



AURION EDUCATION

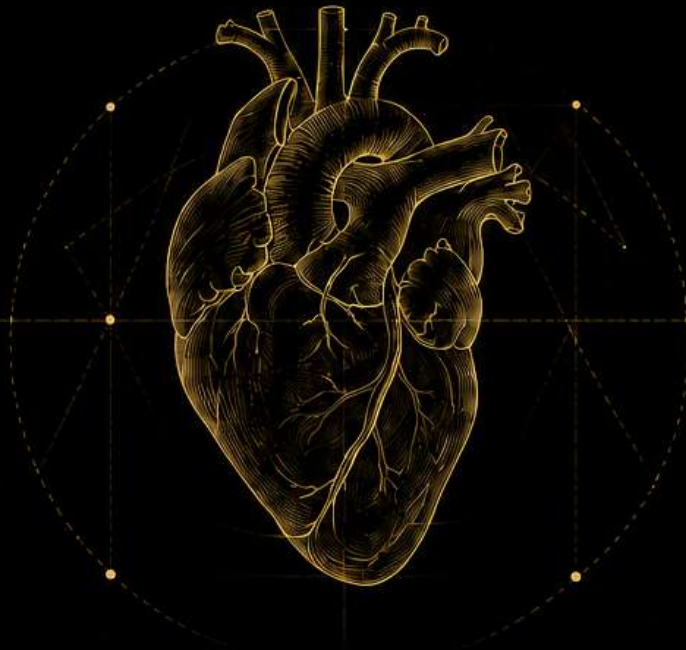
THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT

PERSONAL
STATEMENT



A Step-by-Step Guide to Building a
Stronger UCAS Personal Statement

From experiences → reflection → a compelling application





WHY YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT MATTERS

Your personal statement is an important part of your UCAS application. It allows universities to understand the person behind the grades.

THE THREE QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER

01

Why do you want to study this course or subject?

02

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

03

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

A STRONG PERSONAL STATEMENT SHOULD SHOW

- ◇ Genuine motivation for the subject
- ◇ Evidence of academic curiosity
- ◇ How experiences shaped your understanding
- ◇ Skills and qualities you have developed
- ◇ How you think and reflect
- ◇ What you can contribute beyond academic achievement

A great personal statement is not a list of achievements. It is a story of how your experiences shaped your interest, skills and readiness for your chosen subject.

—◇ **EXPERIENCE** tells the reader what you did.

—◇ **REFLECTION** tells the reader why it matters.

Medicine is used as a worked example throughout this guide, but the framework applies to almost any UCAS subject.



STEP 1 • BUILD YOUR EXPERIENCE BANK

BEFORE YOU WRITE, BUILD YOUR EVIDENCE

Do not begin by writing paragraphs. First, create an 'Experience Bank' containing everything you could potentially use.

EXPERIENCE / ACHIEVEMENT	WHAT I DID	WHAT I LEARNED	SKILL / KNOWLEDGE
Hospital volunteering	Supported patients and observed staff	Importance of adapting communication	Communication
Society leadership	Organised events and led a team	Different people require different leadership approaches	Leadership
Relevant book	Explored an academic topic independently	Developed a question or new perspective	Academic curiosity

WHAT SHOULD GO INTO YOUR EXPERIENCE BANK?

 Academic experiences	 Books	 Lectures	 Competitions	 Work experience
 Volunteering	 Projects	 Societies	 Leadership	 Awards & extracurricular activities

Identify as many different lessons and skills as possible. Avoid repeatedly using the same generic qualities such as 'teamwork' and 'communication.'

DON'T ASK: 'What sounds impressive?'

ASK: 'What did this experience actually teach me?'



STEP 2 · FIND YOUR 'WHY'

WHERE DID YOUR INTEREST BEGIN?

Identify why you want to study your chosen subject. If you already have a clear reason, write it down in its simplest and most genuine form.

IF YOU ARE UNSURE, THINK BACKWARDS

01

When did you first become interested in this subject?

02

Was there a particular experience, observation, problem or question?

03

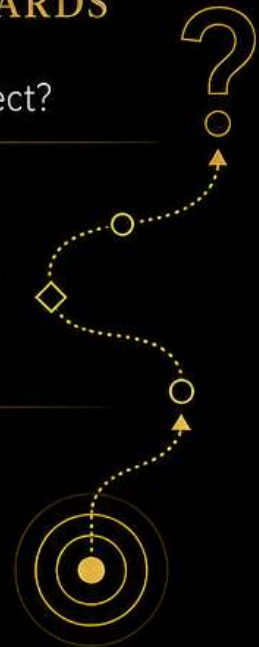
Was there something you read that changed how you thought?

