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HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH NETWORK

# Personal Statements (Y12)

Carshalton Boys Sports College 10/03/16



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

**HC**  
**FI**  
University  
for the  
Creative Arts

**C** UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE  
FARNBOROUGH



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SURREY**

Part of  
**NNCO**  
National Networks  
for Collaborative  
Outreach

# About us



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Four universities working in partnership to inform young people about university, and how to get there



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# Today's session



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## Information

- Personal Statements and the UCAS process
- What to include and how to structure it. How to gain more experience

## Activities

- Personal Statements for different subjects
- You'll play the role of an Admissions Tutor and decide which one would be given a place

## In your own time...

## Planning

- What good tips and examples will you use?
- Starting a draft – using templates, getting advice

# Before you start



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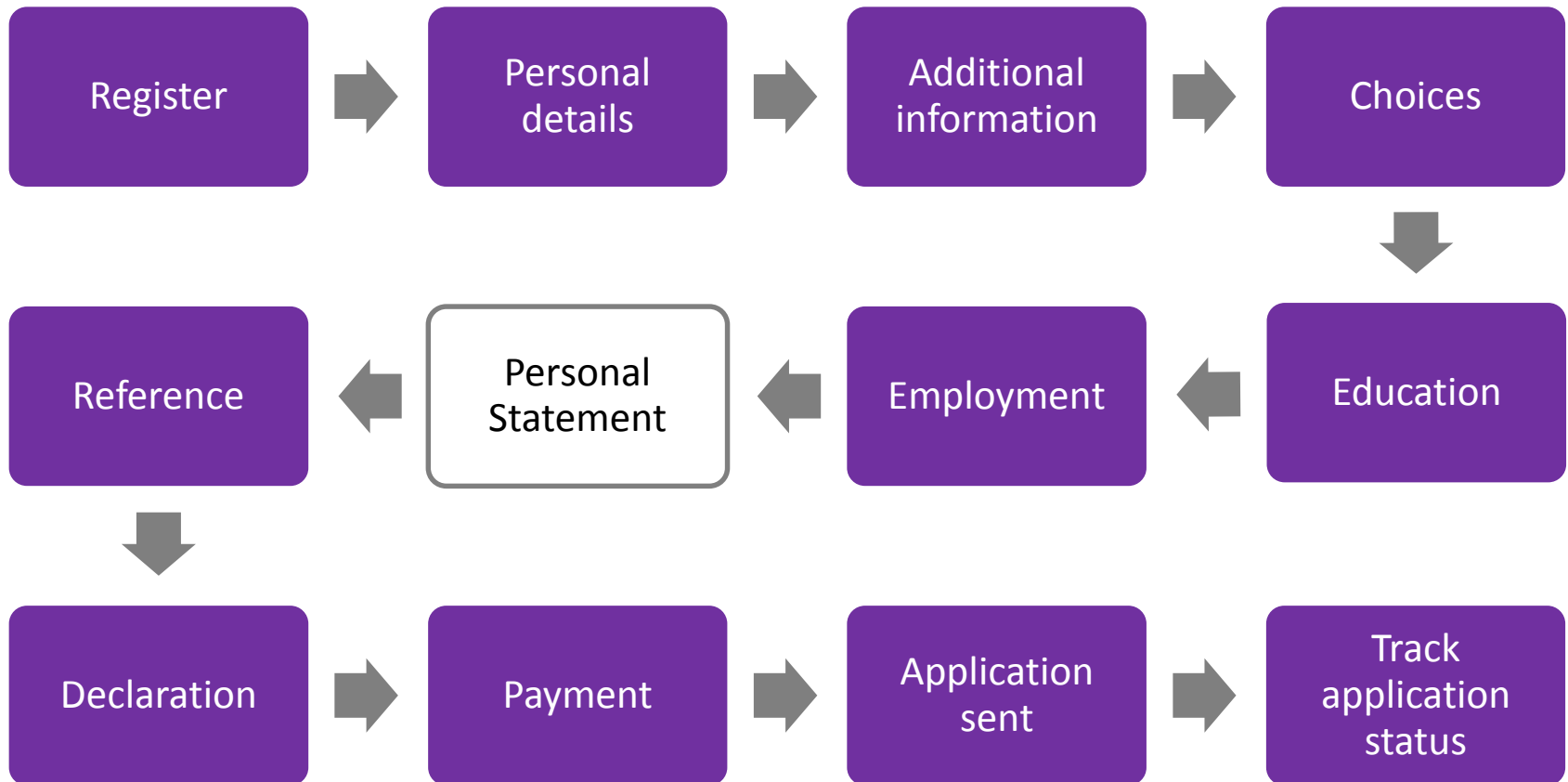
## Why?

