Work experience:

Interests and activities:



Key fact:

Birmingham City University students can gain industry experience through work placements, mentoring schemes, Erasmus years and sandwich courses (subject to any visa restrictions)

Personal Statement — Examples and Comments

Excerpts of Personal Statements from Birmingham City University applicants to the courses of either Policing, Criminology, Psychology

I have chosen to study criminology at university as it is something I have a life-long interest in. The aspect that I am most interested in is why people start offending and whether it is inevitable from conditioning they received in their childhood, or whether they choose to offend out of their own free will. I am also eager to learn if crime can be prevented and how we should deal with the offenders.

Comment: *This student has written a good opening paragraph, it shows an interest and understanding of what the subject will cover.*

I opted to study A Level Psychology because I wanted to explore in-depth the reasons why people think and behave the way they do. I have enjoyed discovering the different perspectives and how they approach the study of human behaviour and experience. In particular, I have found the study of various disorders such as depression, autism and schizophrenia fascinating. Psychology has provided me with skills necessary to grapple with different conceptual ideas in order to explain the causal relations and ability to critically evaluate theories and evidence.

Comment: *A good explanation of how this student's current studies have impacted their choice of course.*

As a special constable the training is preparing me for new challenges which can be strenuous and demanding but I am committed to doing what is needed to succeed. In being part of this voluntary service I am devoting a lot of my personal time and effort which shows that I am determined to learn and gain more skills. I am learning to be a trusted colleague in a team and to be loyal, honest and hardworking. These are all essential attributes that I need to fulfil my goal of joining the police service in the future.

Comment: *Very clever to include known skills required, attributes, relevant experience and future goals all together. Remember to have evidence to support any skill you mention (look at the entry profiles on www.UCAS.ac.uk for skills required for particular courses).*

I volunteer as a creative support worker at a family run care home for people with learning disabilities. I have found this role highly rewarding and it complements my interest in studying psychology, behaviour and experience. I have been able to use the knowledge gained within A Level Psychology to understand the emotions and behaviour of those I help.

Comment: *Relevant voluntary experience is fantastic — but could have added more here about the skills demonstrated not just knowledge.*

I recently attended a psychology and criminology conference in Sheffield which has served to confirm my choice of course. The guest speakers included a psychologist who had substantial knowledge of the prison service, as well as an ex-prisoner who had served time for murder. Having this first hand experience provided me the chance to ask questions and interact with the speakers, it also gave me an insight into what a psychologist's career could entail.

Comment: *Attending a subject conference is a great way to demonstrate a passion for the subject area. The more the competitive the course the more you should know about your understanding of the subject/career.*

Reading is a passion of mine; I regularly read fictional and non-fictional books, as well as newspaper articles. The genre I particularly enjoy reading would be crime thrillers, my favourite being *My life among the serial killers* by Dr Helen Morrison. Dr Morrison is a forensic psychiatrist who I find inspirational as she understands the psychology of serial killers such as John Wayne Gacy...

Comment: *This student has linked their interest with the subject area they wish to study providing a great opportunity for expansion at interview.*

Key fact:

Student employment agency 'OpportUNITY — Student Jobs on Campus' helps students to find part-time work with Birmingham City University (subject to any visa restrictions)



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