04

When did curiosity become something you wanted to pursue academically?

05

What keeps you interested in the subject now?



YOUR REASON DOES NOT NEED TO BE DRAMATIC

A genuine intellectual observation is often stronger than an exaggerated childhood story.

**YOU DO NOT NEED A LIFE-CHANGING MOMENT.
YOU NEED A BELIEVABLE REASON TO CARE.**



MEDICINE · WORKED EXAMPLE

An observation during clinical exposure might lead you to question how doctors adapt patient care, apply scientific knowledge or make decisions under uncertainty. The observation is the starting point; your curiosity and reflection give it meaning.

THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO ALMOST ANY UCAS SUBJECT.



QUESTION 1 · WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE?

NEVER START WITH 'I WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE BECAUSE...'

A strong opening usually begins with something more specific.



WHERE CAN YOUR OPENING BEGIN?



An experience



An observation



A problem you encountered



An academic concept



A book or article



A question that intrigued you

Follow the thought far enough, and it should naturally reveal why you want to study the subject.

WEAK

◇ — vs — ◇

STRONGER

"I want to study Medicine because I have always been passionate about helping people."

"During [experience], I became intrigued by [specific observation]. Seeing how [reflection] made me question [academic/clinical idea], encouraging me to explore..."

THE PURPOSE IS NOT TO SOUND DRAMATIC.

It is to make the reader want to understand how

YOUR MIND WORKS.

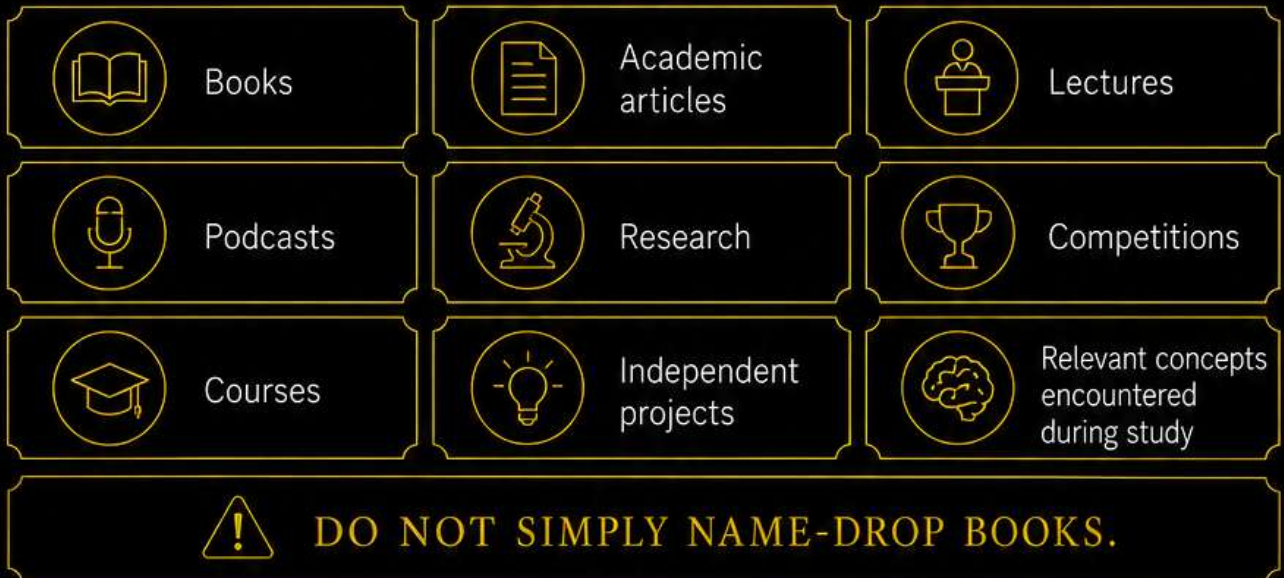


ACADEMIC CURIOSITY

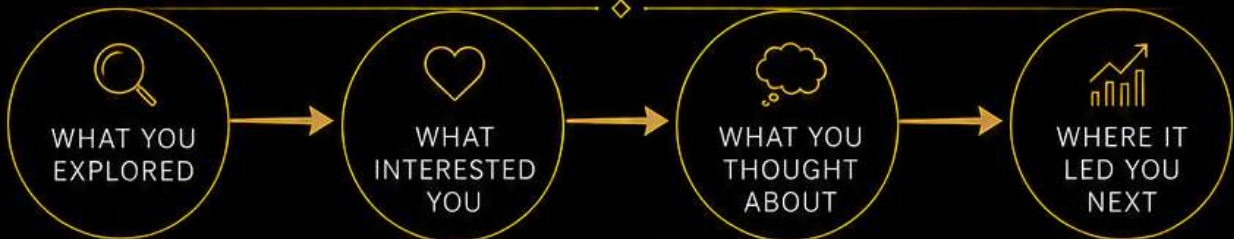
PROVE THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED

Saying “*I am passionate about Biology*” is much weaker than demonstrating what you explored because of that interest.

