

# Personal Statement Guide



A practical guide for writing your personal statement

Includes tips on:

- Where to start
- Skills to focus on demonstrating
- Introduction to 'Supercurricular' and how to include this in your Personal Statement

# What are universities looking for?

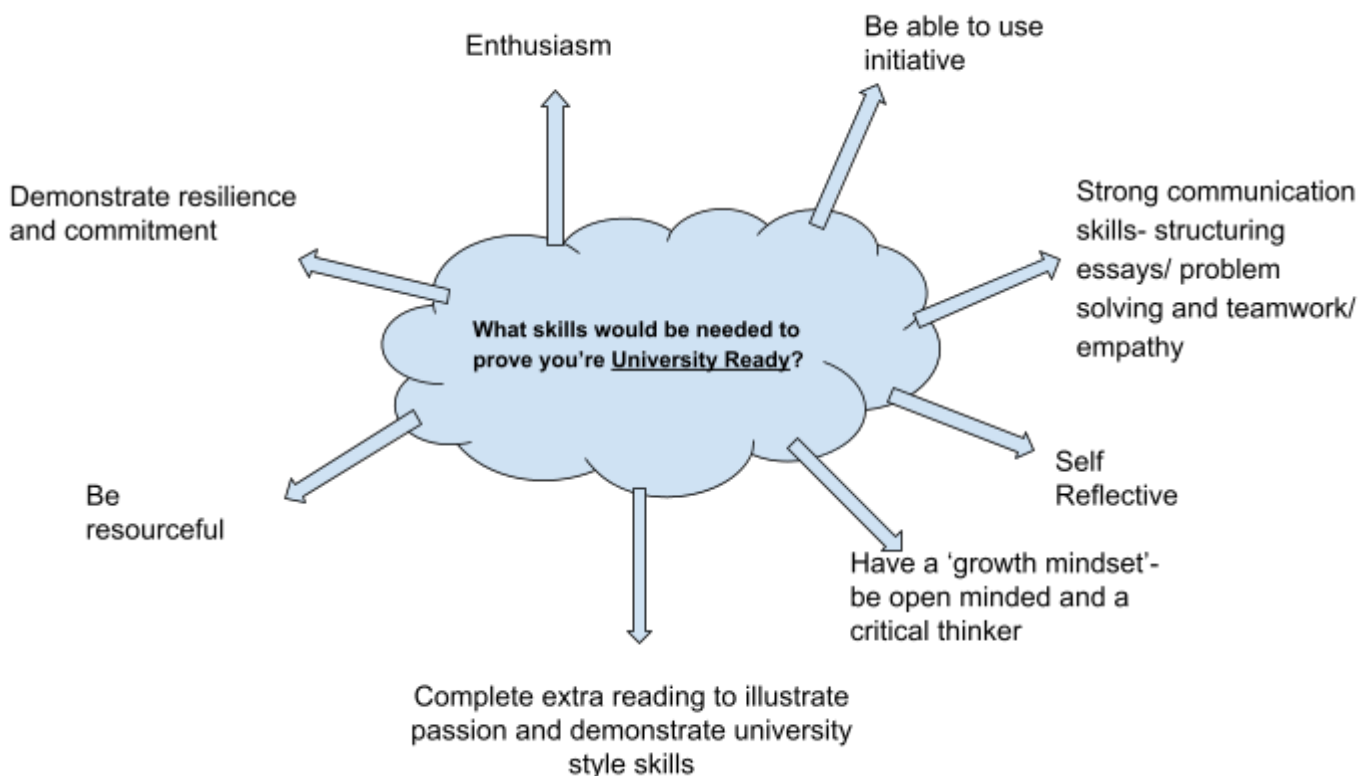
Universities are looking for **'University Ready Students'**

**How do you know if you're university ready and how can you demonstrate this to others?**

There are key differences between studying at school/college and at University. These key differences require a different skill set.

At university...

- You have the freedom to choose your own modules and personalise the course
- You must take more responsibility for your own learning
- Lectures vs. Lessons- lectures are an example of 'passive learning' whereas lessons are 'active'
- Seminars- to discuss and debate ideas and concepts
- Larger groups and bigger, more complex practicals



# Target Audience

Imagine you are in the position of an admissions tutor. What qualities are you looking for? Play to the target audience.

## Where to start?

Writing a personal statement can feel daunting, but, if planned out and started early, you'll allow yourself a greater chance at expressing yourself.

**Substance** is always more important than style- many students will focus on the beginning paragraph, mulling over what to write for long periods of time but for admissions tutors- the substance is the most important.

Start with this substance- the easiest part of a personal statement is to write about you. Forget about the flare for a moment- what evidence do you have to support your passion for your chosen subject? What reading have you done outside of the course?

## 'Super curricular'- What is it and why is important?

Extra curricular= Activities you do in your own time



Super curricular= Focused on extra study you do outside of your current course

## **3 rules to determine- Is this Super Curricular?**

- **Is it relevant to my course?**
- **Is it separate from my compulsory course/ exam?**
- **Does it involve quality academic content in depth?**

### **Choosing your super curricular activities:**

- **Base it on something you love**
- **Look at University Lectures- you can access a range of these online through Youtube or university websites**
- **Good quality documentaries- BBC4/ Netflix/ iplayer**
- **Radio / Podcasts**
- **Work Experience**
- **Books and journals**
- **University Reading lists- can often be found on University websites (Cambridge in particular have a 'Super Curricular' reading list on their website for each subject).**
- **Ask your teachers! What can they recommend?**
- **Maybe read an introductory guide to your subject- this isn't super curricular in itself but can act as a mindmap**

# Final Advice

### **Other advice:**

- **Ring around university libraries- local options include Chichester and Northbrook- you can sometimes gain a 'Reader's Pass' to use their libraries**
- **Buy books for Super Curricular second hand**
- **Collate ideas/ things you have done- what were your reactions to what you've read/ watched/ participated in. What ideas were good/ bad and why? How's it impacted your studies?**
- **Bullet down points as you go**

# Planning Space

Think about the skills you have from the mindmap in this booklet...

- What evidence do you have that you demonstrate these qualities?

Bullet point ideas here:

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Below is a grid to track your SUPER CURRICULAR activities- fill this in as and wehn you complete new reading or activity:

| Further Reading/ Super Curricular activity | When did you do this? | What did you learn/ What skills did you gain? | How has this influenced your thinking/ choice of study? | What does this show about me as a prospective student? |
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