



INVESTIN

THE ULTIMATE WORK EXPERIENCE

The UCAS Personal Statement is Changing **Everything you need to know**

26th March 2025

TIMETABLE

6.00 – 6.05 Introduction

6.05 – 6.30 The new UCAS personal statement format

6.30 – 6.35 How InvestIN can support you

6.35 – 7.00 Live Q&A panel with Dr Ben Morgan & Theo Boyce

Submit your questions throughout via [slido.com](https://www.slido.com) #UCAS

This presentation is being recorded – you will automatically receive the slides & recording tomorrow!

THE ULTIMATE WORK EXPERIENCE

We deliver immersive career experience programmes for students **aged 15-18**, with **15 careers** to choose from.

Our mission is to enable students to **choose the right career** and **maximise their chances** of breaking into that field.

Students can gain **hands-on experience alongside top professionals**, explore real **workplaces** and receive **certification** to demonstrate their passion and commitment to their field in university applications.

We've been working with professionals to support young people in career exploration and university applications **for over a decade**.



We've worked with over

1,000+

industry professionals to design and deliver the ultimate work experience

We've provided over

70,000+

students with an immersive experience of their dream career

Partnerships with 1000+ schools across the globe



What is UCAS?

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the **centralised platform** managing applications to universities, post-uni studies, apprenticeships and internships.

Students search for and use the UCAS platform to apply to up to **up to 5 courses** of their choice.

Alongside listing your qualifications and reference, you also supply a personal statement.

What is the personal statement?

It is the written section of the application that demonstrates to universities **why** you are applying for a particular course and why you are the **right** candidate for the course.

You can select up to 5 courses to apply for, but can only **submit 1 personal statement**, so it should apply to all the courses you are applying to.

Why is it important?

This is your opportunity to demonstrate your **passion** and **potential** for your chosen course, as well as how your relevant **achievements** and **experiences** have inspired you.

Applications to university have risen. For competitive courses in particular, it can be a **key differentiator** for tutors when choosing between applicants with the same grades.

Historical entry grades data for:

- Medicine at Cambridge
- Economics at LSE

Grades held by accepted students



A*A*A*
Highest grades

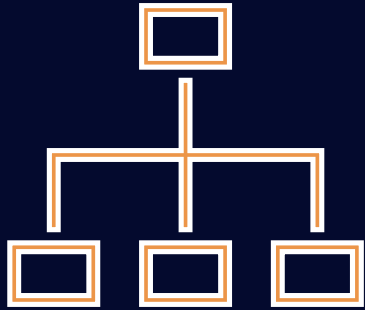
A*AA
Lowest grades

Rate of offers for UK school leavers



Students aged 17/18 who applied to this course were offered a place.

What's changing for 2026 entry?



Format & Structure

Instead of one long 4000-character essay, there are now 3 structured questions to answer.



Character Count

The 4000-character count (including spaces) remains, but you can split these characters flexibly across sections (min. 350 characters).



Question Prompts

The questions indicate what students should include in each question and UCAS has provided guidance.

What are the new questions?

1

..... **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**

2

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

3

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

Why is the format changing?

According to student feedback, the majority of students **struggled to know what to include** in the essay.

What is *not* changing?

The **purpose** of the personal statement remains the same.



Academic potential to thrive on the course



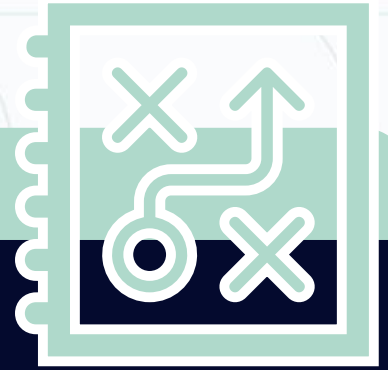
Independent, organised learners with the **initiative** to **drive their own learning**



Long-term commitment to the course and university

What are admissions *actually* looking for?

Question 1



“Why do you want to study this course or subject?”

“Why do you want to study this course or subject?”

This is the dedicated section to explain **what** has sparked your interest in your chosen field and **why**.

What should students aim to demonstrate?

