



University of
Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Personal Statements

Home Recruitment Team

Noelle Peacock





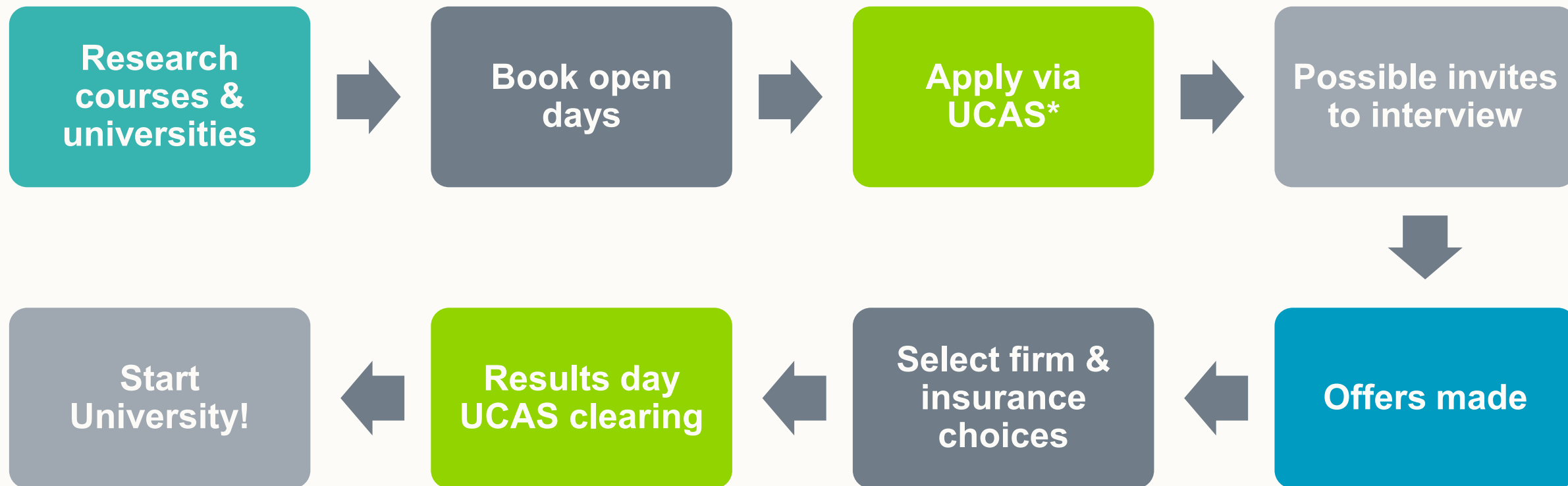
Aims of the session

- Overview of the UCAS and selection process
- Explore how to demonstrate your skills and experiences
- Know what to include in a good personal statement





Overview of UCAS cycle



*you may be required to sit additional admissions tests for certain courses before submitting your UCAS form



Requirements

- Academic achievements
- Compelling personal statement
- Strong teacher reference

Variable requirements

- Volunteer/Work experience
- National admissions test
- Interview
- Portfolio





How many personal statements can you submit?

A

One for each of my five choices

B

Only one for all five choices

C

Two, but only if applying for a joint honours course



Universities might make your application unsuccessful based upon your personal statement?

A

True

B

False



What is the character limit of a personal statement?

A

4,000 characters

B

4,500 characters

C

6,000 characters



Your statement may be flagged as plagiarised if...

A

It has 40% similarity to another statement

B

It has 35% similarity to another statement

C

It has 30% similarity to another statement



What is the most common way to open your personal statement?

A

I am applying for this course because...

B

From a young age I have been...

C

For as long as I can remember I have...



The Purpose of a Personal Statement



The Purpose

- All unis use them
- Personal development activity
- Read by admissions staff and/or academics





What to demonstrate

- A genuine interest for the subject(s)
- Intellectual curiosity
- Engagement with the subject outside of the curriculum
- A well-rounded individual (extra/super-curriculars)





Personal Statements & AI

- Using AI to generate a large part of your personal statement could be considered cheating
- When submitting, you have to declare your statement hasn't been copied or provided by another source
- Can be a useful tool for checking readability or structure
- UCAS Verification Team run checks and notify universities of similar personal statements
- Personal statements should be personal!



⚠ Using AI tools can harm your chances of receiving an offer

⚠ Be honest and consider your future options



Structure & content



The Structure

Q1

- Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Q2

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

Q3

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

Minimum character limit: 350



Q1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?



- What are your motivations for studying this course?
- Showcase your subject knowledge and insight
- Future plans – how does this course support that?
- Think outside the box!



1. Why this course?

Since I was a child, I have found myself to be utterly fascinated by how science works. I do not have to look far to find the source of my love for science. Just glancing around the living room my eyes fall upon a whole host of fascinating organisms, seen and unseen they create a brilliant miniature ecosystem with billions of tiny processes and reactions for me to sit and unpick.

382 characters

My main reason for wanting to study Natural Sciences is the **enjoyment I take from grappling with new and complex ideas**. In Physics, I am particularly drawn to the **atomic scale** and have developed an interest in **quantum models which move beyond my current syllabus**. In Biology, I enjoy analysis on a larger scale; my **curiosity is fired by experimental questions such as how to model the distributions of species on islands**.