- Why do you want to study further?
- What subject(s) you want to study?
- You only get one personal statement)?

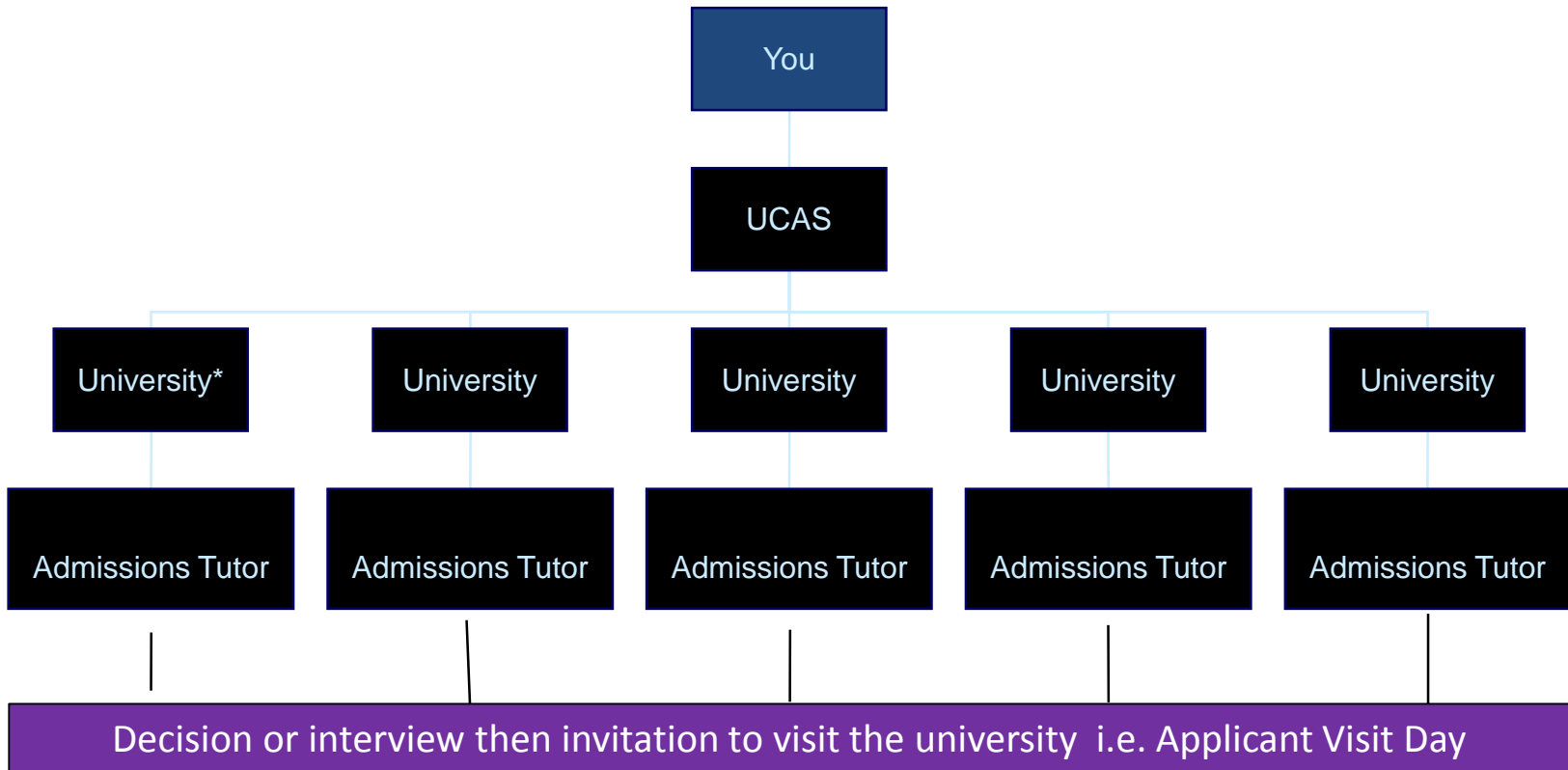
# The UCAS process



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# What happens to your UCAS form?



\* You can apply to more than one course at the same university: Remember though that you only have 1 personal statement

# Your time to shine



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Your Personal Statement is your chance to...

- Show that you are suited to the course
- Demonstrate you are hardworking and committed
- Show that you have researched, and are dedicated to, your chosen course
- Show that you will be able to adjust to your new university environment



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# Showcasing your skills



# Academic skills



- Personal statements – 70% academic and 30% extra curricular content
- How can you **develop** and then **show** your academic interests to universities?

