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**20** UNIVERSITY FOR  
**IMPROVING**  
**THE STUDENT**  
**EXPERIENCE**

NATIONAL  
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SURVEY 2016



University of  
Bedfordshire

Be inspired

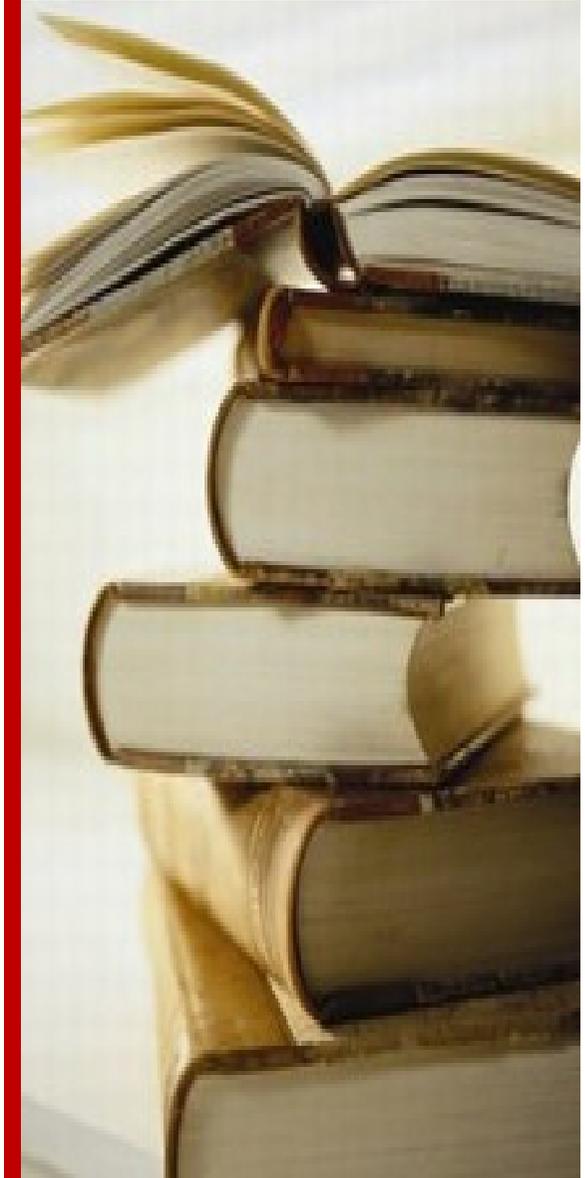
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*Personal Statements Workshop*

*Liam Stott, Higher Education Advisor*

## Today you will...

- Understand how to structure a personal statement
- Examine examples of 'good' and 'bad' personal statements
- Start / continue working on your personal statement



# What should Personal Statements cover?

- Reasons for choosing the course – what inspired them? Background reading? University / employer visit? Work experience?
- Show why they would be suitable for the course
- Capability for higher level study – independence, motivation, academic ability...
- Career aspirations
- Other interests, abilities and achievements



# Drafting A Personal Statement

- Practice writing using clear, plain English – avoid fancy or flowery language
- Write as much as possible at the start!
- Make list of hobbies and achievements
- Demonstrate your strongest skills and personality
- Do not repeat the subject too much!
- Remember what and who you are writing for
- Don't make things up! Be focussed and authentic
- Do research on the course and provide examples of areas of specific interest
- Organised and literate



# Drafting A Personal Statement

- Condensing written material in to an organised personal statement
- Punchy opening paragraph – avoid these opening lines:  
I have always wanted to be a Nurse because it is easier than being a Doctor...  
I have always wanted to become a Doctor ever since I was born...- clichéd  
I think I will be a fantastic Primary School teacher because my friends tell me that I always tell people what to do all the time...
- The opening paragraph – demonstrates commitment and excitement for the course and knowledge
- Middle paragraph – show evidence and skills that makes them suitable
- Final paragraph – personal touch – what makes them unique? What personal qualities could they offer?



