



Writing an effective personal statement

University of Bath

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What we will cover today

**Application
process**

**Personal
statement
advice**

**Top tips &
how to
stand out**



True or false?

1. You need to write a separate Personal Statement for each university you apply to.
2. The structure of the personal statement has changed ready for applications in 2026?
3. The personal statement is now made up of 3 questions that you need to answer?
4. Just listing your academic achievements and hobbies is enough.



True or false?

- 5. You can show your Personal Statement to teachers, friends & family.
- 6. You can use AI to write your entire Personal Statement.
- 7. Universities don't read Personal Statements anyway.
- 8. You can talk about TED talks and documentaries in your PS.

What are university offers based on?

**Prior academic
performance**

**Predicted academic
performance**

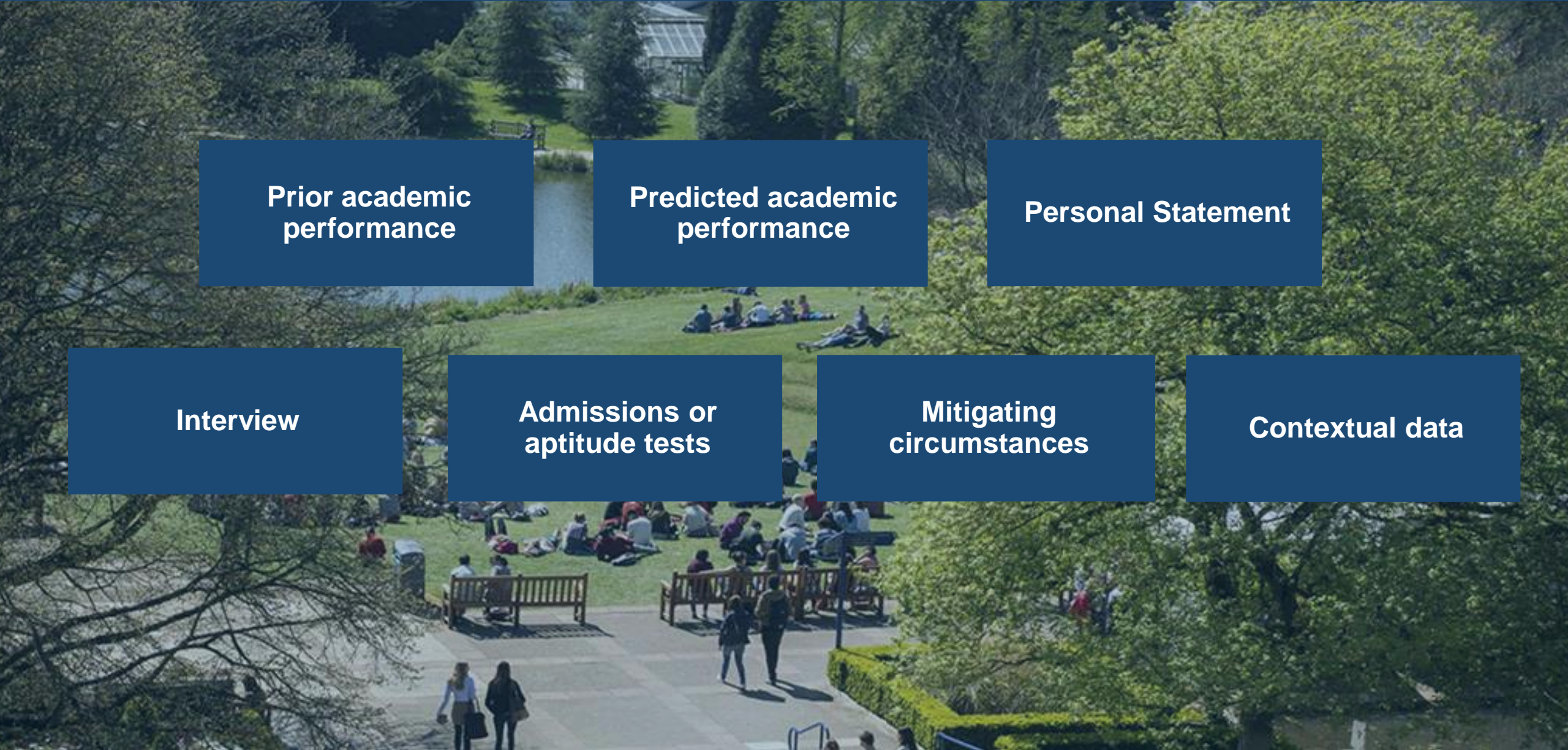
Personal Statement

Interview

**Admissions or
aptitude tests**

**Mitigating
circumstances**

Contextual data



A personal statement is a maximum of **4000** characters, split across **3** questions, with a minimum **350** character count in each

Only place to focus on relevant skills, achievements and work experience

Personal Statements

Sent to all of your choices - may be read by 2 or more university staff at each university

Could be the difference between a 'yes' and a 'no' or used in a 'near miss' situation



