

Applying to Higher Education - The UCAS System Personal Statement Workshop



Mishal Dattani

Student Recruitment Office

- Central online applications service
- The only method of entry to UK degree programmes
- Can apply to up to five universities/courses with one application
 - Choice restrictions:
 - Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry - max 4 choices
 - Oxford or Cambridge

UCAS

YEAR PRIOR TO STUDY

MAR
APRIL
MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUG
SEPT
OCT
NOV
DEC

RESEARCH VISIT & FINALISE FIVE CHOICES

15 October Deadline

INTERVIEWS

15 January Deadline

OFFERS

DECLARE 1 FIRM CHOICE
KEEP INSURANCE CHOICE

YEAR STUDY COMMENCES

JAN
FEB
MAR
APRIL
MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUG
SEPT
OCT

RESULTS

CONFIRMATION

ARRIVE

- Applications for 2014 entry opened on September 1st
- The student must complete the following sections:
 - Personal Details
 - Additional Information (UK applicants only)
 - Student Finance
 - Choices
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Personal Statement
- A member of staff at school / college must complete the reference



UCAS

- **Personal statement**

- Your course choice will tell us that you want to study that subject, but not *why* – this is your chance!
- Overall impression of the student
- Most universities do not interview for many of their courses
- Helps to persuade an admissions tutor to offer you a place

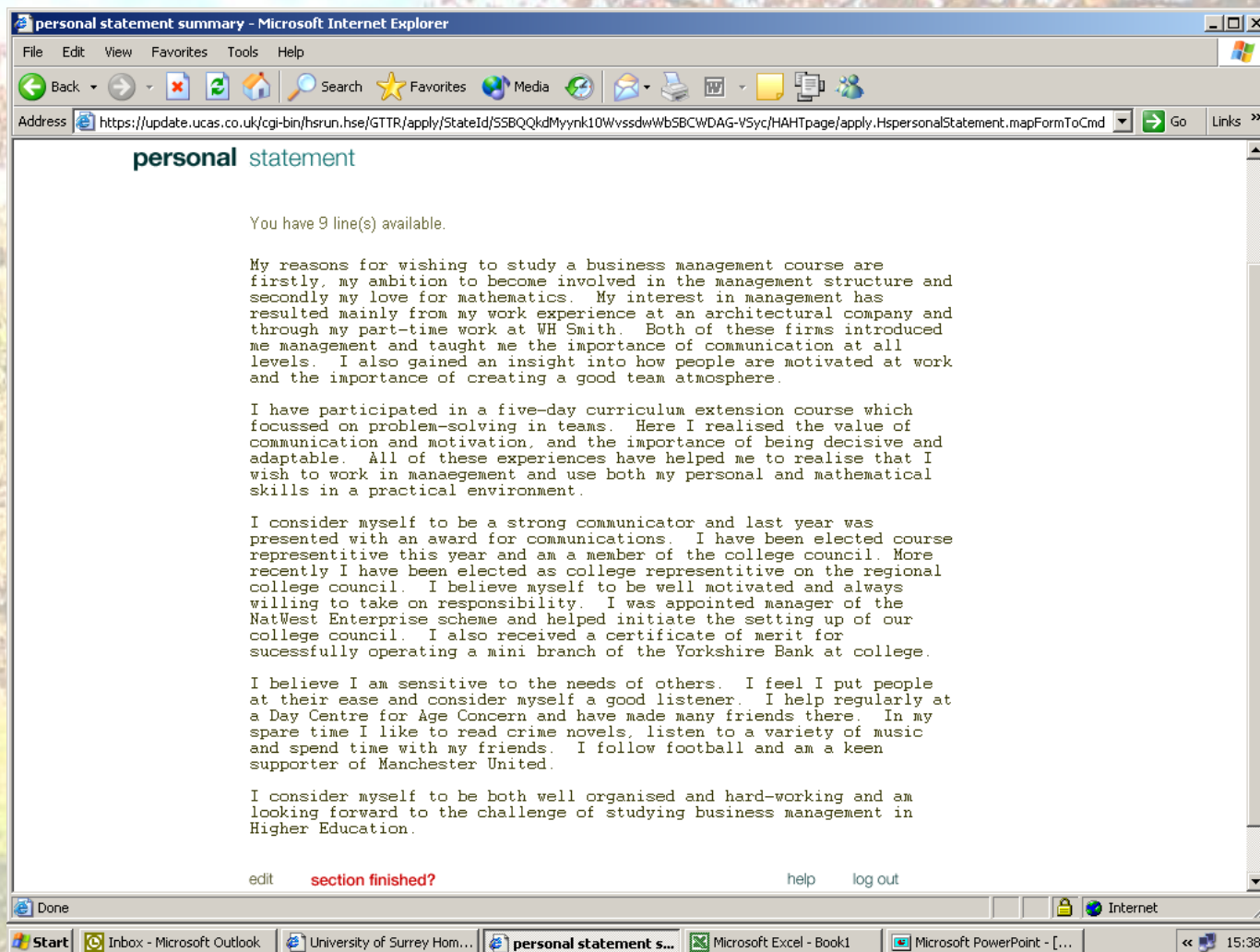
- **Qualification**

- Right subjects (if required)
- Appropriate grades
- Experience (for some courses)
- A basic appreciation of what studying the subject involves

- **Motivation**

- Enthusiasm
- Interest in the field
- Research
- Preparation for study

Personal Statement - 47 lines, no more than 4000 characters



personal statement

You have 9 line(s) available.

