

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

University applications  
An introduction for parents  
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# The application process

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/parents-and-guardians>

<b>Spring/Summer 2016</b>	<b>Researching courses &amp; universities</b> <b>Draft personal statement</b> <b>Register with UCAS – Electronic</b>
<b>Autumn 2016</b>	Finalising 5 choices & personal statement Submitting UCAS application (on time) Sent to university choices Waiting game - Track
<b>Autumn/Winter 2016/ Spring 2017</b>	Universities make their decision – offers/reject Interviews/Applicant Visit Days Make firm & insurance choices UCAS Extra Apply for accommodation & student finance
<b>Summer 2017</b>	A Level exams Exam results – Confirmation & Clearing
<b>Autumn 2017</b>	Starting university/gap year

**Course choices-  
They must choose  
the right course  
at the right place  
for them**



# There are many choices

## Where to go?

**Over 160 universities/colleges**

## What to study?

**Over 38,000 courses**

UNIVERSITY OF  
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IT'S YOUR TIME

# Which subjects can they study?

- A subject specific to a career
- Subject(s) already studying at school/college
- Specific aspects of A Level subjects
- New subject(s)

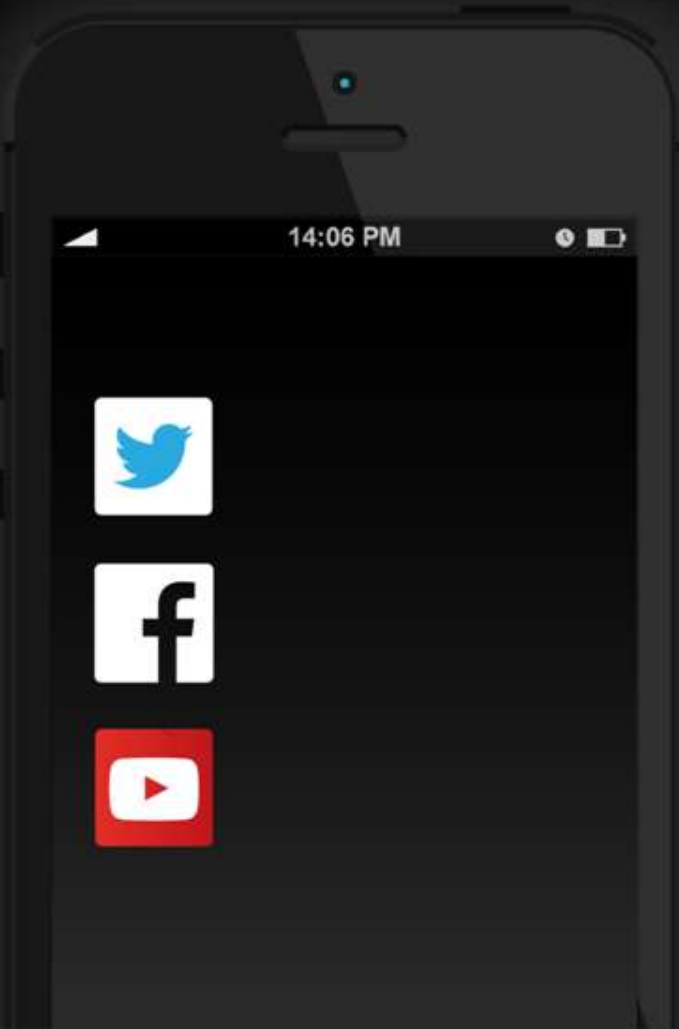


## Choosing courses – research:

- Subject of interest/enjoyment
- Course content
- Teaching and assessment methods
- Entry requirements
- Graduate destinations
- Location
- Accommodation
- Facilities
- Student support
- Student life

# The detective work

- Prospectuses
- Course leaflets
- Internet – UCAS, universities, unistats, Which?university
- Social Media – facebook, youtube etc
- Reference books
- League tables
- Visits



# What do Admissions Tutors look for?

- Apply in time
- Reference
- Will they be able to cope with the academic demands of the course?
- Do they meet the entry requirements?