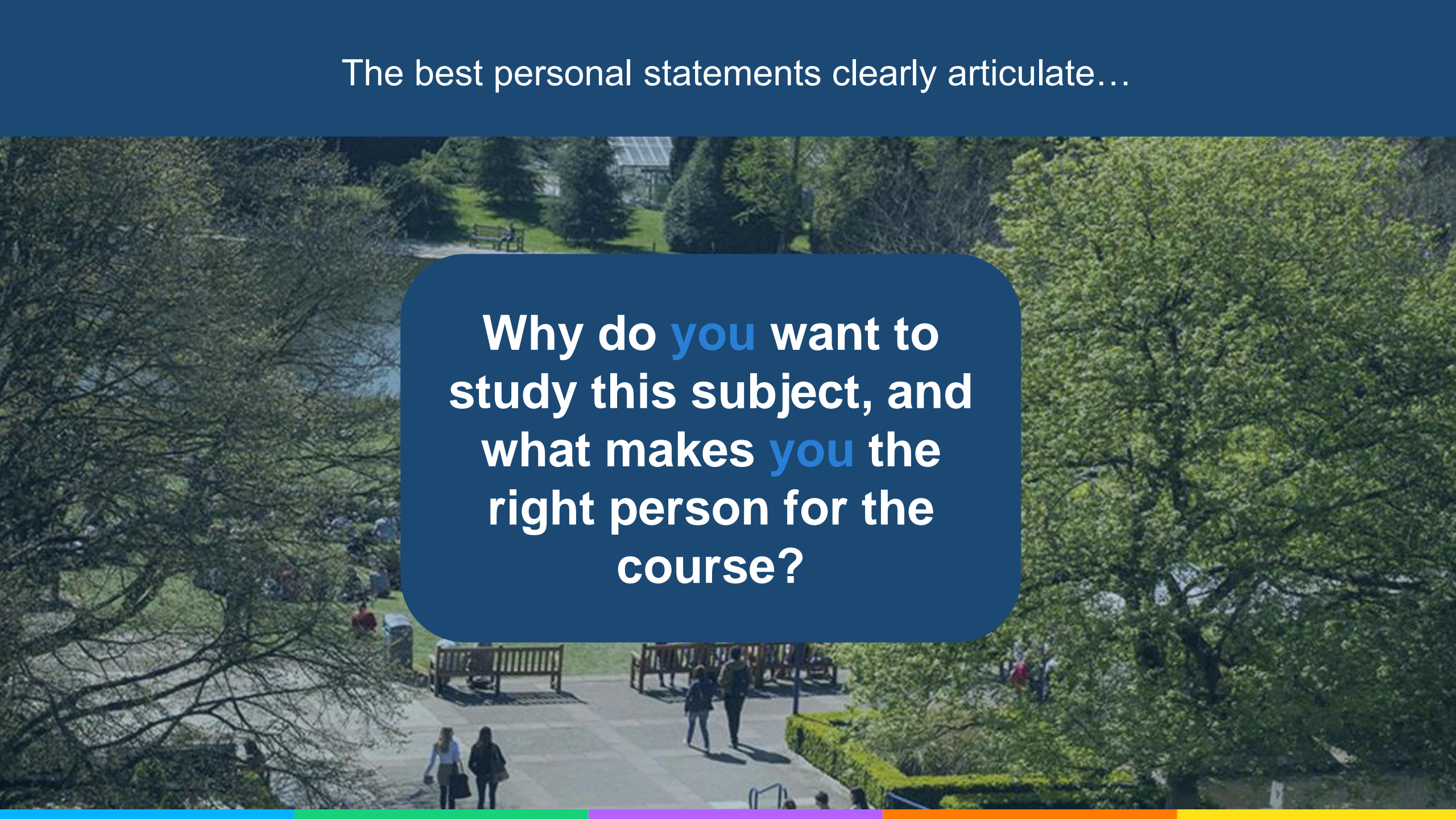
Statement Preparation

- **95% academic 5% extra-curricular**
- **Research**
- **Evidence is key**
- **Spelling and grammar accuracy**
- **Be clear with your language**
- **It will take multiple attempts to write**
- **Don't overuse quotes**



Look at university prospectuses and websites to find out about the courses you're applying for and pick out the key elements you need to give evidence for.

The best personal statements clearly articulate...

The background image is a high-angle, wide shot of a university campus. It shows a paved walkway with several people walking. There are many green trees, some with bright yellow-green leaves, suggesting spring. In the distance, a building with a glass roof is visible. A large, dark blue rounded rectangle is superimposed over the center of the image, containing white text.

Why do **you want to
study this subject, and
what makes **you** the
right person for the
course?**



Personal Statement Structure

1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?



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



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



Question 1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?

The key to this section is authenticity

Think about:

- Any future plans and why this course/subject is a good fit
- Knowledge of this subject area and interests
- Your motivations for wanting to study your course



Motivation for studying the course

**Focus on
course**

Brief

**Simple
language**

While I am no jetsetter, who bundles some outfits into her sleek hand luggage and disappears for the weekend, I am an excursionist. No stranger to experience, with every Duke of Edinburgh affixed like a step on the proverbial stairs of difficulty, I am a critical thinker, who, with the firm belief that to understand we must see, I packed my bags, and this summer I went.