- **Motivations** for studying that course: what moment or experience as ignited your passion?
- Their **depth of interest**, by referring to relevant activities or experiences that reflect intellectual curiosity.
- **Future goals** and why this course/subject is a good fit.

Top tip for question 1:

- Avoid discussing your motivation in general terms – be as **specific, direct and concise** as possible when communicating a moment or experience that sparked your interest.



Prompts for question 1:

Your motivations for studying that course



Why do you love this subject?
Have you been inspired by anyone or anything to pursue this field?
What is important to you about this subject?

Your knowledge of this subject area and interests



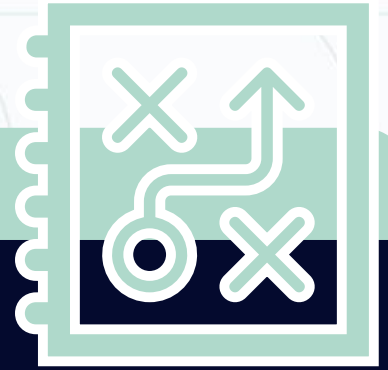
What particular area of the subject are you most interested in?
Is there a particular book, piece of research or subject expert that has inspired you?
What are you excited to learn more about?

Your future plans and why this course/subject is a good fit



Do you have a plan for what you want to do with your career?
How will your studies support this?
If you don't know, what will your course provide you that will be important for your future?

Question 2



“How have your **qualifications** and **studies** helped you **prepare** for this course or subject?”

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

This is the time to draw on your **academic achievements** and **super-curriculars**, to extend on why you are interested in this field (question 1), but also to prove that you have the **initiative** to **drive your own learning**, by engaging with this subject **beyond the classroom**.

What to include

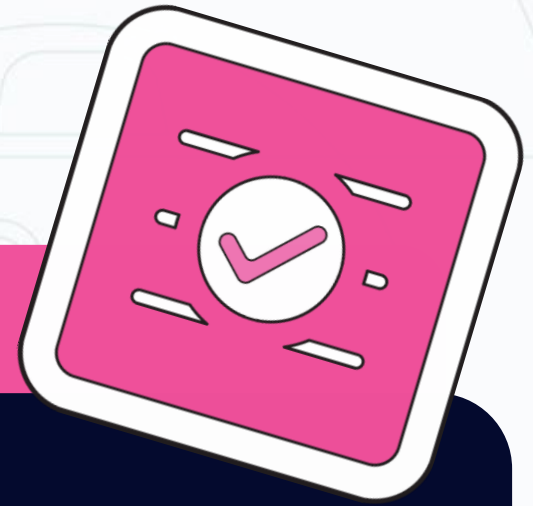
- Specific academic **topics, modules** or **projects** at school that have inspired you and **shaped your thinking** or skills.
- References to relevant **wider reading, research** or **related courses/programmes/clubs** that have deepened your understanding and if appropriate, how this relates to the course curriculum.

Top tip for question 2:

- Tutors will be able to see your qualifications listed on your application, so **don't waste space** by listing what they can see elsewhere. This is your time to **reflect** on the impact your studies and super-curriculars have had on you and how this has fed into your motivation (i.e. proving what you've written in question 1!).

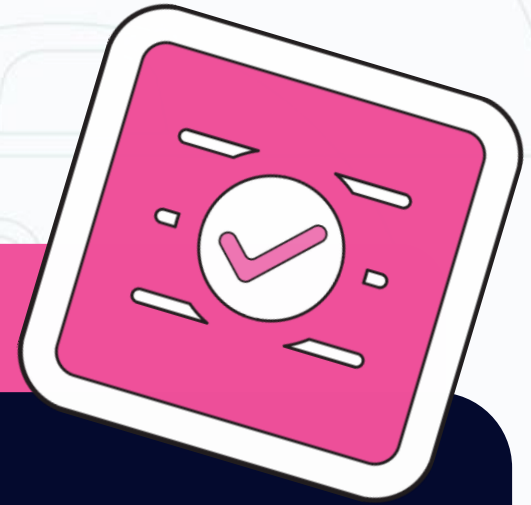


Question 3



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

Question 3



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

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

This is the time to draw on your **relevant extracurricular experiences**, such as **work experience, volunteering, personal responsibilities** or **hobbies** to further demonstrate your potential and commitment.