421 characters



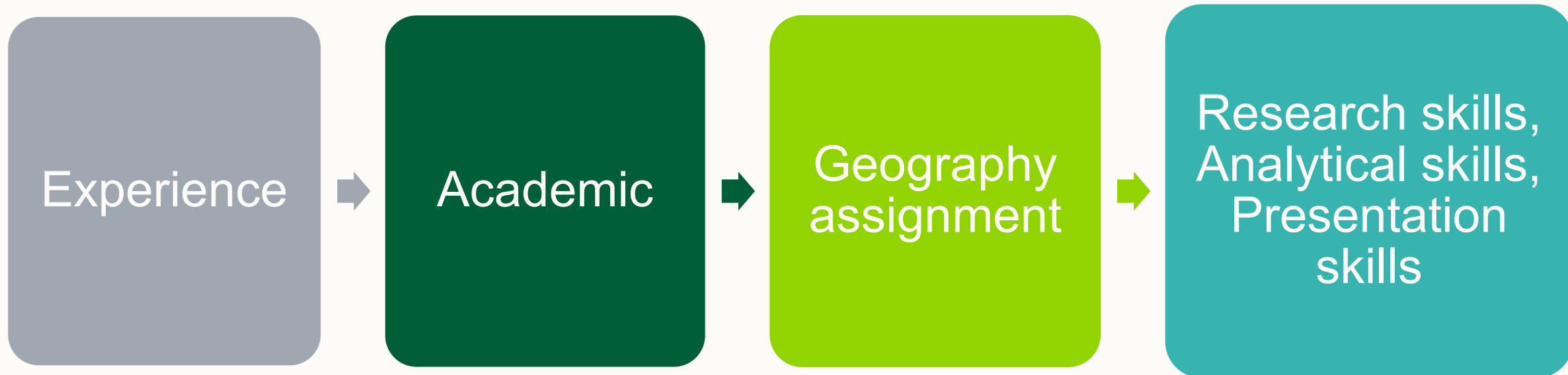
Q2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?



- How do your current studies/training relate to your chosen course or subject area?
- What relevant transferable skills do you have?
- Any other relevant educational achievements – not grades!



Relevant activities





S.T.A.R

- **Situation:** a recent experience or challenge
- **Task:** what did you have to achieve? What was your overall role?
- **Action:** what did you do to complete the task?
- **Result(s):** what was the outcome? What did you learn/achieve and how will this support you at university?





Situation	In my final year of History A-level, I researched the fall of post-colonial governments in sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on Nigeria.
Task (demonstrate)	I aimed to understand how colonial legacies shaped modern political instability and national identity.
Action (demonstrate)	I analysed primary sources like speeches and newspapers, compared them with political theory, and evaluated different historical perspectives to form a balanced argument.
Result (evaluate & reflect)	The project showed me how vital historical context is in political analysis. It sharpened my critical thinking and research skills—tools I am excited to apply and deepen in a politics degree.



Q3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

- Work experience, employment, or volunteering
- Personal life experiences or responsibilities
- Hobbies, extracurriculars (inc. Summer Schools)
- Achievements outside of school or college



Examples of evidence

In person work experience	Blogs & vlogs	Positions of responsibility	Projects or essays	Mentoring
Virtual work experience	Documentaries	Awards	Books	Tutoring
Work shadowing	Podcasts	Challenges	Influencers	Online subject courses
Paid employment	TED Talks	Personal life experiences	Hobbies	Trips or visits
Volunteering	Articles	Work based learning / training	Clubs	Competitions



Q3. Work experience

I recently set up and completed a week-long work experience placement at a local graphic design company. The experience gave me a real insight into the graphic design industry and reinforced my desire to study the subject at university.

236 characters

During a work experience placement with a graphic design company, I was particularly interested in the challenges of creating clear infographics. To emphasize the most important information, I experimented with combining different hooks with a range of typographic fonts. I found that the most effective solution depended on creating a clear "narrative" within the image itself. This experience will be invaluable for my design degree as it has equipped me with the practical skills required.

492 characters



Q3. Extracurricular

Outside of the classroom, I have completed the Duke of Edinburgh Silver award. This helped me to develop a number of skills. I am passionate about swimming and have been a member of the school team since Year 11. During my GCSEs I was also a member of the netball team. Swimming at a high level has provided a perfect training in managing pressurised situations. As a school prefect, I help to organize events such as our recent talent show, I also take parents around the school for tours. For two years, I have worked in a busy local shop and this has developed my abilities to work with people. I feel confident interacting with people from all walks of life and backgrounds.

679 characters

While doing my **Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award**, I had to **complete different team tasks**. I focused on **planning and making sure we communicated** well. I developed skills in **planning tasks** and **leading a team**. Being **bilingual** in English and Portuguese has helped me **connect with different communities**. I've **joined cultural events** and **practiced my language skills**, which has given me a **valuable perspective in understanding different cultures**. During my A-Levels, I **worked in a busy shop** and **swam for the school team**. By balancing these commitments with my studies, my ability in **organising and managing my time has improved significantly**.

632 characters



Top Tips

**Research &
start early**

**Complete
further reading
and activities**

**Refer to
current issues**

**Provide
specific
examples – use
STAR**

**Save externally
& do multiple
drafts**



Thank-You!

Any questions?

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How did I do?



Personal Statements

Presenter name:
Noelle Peacock