Motivation for studying the course

Focus on
course

Brief

Simple
language

Whilst I have always been fascinated by people, it was a talk by Dr Alex George on 'Apprenticeships and Your Wellbeing' that ignited my interest in studying Psychology at university.



Question 2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

- Why what you have studied is helping you decide your choice of degree (or perhaps why not)
- Chance for students to show evidence of the relevant or transferable skills they've gained from their formal education
- Any relevant educational achievements (outside of A-levels, BTEC etc)
- This section may well be the shortest



Question 2: Strengthening your application

Additional qualification

4th A Level
Additional AS

Project Qualification

EPQ or IPQ
Skills Challenge
Certificate

Extra Maths study

Further Maths
STEP/MAT/TMUA



Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

- **This is your chance to outline anything else from outside formal education you want to highlight.**
- **Things included here should demonstrate interest in the subject applied for and reflect on why its relevant.**
- **Use the PEEL technique**

Activities you could include in answer to question 3

Extra curriculars

Volunteering

Personal life experiences

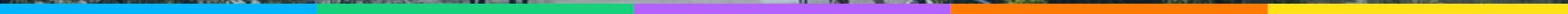
Trips and visits

Work experience

**Job/employment –
part-time or full-time**

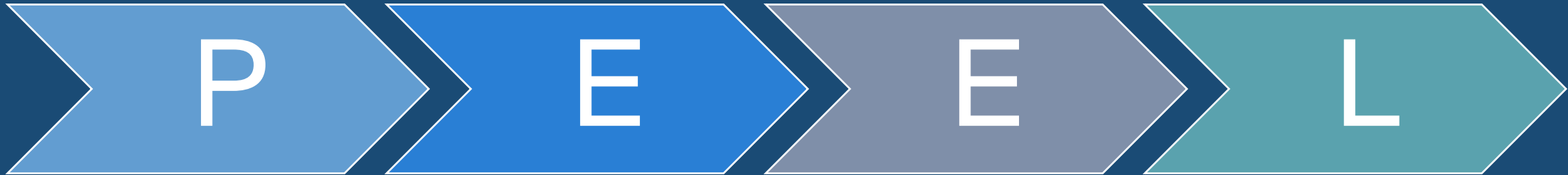
Shadowing

**Podcasts, TED talks,
documentaries etc.**





Example of PEEL



Point

I've always taken a keen interest in politics & how it impacts the world around me.