# Personal statement

- Reasons for course/subject choice
- What they enjoy in any related subjects now
- Interests/reading around the subject
- Career goals/ what hope to gain
- Interests/hobbies
- School/college experience – positions of responsibility
- Involvement in Higher Education activities
- Work experience/employment
- Skills relevant to the course
- Gap year information, if applicable
- Motivation – Commitment - Enthusiasm

# Key skills to do well

## Medicine

- Sound academic background
- Physical stamina
- Manual dexterity
- Desire to help people
- Able to work under pressure
- Time management
- Methodical
- Interest in science
- Communication skills
- IT skills
- Study skills
- Team working
- Self-motivation

They may need a skeleton

**COSTS AN ARM AND A LEG**

# Personal statements

‘I enjoy the theatre and used to go a couple of times a year.’ (Drama)

‘I am a keen reader and committed to the study of human behaviour through TV soaps.’ (Psychology)

‘My interest in medicine stems from my enjoyment of ‘Casualty’ and other related TV series.’

‘To be or not to be, that is the question’. It was this quote from Shakespeare’s Macbeth that persuaded me to study English.

Type of school, college or training centre	Comprehensive ~	
School Number		
Date when the applicant is available for interview due to examinations, etc.		
Total number in post 16 education	Full time	150
Number normally proceeding to higher education each year	Part time	0

A

years and throughout this time he has shown achieved good grades in his GCSE and he is currently completing a four subject

of the basic and many of the more including some extra reading on and him to regularly ask why and he will independently on his A2 coursework in the

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to be general

# Personal statements

When I started school, I believed that when it came to examination and coursework, there was always a right and a wrong answer. As I continued my education, I realised that this was not always the case: there is often more than one answer, the validity of which depends not so much on it being 'right' or 'wrong' but rather whether it is supported by reasoned argument. As part of my English AS I studied Henry V. I was struck how, by selective quotation, it was possible to portray Henry as both a selfless hero and a manipulative opportunist. Similarly, in my study of Mussolini for History, it was apparent that he too could be viewed as either a ruthless tyrant or national hero depending on the source material that was selected.

(Law)

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# Personal Statements

'If I should be accepted to your university I would wish to pursue my chosen field of study, psychology, for one very basic reason: I want to Rule the World. I'm not talking your run of the mill big company, or being Prime Minister, no I'm talking about Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, King Tutankhamen type of Ruling the World except, succeeding where they failed, because quite simply they lacked the basic understanding of human psychology.'

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## Personal statement example

The occupation of engineers, particularly mechanical, because of their vital role in daily life, is something that I have grown to appreciate and now aspire to. My ultimate vision is to be part of a Formula 1 team; the pioneering excellence and precision involved with such an occupation appeals to me and despite its esoteric appearance provides genuine advancements enjoyed by many in their everyday lives.

In Year 12 I did a project on the application and development of technology within Formula 1, and as part of the research, organised a tutorial with the lead engineer of Red Bull Racing. This proved fascinating, his deep knowledge and understanding of the mechanical components of the cars further fuelled my intention to study engineering, and confirmed to me my aspirations of working in Formula 1. David Treymayne's 'The Science of Formula 1 Design' gave a fascinating insight into the individual components which allow the cars to perform as well as they do. My project allowed me to conclude that safety is the primary cause of technological development, the research Formula 1 provides, as well as the budget, allows devices such as Traction Control and ABS to be commercially implemented in the public sector.

# Personal statement examples

‘I have always wanted to either be a doctor or a primary school teacher.’ – Applied for Medicine.

‘I have always wanted to study history or physics’

‘I have always wanted to pursue a Journalism degree’ –  
Birmingham does not do Journalism!



# Making a good impression with their personal statement

- 75% should concentrate on course/subject related issues
- Well structured
- Grammar/spelling/vocabulary
- Be specific
- Be honest
- Be positive
- Be selective
- Take time – edits required, don't have to start with first paragraph
- Don't plagiarise – Similarity Detection Service
- Don't start every sentence with 'I'
- No lists – analyse their experiences





# Top tips for parents

- Get to know UCAS procedures  
<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/parents-and-guardians>
- Up to date information
- Encourage wise use of vacation time for:
  - Research
  - Extra reading
  - Personal statement
  - Work experience
- Visit
- UK students - provide any information required for student finance application if applying for means tested support [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)
- Stay calm in anxious times