My reasons for wishing to study a business management course are firstly, my ambition to become involved in the management structure and secondly my love for mathematics. My interest in management has resulted mainly from my work experience at an architectural company and through my part-time work at WH Smith. Both of these firms introduced me management and taught me the importance of communication at all levels. I also gained an insight into how people are motivated at work and the importance of creating a good team atmosphere.

I have participated in a five-day curriculum extension course which focussed on problem-solving in teams. Here I realised the value of communication and motivation, and the importance of being decisive and adaptable. All of these experiences have helped me to realise that I wish to work in management and use both my personal and mathematical skills in a practical environment.

I consider myself to be a strong communicator and last year was presented with an award for communications. I have been elected course representative this year and am a member of the college council. More recently I have been elected as college representative on the regional college council. I believe myself to be well motivated and always willing to take on responsibility. I was appointed manager of the NatWest Enterprise scheme and helped initiate the setting up of our college council. I also received a certificate of merit for successfully operating a mini branch of the Yorkshire Bank at college.

I believe I am sensitive to the needs of others. I feel I put people at their ease and consider myself a good listener. I help regularly at a Day Centre for Age Concern and have made many friends there. In my spare time I like to read crime novels, listen to a variety of music and spend time with my friends. I follow football and am a keen supporter of Manchester United.

I consider myself to be both well organised and hard-working and am looking forward to the challenge of studying business management in Higher Education.

edit **section finished?** help log out

Done Internet

Start Inbox - Microsoft Outlook University of Surrey Hom... personal statement s... Microsoft Excel - Book1 Microsoft PowerPoint - [...]

15:38

What could be included?

- **Why you are interested in the subject**
- **Details of your key skills**
- **Any work experience**
- **Other achievements**
- **Your future plans**
- **Tasters and Master classes**
- **Any sponsorship/placements you have applied for**
- **Gap year?**
- **Your social, sports or leisure interests**

Assessing a Personal Statement

Read the three example personal statements and list **FIVE strengths** and **FIVE weaknesses** in terms of each of the three categories:

- Content
- Structure
- Tone

(15 minutes)



Strengths

- Relevant work experience and what they learned from it
- Has researched the subject area, showing commitment to the subject
- Mentions hobbies and how they are relevant to the course
- Well structured, uses paragraphs and has introduction and conclusion
- Concise and to the point

Weaknesses

- Negative in tone towards “dropping” A Level Economics
- Don’t see much of their personality
- Could expand on their interest in musical studies
- Doesn’t work to stand out from other similar statements

Strengths

- Evidence of motivation and determination
- Get a sense of the applicants personality
- Stands out
- Uses paragraphs and has an introduction and conclusion
- Evidence of relevant activities and outside interests

Weaknesses

- Doesn't mention the course
- Mentions social activities but no academic commitment
- Too informal – Maybe you get too much of their personality?
- Admits to illegal activity!
- No evidence of a “...bright, intelligent person”
- Inappropriate conclusion
- Rambles

Strengths

- Mentions the course
- Has relevant work experience which can be applied to the course
- Demonstrates academic and extra-curricular activities
- Shows commitment and evidence of time management through long term part-time employment
- Concise and to the point – doesn't waffle

Weaknesses

- Lists activities
- Doesn't use activities to demonstrates skills and experiences relevant to the course
- Isn't well structured - no conclusion
- Negative points - school absences, difficulty finding a sax teacher
- Very bland and uninteresting
- Hasn't been proof-read

It's as simple as A, B, C...

Action

Benefit

Course Relevance

Business Management

Action: I play football twice a week. My team often enters local tournaments and I am the team captain

Benefit: Team work, dedication, leadership skills, competitive drive

Course Relevance: Examples of two vital skills in business: competitiveness and enthusiasm. Leadership skills are essential for success in Business Management and lead to strong skills in project management, presentation, and managing other staff

Psychology

Action: I have volunteered at a primary school as a part-time classroom assistant for two years

Benefit: Close regular contact with children over a reasonable period of time, classroom management, interaction with parents

Course Relevance: Excellent for developmental psychology modules, child psychology, family issues, basic understanding of how some special needs affect the learning process. Could have sparked the passion for studying psychology

- The personal statement is your opportunity to sell yourself to the University and get the course you want
- Admissions staff want to see a person, not an application
- Use clear and concise in English, ensure it is well laid out using paragraphs
- Check for mistakes
- Have an opinion
- Don't repeat details already on the form

- Don't relate it to any specific University but DO mention the course
- Avoid plagiarism
- DON'T LIE! - You will be found out
- Avoid giving lists of activities, interests, personal qualities
- Be honest and positive

Be truthful... Be specific... Be interesting...



Discover the
**University
of Surrey**

CAMPUS TOURS EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 1PM

www.surrey.ac.uk/study/opendays/

Thank you for your time and good luck!

Mishal Dattani

Student Recruitment Office

T: 01483 683382

study@surrey.ac.uk