

Your guide to

Personal statements 2026

Use this guide to help you with planning, writing and submitting a personal statement to Durham University



What is changing?

The statement will still be all about you and why you'd like to study your chosen course, but from next admissions cycle UCAS are breaking this into three sections to help guide you when writing your statement.

These are based around the following three questions:

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

The personal statement will remain 4000 characters in length (including spaces), and each question will require a minimum of 350 characters.

Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Interest in the subject

Tell us why you like the subject, what are your thoughts about your chosen subject and why have you chosen to study it for three years?.

Point of view

Tell us about any books or articles you have read, have any texts stood out to you? If so why? And did you agree or disagree with a particular viewpoint?

Knowledge and Research

Have you done further research around your chosen subject? If so, what did you find out and how does this link to why you want to study the course?

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?

Transferable skills

Tell us about what skills you might need for your chosen course and what you have done in your life that shows us you have these skills and would be successful on the course

Merit & potential

Tell us about any educational challenges you have taken part in, have you been involved in a Summer School or a competition. What involvement did you have and what does this demonstrate to us?

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences helpful?

Sports, hobbies and interests outside of school

Tell us about your hobbies and any interests you may have outside of the classroom and how they have prepared you for your course.

Work experience, employment or volunteering

Work experience is not essential as we know not everyone will have the same opportunities. We are interested in the transferable skills you have gained throughout these activities and how you can apply that to your chosen course.

Personal life experiences or responsibilities

Do you have any other experiences outside of your education and how the ways in which they've prepared you for your chosen course? Or have you had a particularly challenging period in your life where you have had to overcome it and learn from it?



Personal statements 2026

Start drafting your own ideas below

1

Why do you want to study this course or subject?



2

How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

3

What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