# Drafting A Personal Statement

Top 10 Opening Lines from the 2015/16 UCAS application cycle:

1. From a young age I have (always) been [interested in/fascinated by]... [1,779]
2. For as long as I can remember I have... [1,451]
3. I am applying for this course because... [1,370]
4. I have always been interested in... [927]
5. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed... [310]
6. Reflecting on my educational experiences... [257]
7. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding [career/profession/course]... [211]
8. Academically, I have always been... [168]
9. I have always wanted to pursue a career in... [160]
10. I have always been passionate about... [160]



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# An example of a Personal Statement (Sport & PE)



Physical Education (PE) is a multidimensional subject that I have continuously enjoyed learning, through school and college. My own personal experiences in PE have guided me to further my knowledge within sport as a whole. The ability to help others strive to maintain a positive experience, both within PE lessons and sport, is the main reason I want to become a PE teacher. These experiences have taught me the importance of understanding the impact physical activity can have on an individual and the overall education, which is required to inform all pupils about the benefits and health risks.



# An example of a Personal Statement (Business Studies)



My motivation to study Accounting /Information Business at degree level develops from my enjoyment from the single Business Studies at AS, currently converted into a double award at A2. For me, Business Studies has proved to be a fascinating subject, one that offers unlimited professional opportunities. My coursework case studies of both Norwich Union and Zenith Conservatories have given me an insight into complexities involved in operating such varied businesses, which I have found most intriguing, particularly those which relate to any financial considerations. Studying these business subjects at degree level will allow me to explore, in depth, a range of stimulating and interdisciplinary topics which I feel will give me a broader understanding towards the theories and practices of management in different organisations in relation to a Financial/Information environment.



