

# Personal Statements

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# Session Content

- About Personal Statements
- Changes to Personal Statements
- What that means in practical changes
- Examples
- What Russell Group Universities expect to see from Personal Statements

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## Is the Personal Statement being scrapped?

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# What would you like to get out of today's session

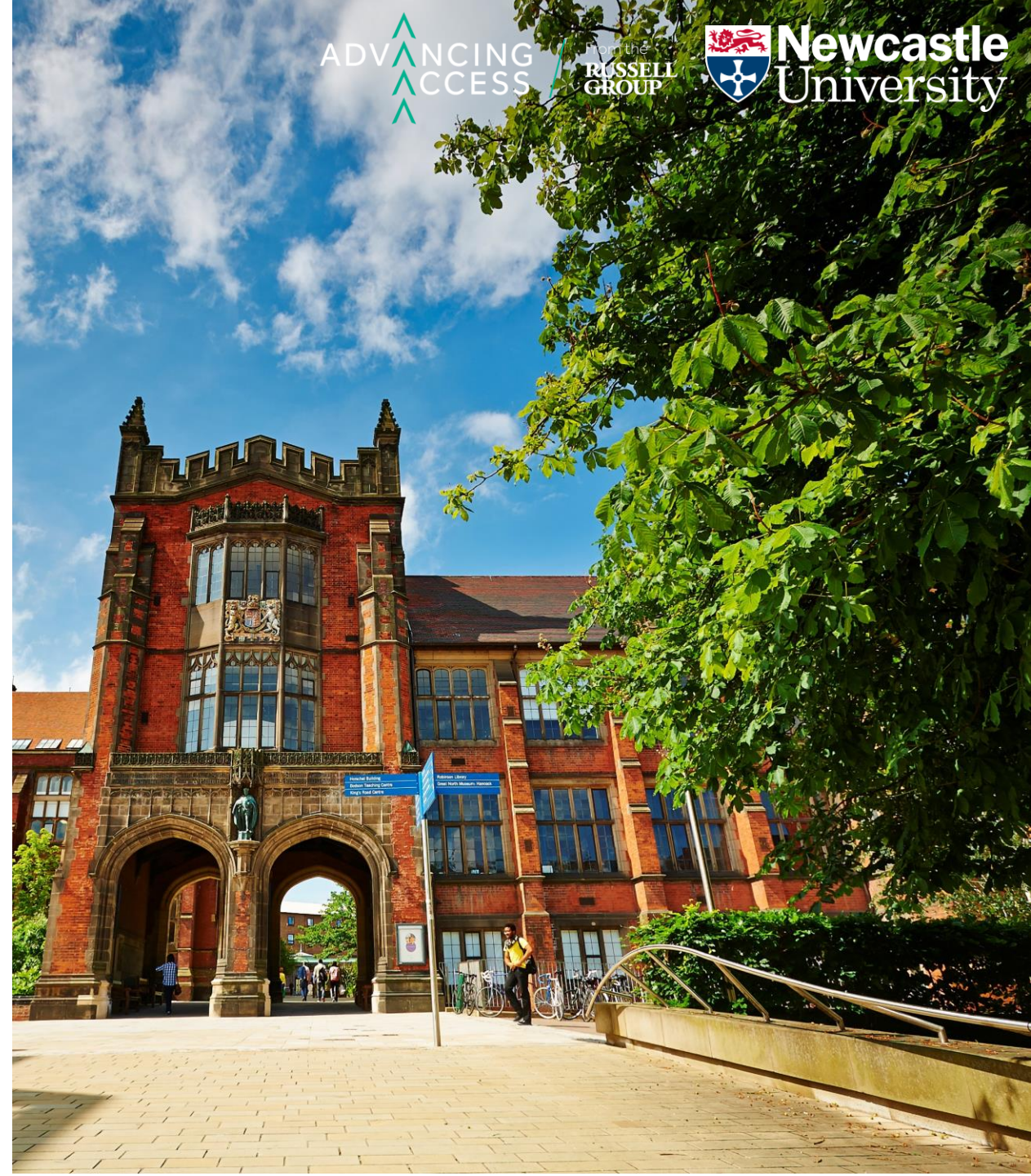
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# Changes to Personal Statement

- Moved to 3 Questions rather than one longer piece of text.
- The new personal statement will allow for a clear structure and guidance of what to include the personal statement for the applicants due to the specific questions.
- The new web page for submitting the personal statement will also feature helpful on-page guidance for each question.
- A statement is reviewed as a whole - students should not repeat information across their answers.