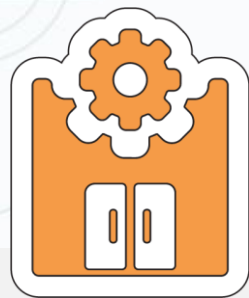
What should students aim to demonstrate?

- **Relevant** experiences outside of the classroom to **extend** your **evidence** of subject engagement: work experience, volunteering, employment, personal life responsibilities, hobbies or achievements.
- If your chosen course requires work experience, this is where to include what you did but most importantly, **how** and **why** it matters for your chosen subject.

Top tip for question 3:

- **Quality** of your reflections trumps the quantity of activities you have completed. Don't just list everything you have done!





Question 1

Show your spark for the subject, with specificity and genuine enthusiasm.



Question 2

Highlight how your studies extended and shaped your thinking, going beyond the core subject curriculum.



Question 3

Present experiences beyond school as further evidence of your curiosity and potential, always tying them back to why they matter for your chosen course.

Pulling it all together

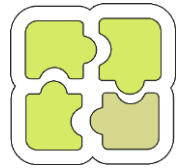
Writing style & structure



Demonstrate **critical thinking** and **academic reflection**. When mentioning a piece of reading, a theory or principle, or work experience, show your **unique take** on it.



All three questions will be read together – ensure there is **logical progression** and cohesion between your answers.



Every sentence should serve a purpose. **Keep editing** until you have removed any unnecessary words, jargon and repetition.



Be yourself! Show the admission tutor who you are, in your own words, avoiding any performative writing.

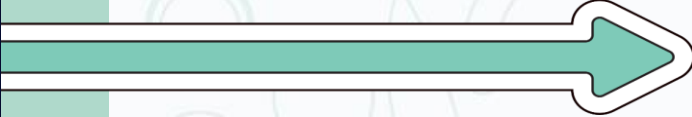
Pulling it all
together:
What to avoid!

- ✘ Listing off everything you've achieved
- ✘ Repeating information already available in your application
- ✘ Spending too long on personal stories or issues and losing sight of what the statement is really for
- ✘ Making simple spelling and grammatical errors
- ✘ Using clichés
- ✘ Using performative language and jargon
- ✘ Lying or exaggerating

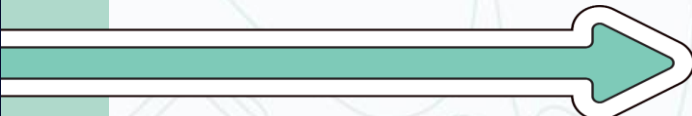
Next Steps



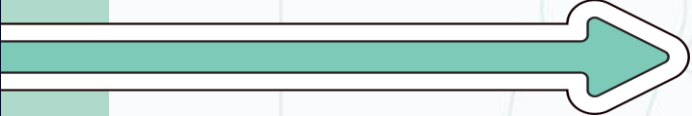
Research your chosen course!



Reflect on your studies: what specific topics, modules or projects have you completed at school so far that stand out to you?



Mind map **all the super-curriculars, extra-curriculars and work experience** you've gained so far. Highlight the best examples and **identify connections** with your chosen field.



Identify **gaps:** what knowledge and skills are required in your chosen field and what could you do between now and when you apply to **deepen your knowledge and skills?**

The time to get ahead is now.

Make the most of your summer!



Relevant **work experience & volunteering**



Wider **reading**, research & personal **projects**



University and course **research, insight days** and **campus visits**



Start **drafting!**

Key dates for 2026

Please check these dates again on the UCAS website as they could be subject to change

14th January 2026

Deadline for most other courses

29th April 2025

UCAS will show courses available for 2026

13th May 2025

Applications for undergraduate courses open, but cannot be submitted until 2nd September 2025.

May 2026

Deadline for decisions from universities on most applications

15th October 2025

Deadline for application to Oxbridge, Med/Vet/Dentist Courses.

Note 2nd October deadline for conservatoire music applications.