## Knowledge

- Further Reading
- University reading lists
- Ask a university student

## Passion

- Dedicate time to your favourite aspect of the subject for fun
- Outreach/ work experience

## Independence

- Study buddy
- Time management
- Challenge yourself – in any way

# New experiences- Sixth Form and Summer



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- Travel
- Work (balance!)
- Volunteering
- Duke of Edinburgh, leadership schemes
- **Sports** – team games or individual fitness. Also relaxation in Year 13 - yoga or pilates?
- **Clubs and Societies** – similar to those at universities. Film Club, Islamic Society, Amnesty International, learn new language...
- Student Course Rep, Student Governor-?





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# Think like an Admissions Tutor - Part 1

# Getting into the mind of an Admissions Tutor...



## Activity – Think like an Admissions Tutor



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- What is good or bad about these extracts?
- How might you have communicated the information differently?

**Under 10 minutes, then feedback**



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# Personal Statement toolkit

# Finding the balance...



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**70%**

Academic, focusing on your chosen course

- Why have you chosen this subject?
- What particularly interests you about it?
- Where has this interest come from?
- What independent reading or research have you done?

**30%**

Extra-curricular

- Relevant work experience
- Subject-related activities
- Career aspirations
- Unrelated activities

**EVIDENCE** - always reinforce what you say in your statement with relevant examples

# A possible structure...



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## Part 1 - Introduction

- **Why** are you interested in this course? Why do you want to study it at degree level?

70%

## Part 2 – Academic

- How do your current qualifications link to your chosen course? What independent reading or research have you done? What other course-related activities have you taken part in?

## Part 3 - Extracurricular

- What unrelated additional activities do you take part in? How could these show skills that are relevant for studying at university level?

30%

## Part 4 – Brief Conclusion

- **Close the statement**
- Career ambitions?

And finally...



# Remember...



## Make it yours

- It is a **personal** statement
- Admissions tutors read hundreds, possibly thousands of them
- It should read like **you** wrote it (not your parents or your teacher)
- **Your** enthusiasm, **your** commitment

## Make it count

- You only have 4000 characters
- Draft and redraft - if it doesn't relate to being a successful university student, cut it out
- Get to the point!
- Spell check in Word – proof reading with others



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## Think like an Admissions Tutor - Part 2

## In this task...

1. You will be given two personal statements for the same subject area
2. Pretend you are an Admissions Tutor
3. Analyse the Statements in detail (like a teacher marking a piece of work).
4. Evaluate the two personal statements and decide which one you would give a place at university to
5. Be prepared to provide some feedback to the rest of the group

# Use these criteria to 'mark' Personal Statements



Admissions Tutors are looking for the students they want to teach in the future!

# Law Personal Statement 1

What?	How?
<b>Displays strong historical and contemporary knowledge</b>	'The recent case of three MPs trying to use Article Nine of the Bill of Rights 1688 to privilege their expenses and therefore protect them from prosecution...'
<b>Legal experience</b>	Junior Mock Trial Competition Bar National Mock Trial Competition Work experience in a Solicitors' firm
<b>Proactive nature</b>	'I took full advantage of the firm's extensive law library and [...] assist[ed] a paralegal'
<b>Wider research on legal topics</b>	Subscribes to The Economist and Legalweek, and can cite recent articles. Writing an EPQ on law.
<b>Writes critically about what they've read</b>	Writes own opinion on 'DPP Keir Starmer's proposals to introduce the US system of degrees of homicide'
<b>Career focused</b>	Aware of how to become a Barrister, and how his choice of degree links into that
<b>Gets the balance right</b>	Mostly about Law, with a smaller section about extracurricular activities

The student who wrote this personal statement got offers from all five of his universities!

# In summary

## Do

- Give yourself plenty of time to draft and re-draft
- Get other peoples' advice
- Focus on the academic side of things
- Back up everything you say with evidence
- Use themed paragraphs
- **Make sure it reflects you**

## Don't

- Leave it to the last minute
- Use jokes (your sense of humour is unlikely to match the Admissions Tutor's)
- Make sweeping statements, especially about the subject you're applying for (remember they're experts and know far more than you do!)
- Use long words that you don't understand

# Personal Statements



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- UCAS Personal Statement webpages (writing tool)
- National Careers Service - [bit.ly/NCStourney](https://bit.ly/NCStourney)
- Bright Knowledge - [www.brightknowledge.org](http://www.brightknowledge.org)
- Career Pilot - [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk)
- **University Open Days – summer of Year 12/ Autumn Year 13**

[www.heon.org.uk](http://www.heon.org.uk)