



Widening Participation

Writing your
UCAS Statement



What is the UCAS Statement?



- * Your UCAS Personal Statement is part of your application to study at university. It's a chance for you to articulate why you'd like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field.
- * This guide contains some prompt questions to help applicants to creative courses write their UCAS Personal Statement. Creative courses (e.g. Fine Art, Design or Architecture) often look for a very different statement than STEM courses (e.g. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
- * You can apply to up to five different courses. You may be applying for a similar course (e.g. Textile Design) at five different universities. In this case, your UCAS Personal Statement will need to be relevant to the subject area. Alternatively, you may be applying for a mixture of different courses (e.g. Painting and Photography) at a number of different universities. In this case, your UCAS Personal Statement should be broad enough to be relevant to both specialisms (by referring to 'Fine Art' instead of the specific courses for example).



What to include



* We would recommend that you try to cover the following points in your UCAS Personal Statement for creative courses:



- 1. Why you are interested in the subject area.**
- 2. The materials, methods and processes you use to make work.**
- 3. The ideas, concepts and research behind your work.**
- 4. Information about extra-curricular or independent creative activities you've taken part in.**
- 5. Your creative strengths and any other evidence that you are well prepared to undertake a degree in this area.**
- 6. What you hope to gain from the course.**

Top Tips



- * The UCAS personal statement is your chance to show that you are academically, practically and personally ready to study at university.
- * There should be no spelling or grammatical errors. The structure should be coherent and should have a strong conclusion.
- * The tone of your UCAS statement should be **positive** and **factual**.
- * Where possible, back up statements you make about yourself with **evidence**.
For example:
“I’m a really diligent and hardworking student. I was enrolled on a 20 week S6 Portfolio Course at the Glasgow School of Art which took place every Thursday evening after school. My attendance on this course was 100%.”
- * Avoid making sweeping generalisations or assumptions about careers or the industry most closely related to the course you are applying to.

Meaningful Statements



* Consider how much information you are actually communicating in what you write. It is imperative that you make meaningful statements rather than surface statements. We've given an example of each below:

• Surface Statement → *"I like to draw."*

• Meaningful Statement → *"I use a variety of materials to record what I see from primary sources and I prefer using charcoal because I think it allows me to make more gestural marks."*

* Try to write at least one paragraph in response to each of the following prompt questions. Doing this, and then adding all of the paragraphs together into one document will give you a first draft that you can begin to edit from further.

Why you are interested

1

→ How did you become interested in the subject area?

* Everyone will have a different answer for this and it should be completely personal to you. Try to avoid starting your personal statement with clichés such as *'I've always loved art'* or *'Since I was a child, I have always drawn in my spare time'* etc.

You also want to try answer:

- *Why are you applying to study a creative degree at University?*
- *Why do you want to study this subject area (Fine Art, Design, Architecture)?*

* Use this opportunity to show you've done your research into the course- clearly state at least 3 aspects of studying a creative degree that appeals to you.

Examples could include: ↘

- Working in a studio environment.
- The facilities available to students. (give examples)
- The more self-directed nature of this subject area.
- The quality of work you've seen from graduates at Degree Show.
- Course structure (explain what the course structure is).
- Work or career prospects (show that you know where graduates of this course go).

If applying to **design** courses, be sure to talk about design - avoid saying 'art' when you mean 'design' or 'design work'.

Mirroring Language

* If you are applying **only** to GSA, you should very carefully read the information [HERE](#) about the degree courses you are applying to. A top tip is to mirror some of this information in your UCAS Personal Statement to show you have done your research, for example:

From the GSA Fashion Design webpage:

“The programme promotes a culture that recognizes teamwork and interdisciplinary peer learning as well as independence as essential elements in the effective practice of Fashion Design.”

How this could be responded to:

“One of the reasons I am so keen to study Fashion Design is because I know it will give me the chance to develop my collaborative and independent working and making skills, with other Fashion Design students and also students from other discipline areas.”

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From the GSA Sculpture and Environmental Art webpage:

“The core objectives of the Programme are to develop the practical and philosophical understanding of the subject of sculpture; to develop practical skills and the ability to mediate ideas through materials and process; and to develop the ability and confidence to critique and communicate about sculpture, both historical and contemporary.”