# An example of a Personal Statement (Art & Design)

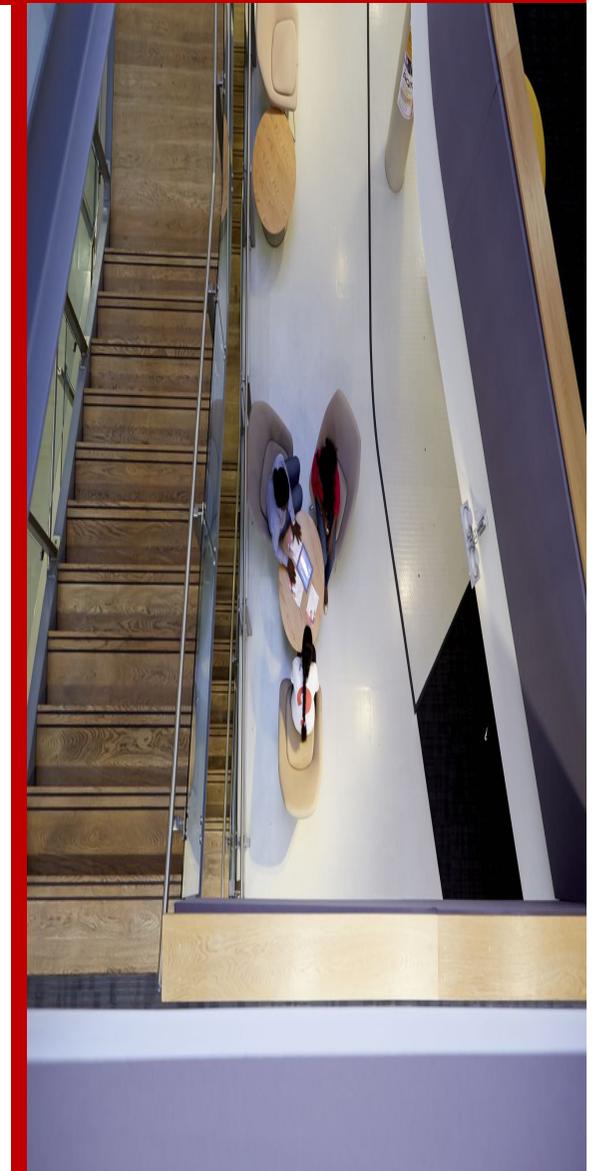


To me, art is like a mystery which is to be solved. I see an artwork as the concentration of an idea or concept into a physical entity. The idea or concept is rarely evident through just looking at piece; it requires analysis or scrutiny to interpret it. This is why I am rarely happy with a piece of art unless I can see some meaning behind it. Whether it is my own or another person's, I feel a great satisfaction when I discover an underlying theme or message; deliberate or not. It is like poring over a cryptic riddle or a puzzle for time until all at once it falls into place.



# UCAS Copycatch Plagiarism Software

- Personal statements are checked against 1,500,000 statements - websites and in books
- 30,000 students 'caught' in 2010
- 10% were identical to other applications personal statements or online examples e.g student rooms
- Universities applied to informed so they can take appropriate action
- Students told by e-mail with details on track
- Flagged up on advisor track for school staff as well



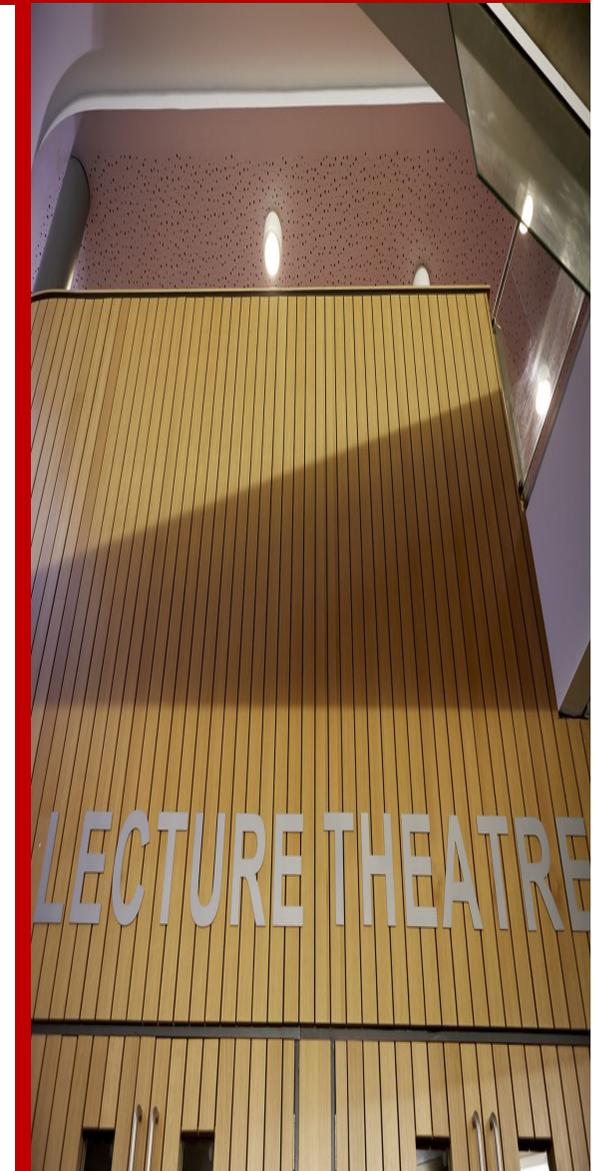
## Hints and Tips...

- Spelling, punctuation and grammar must be of a high standard
- Clear structure
- Avoid the ‘obvious statements’ – “I read”, “I socialise with friends”...
- Never list interests or activities in the final draft
- If applying for combined courses, make sure you address all subjects
- Remember that you only have one statement



# Applying for multiple courses?

- Remember that you only write **one** personal statement so it will be used for all your choices.
- Explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme
- If you are applying for different subjects – So five different courses
- Identify the common themes and skills



Any questions?



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Student Engagement

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**University of Bedfordshire open days/campus tours:**

**Please check [www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/oe](http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/oe)**



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