Evidence

My school values the importance of a whole school president.
I campaigned relentlessly to be the next school president. This taught me that a clear manifesto and campaign is so fundamental to being politically successful.

Explain

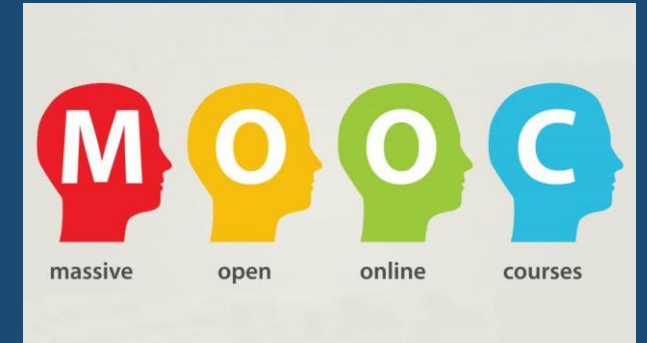
I did not win, however I work closely with the successful candidate and it has taught me how challenging it is to lead and create an ethos where all students work happily together.

Link

This, however, only strengthened my love, ambition and drive to read the subject of politics. University is clearly the next logical step where I can debate all aspects of this discipline with people who share my enthusiasm.



Q3 Online Resources





Q3 Wider Reading



New Scientist

Very Short Introductions



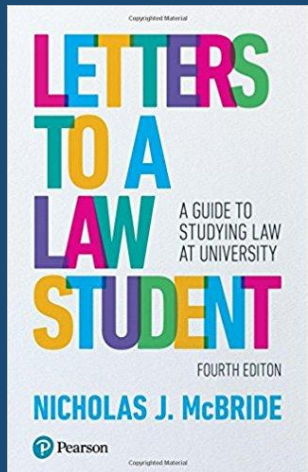
The Economist

THE NEW YORKER



nature
International weekly journal of science

 **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**



Psychology Today

FT FINANCIAL TIMES



HistoryToday





Question 3: Wider Research

- When talking about what you've read, experienced, or done, give evidence and detail.
- For example, if you've completed a work experience placement or attended an interesting lecture, tell us what you learned and why it was interesting.
- Some courses might publish recommended reading lists, but don't limit yourself to these.
- **Quality over quantity is best.**





Personal Statement Tips

**DON'T - repeat
information**

**DON'T - just list
achievements &
skills**

**DON'T – begin
every sentence
with 'I'**

**DON'T - be
tempted to
plagiarise**

**DO – Research
your choices**

**DO – draft then
re-draft until you
are completely
happy with it**

**DO – get
external
feedback**

**DO – Think
carefully about
spelling, grammar
and vocabulary**

**DO –
demonstrate
your
enthusiasm!**



Key Messages

- **Personal statements play a vital role in university admissions.**
- **You won't be penalised for putting info in "wrong" section.**
- **Use the PS to demonstrate:**
 - **Why you are applying for your course**
 - **What makes you the right person for the course**
- **Chance to demonstrate suitability for HE alongside relevant skills, knowledge & experience.**



Resources

There are a range of amazing resources to support you when applying to university:

- University websites - University Of Bath's page on applying
- The UCAS website & HUB - www.ucas.com (Subject guides, city guides, student vlogs, personal statement guidance)
- Reach out to Admissions Teams
- Chat to students online via unibuddy
- Follow UCAS, universities, student finance etc on socials.





Thanks for listening!