How this could be responded to:

“Studying Sculpture & Environmental Art will give me the opportunity to strengthen my practical abilities through using different materials and processes but also the chance to develop how I communicate my ideas and opinions on both historical and contemporary sculpture.”

Materials, methods & processes

2

→ Tell us about the materials, methods and processes you use to make work.



- Do you draw from life? → *'I enjoy drawing people on the bus on my way to school...'*
- Do you make three-dimensional work? → *'I work with found objects to create temporary sculptures...'*
- Do you work with knit, weave or embroidery? → *'Knitting has been a large part of my process since...'*
- Do you make really large scale work? → *'I enjoy making really large pieces of work because...'*
- Do you take photographs? → *'I take photos as a way of gathering primary research'*
- Do you explore colour, texture or shape? → *'I like to explore colour by...'*
- Do you create abstract images? → *'I often paint from photos I have cut up and stuck back together'*
- Do you play with text? → *'Changing the meaning of an image by adding text is a method I use...'*
- Do you illustrate stories? → *'Exploring narrative is an important part of my work'*
- Why and how do you use your sketchbooks? → *'I carry my sketchbook at all times...'*

Ideas, concepts & research

3

→ Tell us about the ideas, concepts and research that underpin your creative work.

* How and where do you research artists/designers?

- Internet
 - Online Art/Design Magazines, which ones?
 - Podcasts, what have you learned?
 - Documentaries, about what/who?
- Books
 - Where do you find them? Home? The library?
 - Talk about which ones you've found really helpful and why.
 - Do you make notes about what you read and collect images in a sketchbook?



If you have read or watched anything that has been influential then write about it!

* Talk about at least one historical **and** one contemporary artist/designer/architect that have influenced the materials, methods and processes you use to make work.

* If you've managed to go to an exhibition recently talk about it; who created the work, what was it about and what did you think about it? If you haven't that's okay, it is not compulsory that you have visited exhibitions, but maybe try and research online instead.*



Extra-curricular Activities

→ Explain the content and structure of any extra-curricular/independent/Widening Participation activities you have participated in and tell us what you have learned from your involvement.

* This is where you can provide evidence of your preparedness to study at university. Have you worked in a studio environment before? If so, where and what was it like for you? How did it affect the way you learned?

* Be sure to mention how long any courses ran for and how frequently you attended. For example:

↳ *“I attended the GSA WP S6 Portfolio Course every Sunday for 3 hours for 15 weeks.”*

* What do you do in your own time, outside of regular course work at school, which proves that you are committed to improving your creative skills?*

- Do you carry a sketchbook with you at all times?
- Are you part of a local photography club?
- Do you spend time drawing every evening?
- Have you taught yourself any creative skills?



*Try adding up all the hours you spend a week on art/design activities as this can show dedication.

Strengths



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→ What are your creative strengths? What would you like to improve on?

* Use this as an opportunity to share what you are already good at and what you are keen to learn more about. Some examples might include:

→ “I would like to develop highly specialist skills which I’ve not had access to yet, particularly lithography, which I have seen other artists use very successfully.”

→ “I relish the idea of being able to work on my curatorial skills through putting on exhibitions with my classmates.”

→ “I am very prolific at making work but am looking forward to receiving feedback from my peers and tutors to help me develop my work further.”

What you hope to gain

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→ What do you hope to gain from the course? Do you have any specific career ambitions?

* By answering this you can demonstrate the knowledge you have about the course and show a dedication to your chosen specialism. For example, you might hope to gain:

- The skills to be industry ready.
- The chance to meet creative people and collaborate/learn from them.
- The experience of working on live projects.
- The life changing opportunity to go on exchange.
- Knowledge and advice from tutors and technicians.

* If you do have career ambitions, mention them:

“I want to start my own sustainable textiles company...”

“I want to work for an architecture practice that is passionate about improving quality of life of others.”

Online Research Resources



Fine Art Resources

[Frieze](#)
[WhiteHot Magazine](#)
[Tate](#)

[Juxtapose](#)

[It's Nice That](#)
[Elephant](#)
[Wallpaper](#)


[Architectural Digest](#)
[Arch Daily](#)
[Architectural Review](#)

Architecture Resources

Design Resources

[Eye Magazine](#)
[AnOther Magazine](#)
[Creative Review](#)
[Design Week](#)

[Dezeen](#)
[Living Etc](#)



Good Luck!