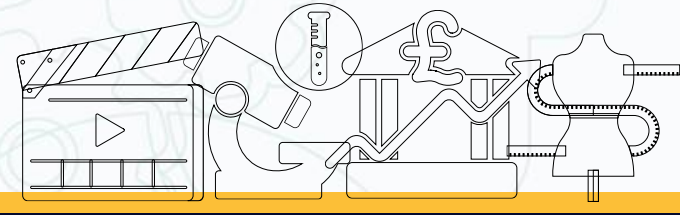
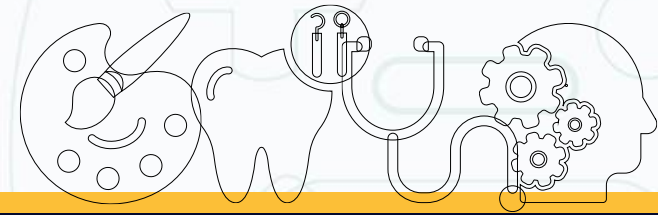


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ULTIMATE

WORK

EXPERIENCE



CHOOSE FROM
15
DIFFERENT
INDUSTRIES



ARCHITECTURE

ART

COMPUTER SCIENCE

DENTISTRY

ENGINEERING

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FASHION DESIGN

FILMMAKING

FORENSIC SCIENCE

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

INVESTMENT BANKING

LAW

MEDICINE

PSYCHOLOGY

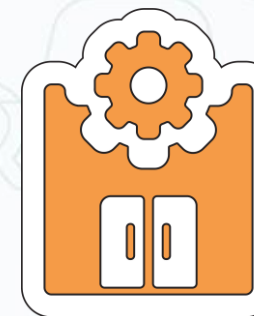
VETERINARY MEDICINE



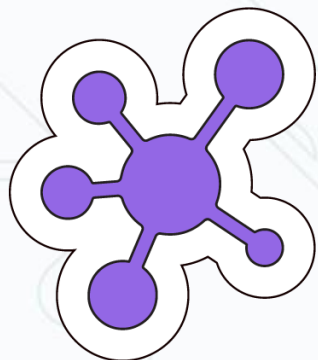
**Gain hands-on experience
with top professionals**



**Gain a certificate,
reference letter &
accredited award in work
experience to boost
university applications**



Explore real workplaces



**Meet students from
around the world**



**Live in UCL halls
of residence**

Summer Experiences 2025

Students aged 15-18

1 or 2 weeks

In-person in London

July & August start dates

UCL accommodation optional

80% full for 2025



Our alumni



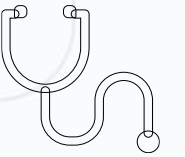
78%

Referenced us in their university application



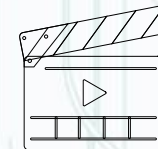
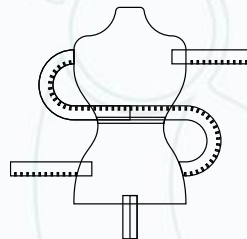
3/4

Of the students who referenced their InvestIN programme in their application received a place at their first-choice university.



80%

Said that our programmes helped them decide on their career



How can students use InvestIN?

Add your experience with InvestIN to your university application in the extracurriculars section & the personal statement.

Question 1:

Evidence of your source of inspiration and motivation: the professionals you met, workplaces you visited, or the work and activities you completed.

Question 3:

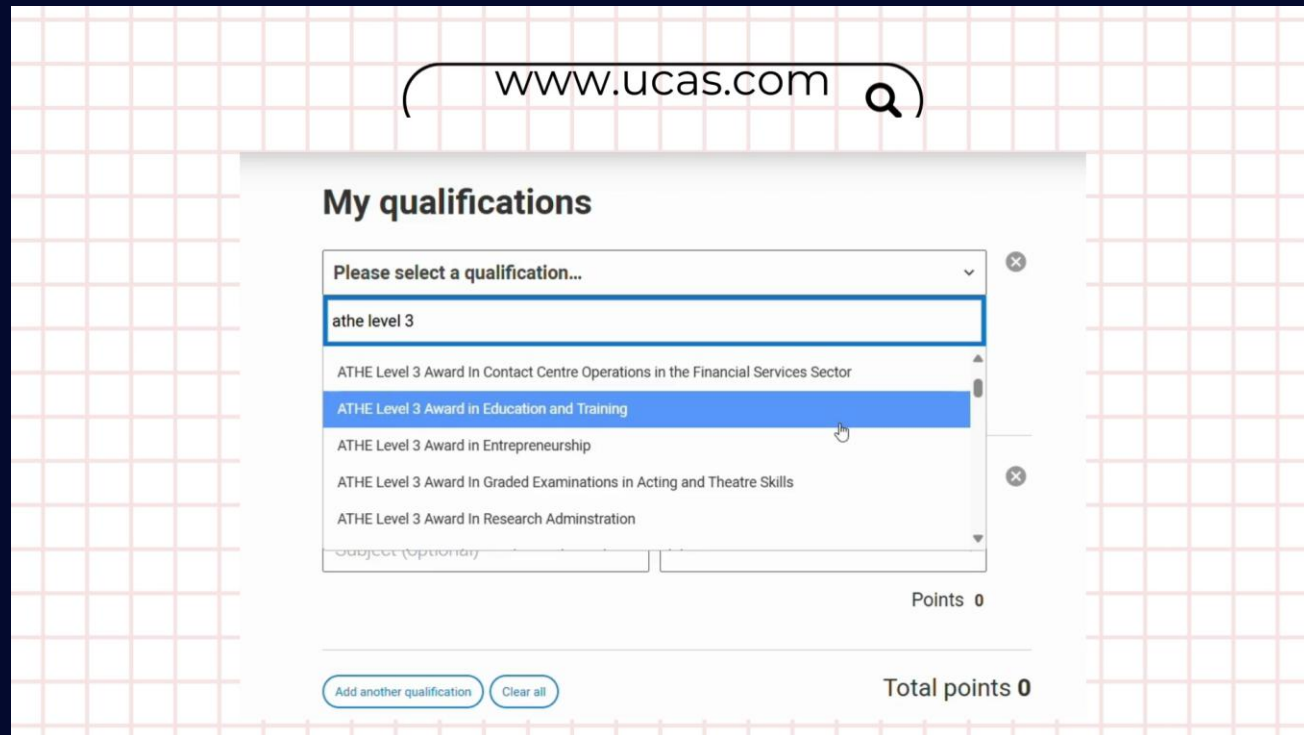
Evidence of work experience, demonstrating a commitment to your future goals and the capacity to apply academic theory and skills to the real working world.

In interviews!

Bring your passion to life with lived experience and talking points to demonstrate your compatibility with the field and possession of transferable employability skills.

Gain a qualification & UCAS points for work experience

Concrete evidence of the key employability skills you've gained.



The screenshot shows the UCAS website interface. At the top, the URL 'www.ucas.com' is visible. Below it, the 'My qualifications' section is displayed. A dropdown menu is open, showing a list of qualifications to select from. The selected option is 'ATHE Level 3 Award in Education and Training'. Below the dropdown, there are two empty input fields for 'Subject (optional)' and 'Points'. At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'Add another qualification' and 'Clear all'. The 'Total points' is currently set to 0.

www.ucas.com

My qualifications

Please select a qualification...

- athe level 3
- ATHE Level 3 Award in Contact Centre Operations in the Financial Services Sector
- ATHE Level 3 Award in Education and Training
- ATHE Level 3 Award in Entrepreneurship
- ATHE Level 3 Award in Graded Examinations in Acting and Theatre Skills
- ATHE Level 3 Award in Research Administration

Subject (optional)

Points 0

Add another qualification Clear all

Total points 0

If you join us for 2 weeks this summer, you can opt to achieve a Level 3 Award in Work Experience, and you can simply add this to your application along with your other academic qualifications.

Join our Q&A

Head to **Slido.com** and enter the code **#UCAS**
to submit your questions



Dr Ben Morgan
15 years as Oxford
admissions tutor



Theo Boyce
Oxbridge Applications

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Thank you and good luck!



We'd love to hear from you!
Scan the QR code or enter the code **#UCAS**
to take you to our feedback page

Or get in touch via:

Website: www.investin.org

Email: info@investin.org

Phone: +44(0)20 30488 5089

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