SELECT THE EVIDENCE THAT MATTERS



BUILD YOUR REFLECTION INTO A CLEAR JOURNEY



INSTEAD OF

AIM FOR

“I read [book title], which was very interesting.”

“Reading [book] introduced me to [idea], particularly [specific concept]. It challenged my previous assumption that..., leading me to explore...”

KEEP EVERYTHING CONCISE.

ONE DEEPLY REFLECTED EXAMPLE

can be stronger than five titles.



DEPTH > QUANTITY

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE: TRYING TO INCLUDE EVERYTHING

You may believe an impressive personal statement
needs as many experiences as possible.

— IT DOES NOT. —

UNIVERSITIES DO NOT SIMPLY WANT AN INVENTORY OF:



THEY WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU LEARNED.

THE REFLECTION FRAMEWORK



WHAT?

What happened?



SO WHAT?

What did you learn,
notice or question?



NOW WHAT?

How did this change
what you did, thought
or explored next?

THREE DEEPLY REFLECTED EXPERIENCES
CAN REVEAL **FAR MORE ABOUT YOU**
THAN TEN UNEXPLAINED ACHIEVEMENTS.

Your reflection—not the length of your list—is
what makes the evidence meaningful.



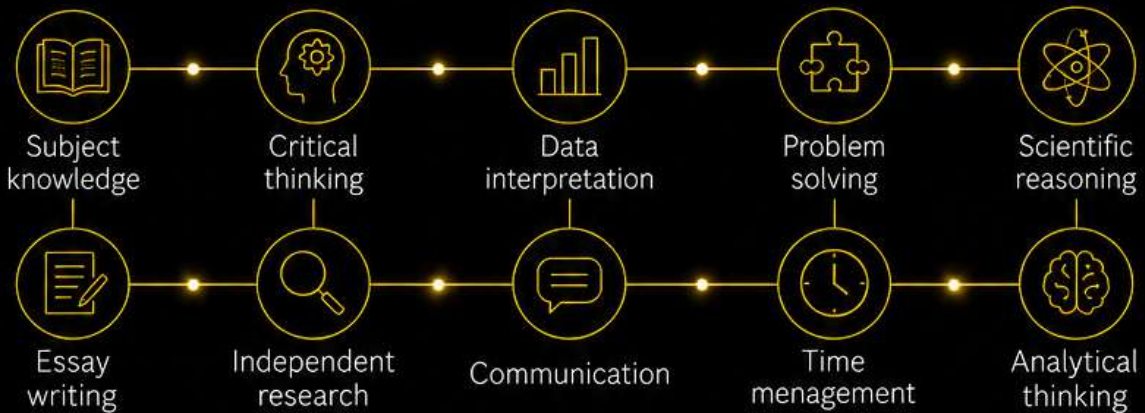
QUESTION 2 · HOW HAVE YOUR STUDIES PREPARED YOU?

TURN YOUR QUALIFICATIONS INTO EVIDENCE

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

Return to your Experience Bank from Page 3. Select academic experiences that demonstrate relevant knowledge, thinking or transferable skills.

WHAT COULD YOUR EVIDENCE SHOW?



**CONNECT EXPERIENCES.
DO NOT DISCUSS THEM IN ISOLATION.**



HOW THE CONNECTION MIGHT SOUND

“Learning to communicate complex scientific ideas through [experience] became particularly valuable during [second experience], where I had to adapt my explanations to...”

**YOUR EXPERIENCES BECOME STRONGER
WHEN EACH ONE BUILDS ON THE LAST.**



COHERENCE

MAKE EVERY EXPERIENCE LEAD SOMEWHERE

One of the clearest differences between an average and an excellent personal statement is **COHERENCE**.

AVOID WRITING:

"I did X. I also did Y. Furthermore, I participated in Z."



INSTEAD, LET EACH EXPERIENCE BUILD ON THE LAST.

**HOW A COHERENT STORY DEVELOPS**

The reader should feel that each experience naturally leads to the next.

**YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT SHOULD FEEL LIKE
ONE ARGUMENT FOR WHY YOU ARE READY
FOR THE COURSE —
NOT SEVERAL UNRELATED MINI-PARAGRAPHS.**



QUESTION 3 • WHAT HAVE YOU DONE OUTSIDE EDUCATION?

SHOW WHO YOU ARE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

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

This section can demonstrate **qualities** you have not already shown academically.

