

OPENING MORE DOORS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

YOUR GUIDE TO:

- THE NEW PERSONAL STATEMENT
- NO APPLICATION FEE FOR STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED FREE SCHOOL MEALS
- NEW HISTORICAL ENTRY GRADES TOOL



THE NEW PERSONAL STATEMENT

We're excited to announce a significant update for 2026 entry. The new personal statement will have three sections, each carefully scaffolded with specific, mandatory questions to improve the application experience for all. These three questions will give higher education providers the information they tell us is the most use to them.

The structured format will provide students from all backgrounds with clear guidance through the writing process to ensure consistency. It will help them to articulate their thoughts and include key information for their university application.



PERSONAL STATEMENT 2026
UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

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 they are a good fit for you and your future ambitions.

Up to 4,000 characters across the three sections.

Minimum of 350 characters

Next

PERSONAL STATEMENT 2026
UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

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

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

Minimum of 350 characters

Next

PERSONAL STATEMENT 2026
UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION

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

This is your chance to reflect on any other activities you have undertaken outside of your education or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be deeply personal to you, so anything you include should be meaningful and relevant to you.

Minimum of 350 characters

Next

READ MORE

89% OF STUDENTS FELT THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW PERSONAL STATEMENT IS EXTREMELY CLEAR OR CLEAR. THEY ALSO TOLD US IT HELPS THEIR DECISION-MAKING.

"THESE CHANGES WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR STUDENTS TO COMPLETE THEIR PERSONAL STATEMENT AND UNDERSTAND WHAT TO INCLUDE."

HELEN REED
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

- Learn about the new personal statement and how we'll support you and your students.
- Download assets to share with your colleagues, and invaluable top tips to support your students.
- Find detailed examples of what to write in each section to support a range of students applying to different subjects.
- Refer to our handy FAQs to help you understand the new personal statement structure.

SCAN HERE OR VISIT:
[UCAS.COM/ADVISERS/PS2026](https://ucas.com/advisers/ps2026)



NO APPLICATION FEE FOR STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

As a charity focused on fair access to higher education, we're committed to removing obstacles for students, especially those experiencing hardship. With living costs rising, we're opening opportunities and getting rid of the application fee for students who have been in receipt of free school meals.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

We need your support to launch this new initiative for 2025. Please complete the necessary steps in the Adviser Portal and encourage eligible students to declare their receipt of free school meals.

Eligible students will need to:

- **Declare they are/or have been in receipt of free school meals in the 'More About You' section of the application.**
- **Choose the option 'Pay By Centre' when they review and submit their application from 3 September 2024.**

To support your eligible students to receive the fee waiver you'll need to:

- ✓ Check your application fee payment method in 'Centre Management' is set to a method that enables invoicing. This ensures UCAS can apply the fee waiver to eligible students, and they do not need to pay when they submit their application.
- ✓ Encourage eligible students to make a positive self-declaration in the 'More About You' section that they have been in receipt of free school meals at some point in the last six years.
- ✓ Provide agreement in the Adviser Portal that there is evidence that the student qualifies for the fee waiver.

Centres will not be invoiced for eligible students confirmed in the Adviser Portal.

Please share this guidance with your colleagues so that all eligible applicants can benefit from the fee waiver.

"THOSE OF US WITH SIXTH FORMS SERVING DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES KNOW THIS £28.50 CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TALENTED STUDENT DECIDING TO CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES IN AN AREA THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT OR HAVING TO TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH."

DAN MORROW - CEO
DARTMOOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



FIND OUT MORE HERE:
[UCAS.COM/ADVISERS/FSM](https://ucas.com/advisers/fsm)



NEW HISTORICAL ENTRY GRADES TOOL

University can sometimes seem out of reach. Especially for students from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds who can feel daunted by the entry requirements.

By sharing historical grades data, we give students an indication of the grade profiles previously accepted by universities and colleges, so they can compare them with the current entry requirements.



WHAT'S NEW?

To help raise aspirations, the course details pages in our search tool will now display both the required offer rates and historic grades of accepted students. What's more, students will now be able to add their predicted grades to personalise their search and discover courses they have never considered before.

Initially, the beta product will include A level and BTEC grades of 18-year-olds in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland from the 2019-2023 cycles. However, we plan to broaden this range in the future.

STUDENT TESTING SHOWED HIGH LEVELS OF USEFULNESS. 78% FOUND IT EXTREMELY OR VERY USEFUL.

This feature was recommended by Universities UK's Fair Admissions Review and the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, promoting inclusivity and fairness in admissions.



DISCOVER MORE:
[UCAS.COM/ADVISERS/HEGT](https://ucas.com/advisers/hegt)

DID YOU KNOW? AROUND HALF OF STUDENTS ARE ACCEPTED ON TO UNIVERSITY COURSES WITH GRADES LOWER THAN THE PUBLISHED ENTRY REQUIREMENTS.

*Research from 2019



Illustrations designed by Storyset on Freepik.com