

Psychology personal statement guide

Get the tone right in your psychology personal statement and write about your interest, enthusiasm, and commitment to studying this fascinating, scientific, and rewarding subject.

What do admissions staff at universities and colleges want to see?

Working out what to include in your personal statement can feel daunting, but we've got some tips to help get you started.

1

Think about why you want to study the subject

- Have you been inspired by someone, a news story, a documentary, or a podcast?
- Do you have career aspirations in this area of study?
- What interests you about the subject – be specific; rather than saying you enjoy it or are good at it, try to explain the 'why' behind your reasoning.
- What do you already know about the subject and what are you looking forward to learning more about?

2

What makes you suitable to study the subject?

- Have you done projects or essays in this subject at school or college?
- Think about who you are as a person; your personality, your strengths, your experiences in life – how do these make you suited to study the subject?
- How have you shown an interest in the subject outside of school or college – have you done extra reading, online courses, been part of clubs or competitions?
- Your current subjects and grades will be included elsewhere in your application, so try to think about specific things you've learned during your studies that relate to the subject, rather than listing your grades and subjects.

3

Look at the bigger picture

- Have you done any work experience, an internship or had a part-time job in this subject area or related? Most job or work experience will give you transferable skills, even if it's in a different industry.
- Do you have any hobbies you can mention that might relate to your chosen subject? Many hobbies show that you can be motivated outside of school to achieve and succeed in something you're interested in.
- Think about how your life and personal experiences have helped make you the person you are today, and how these challenges and experiences can support your application by evidencing essential qualities for certain subjects.
- If you've got ambitions and goals for your life and career, can you express how this subject will help you reach these goals?

Guidance and examples you can use

Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

This is your opportunity to showcase your passion and knowledge of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges why it's a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

Examples:

- Write about what's inspired you to want to study for a psychology degree. You may have done A level (or equivalent) psychology and want to study specific elements further. Or you may be fascinated by influencers on social media and want to explore the use of reciprocity and other forms of psychological persuasion further.
- Mention books you've read, such as *Man's Search for Meaning*, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, or *The Body Keeps The Score*, or people you follow, and what you've learned from them.
- The University of Bristol wants you to 'demonstrate your enthusiasm for psychological research as a focus for academic study'. Think of a time when you've studied human behaviour – for example, if that's through a particular reality TV show you enjoy, expand on how you'd monitor and analyse the contestants if you were researching it as part of your degree.

Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

This is your chance to shout about the relevant or transferable skills you've gained from your formal education and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area.

Examples:

- What projects or coursework have you done that are relevant? You may have already studied human behaviours or thinking patterns in psychology, sociology or geography. Think about the skills you acquired such as making hypotheses, and collecting and analysing data.
- What other skills have you picked up from studying sciences, maths, or economics, such as statistical analysis, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills?
- You're going to train in psychology – try and explain what attributes of your own you've become aware of through your formal education, such as good attention to detail, empathy and people skills, or being a thorough researcher. Give examples to illustrate this.
- Have you done any online courses to boost your knowledge in the subject? For example, why not try [Subject Spotlights](#) or [Virtual Work Experiences](#) from Springpod to grow your skills and interest?

Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

This is your chance to talk about any other activities you have undertaken outside of your formal education, or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be highly personal to you and anything you do include should reflect on why you're including it.

Examples:

- Give examples of extracurricular activities you're involved in that indicate the contribution you're likely to make to university life. Perhaps you're part of a running club, or love playing squash or tennis, or maybe you were involved with your school radio station and you're keen to continue that hobby at uni.
- Any relevant work experience you have under your belt is also worth talking about. But if you haven't gained experience in the field directly, think creatively – there might be ways to link observations from your part-time job, voluntary work, or extracurricular activities to psychology.
- Include examples where you can demonstrate good interpersonal and communication skills through part-time jobs you've had in a cafe or shop, or volunteering you've done. You can also mention personal experiences you've been through and what applicable skills that's given you – but only if it's relevant to your future studies.

How to set yourself apart

The key to setting yourself apart in your application is to remember how important the 'personal' bit is to your personal statement. What makes you, you?

If you're interested in a particular area of psychology, such as child or educational psychology, link that to your personal experiences. Perhaps you've had a much younger sibling or did work experience in a nursery or primary school, and you've witnessed children's developmental psychology in real-time. Think how that has inspired you to want to study on the particular course you're applying for.

If you spend time on social media, perhaps you've noticed how the algorithms affect your attention span or your mood, and you can reflect on what you've learned about human and behavioural psychology from that. It's even better if you've taken it one step further and read something like Jonathan Haidt's book *The Anxious Generation*, and learned about research or analytical techniques from his work.

[UCAS Psychology](#)

Dos

- ✓ Do relate any examples back to the subject you're applying to – make it relevant
- ✓ Do make it personal – admissions staff want to get to know who you are
- ✓ Do use a spell-checker and grammar-checker to ensure there are no errors
- ✓ Do ask people for feedback, whether that's family members or teachers
- ✓ Do your research to find out what universities are looking for, and make sure you include evidence to show how you are suitable for the course

Don'ts

- × Don't just list out examples, subjects you study, or experiences you've had without any evidence
- × Don't copy something you've seen online or use AI to write something for you
- × Don't make things up just because you think they'll make you look good on paper
- × Don't leave it until the last minute – you need time for several drafts
- × Don't worry about making each section the same length; as long as you hit the minimum character count, you can use the 4,000 characters across each answer in the way that suits you best