WHAT COULD YOU INCLUDE?



Society
leadership



Volunteering



Sport



Music



Employment



Caring
responsibilities



Community
projects



Competitions



Awards



Entrepreneurship



Creative
activities

EVERY EXTRACURRICULAR SHOULD HAVE A PURPOSE.

DO NOT SIMPLY WRITE:

“I play piano and tennis in my spare time.”

ACTIVITY → WHAT IT REVEALS

Discipline

Resilience

Teamwork

Leadership

Balance

Communication

Responsibility

Another
relevant
quality

Briefly explain what each experience **reveals** about you
and why that quality matters.

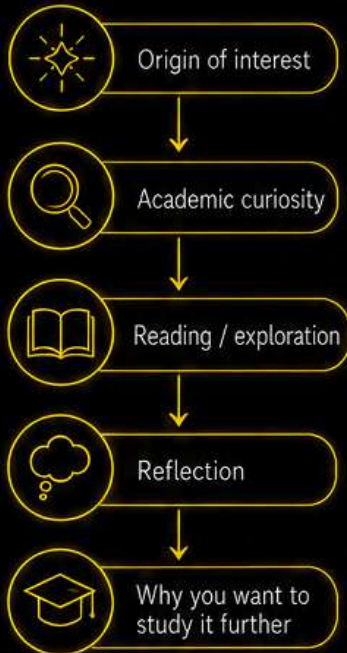
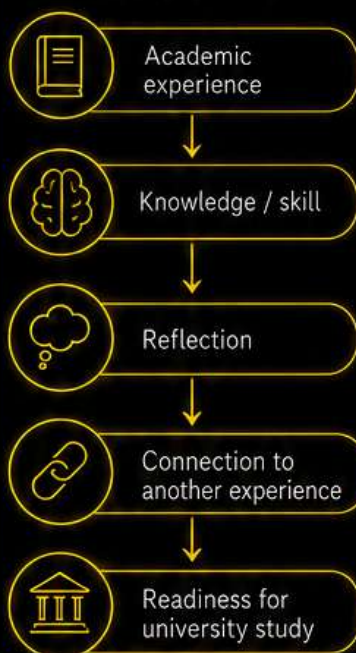
UNIVERSITIES WANT TO SEE THAT YOU CAN:
MANAGE UNIVERSITY LIFE • CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR WIDER COMMUNITY

REFLECTION STILL MATTERS
MORE THAN THE ACTIVITY ITSELF.



THE FINAL ANATOMY

HOW THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER

QUESTION 1**• WHY THIS SUBJECT?****QUESTION 2****• HOW HAVE YOUR STUDIES PREPARED YOU?****QUESTION 3****• WHAT HAVE YOU DONE OUTSIDE EDUCATION?**

EVERY PARAGRAPH SHOULD ANSWER AT LEAST ONE:

**FINAL EDITING CHECKLIST**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ✓ Remove repetition. | ✓ Deepen reflection. |
| ✓ Remove unnecessary descriptions. | ✓ Strengthen links between experiences. |
| ✓ Replace claims with evidence. | ✓ Keep every sentence purposeful. |

ONE PERSONAL STATEMENT • THREE QUESTIONS • ONE COHERENT ARGUMENT



THE FINAL CHECK

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT...

☒ 1. Does my opening immediately show genuine interest?	☒ 7. Have I demonstrated different skills rather than repeating the same ones?
☒ 2. Have I demonstrated rather than simply claimed passion?	☒ 8. Have I explained why my experiences matter?
☒ 3. Have I shown academic curiosity?	☒ 9. Does every paragraph contribute something new?
☒ 4. Have I reflected on my strongest experiences?	☒ 10. Is my writing concise?
☒ 5. Have I avoided turning the statement into a CV?	☒ 11. Does the statement sound like me?
☒ 6. Do my experiences connect naturally?	☒ 12. After reading it, would someone understand why I am ready to study this subject?

HOW SHOULD YOU END?

The conclusion does not need to be long or dramatic.

It should briefly bring together:

MOTIVATION

+

PREPARATION

+

READINESS FOR
THE NEXT STAGE

DO NOT INTRODUCE COMPLETELY NEW EXPERIENCES IN THE CONCLUSION.

YOUR EXPERIENCES DO NOT MAKE
YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT UNIQUE.
THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT THEM DOES.



AURION EDUCATION

PERSONALISED UCAS GUIDANCE



NEED A SECOND PAIR OF EYES ON YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT?



*Aurion Education provides personalised UCAS application
and personal statement guidance to help students turn their
experiences into compelling applications.*

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Thoughtful feedback · Clearer reflection · A stronger final application