# Personal Statement

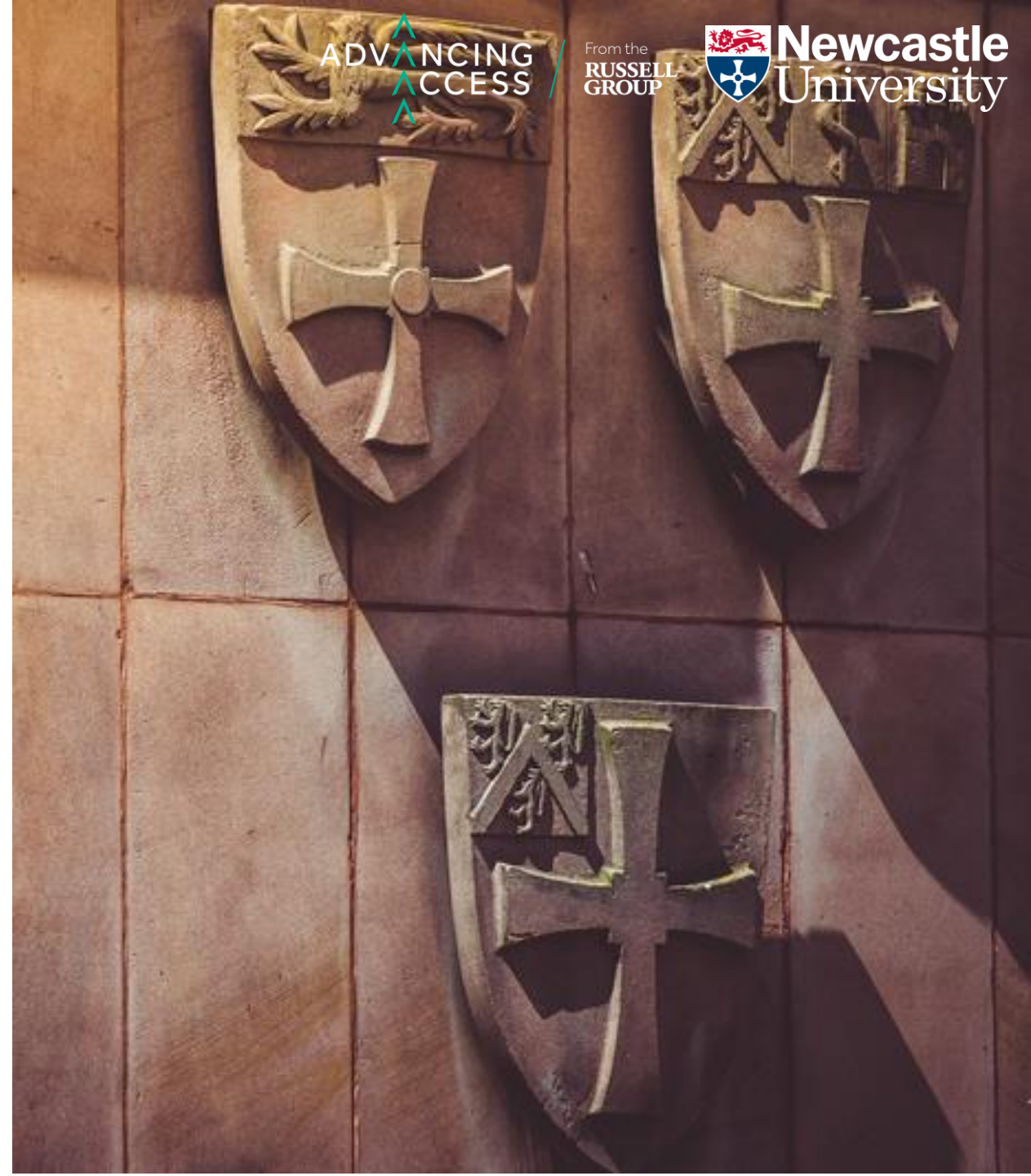
- Purpose:
  - The opportunity for Students to tell a university why they should choose them to study on their course.
- How are they used?
  - Consider Applicants.
  - Formulate Interview Questions.
  - Decide the status of 'near-miss' applicants.
- Components
  - Made up of 3 questions.
  - 4000-character limit.
  - 350 character minimum per question.





# What are the questions?

- Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?



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

- What about this subject interests the student?
- What do they love about the subject?
- Does the course require any specific experience or knowledge?  
Students should show that they understand the requirements!

- Read the course description and find key skills
- Why do they want to go to university?
- Think about other parts of student life/
- Does your course link to any future aspirations?

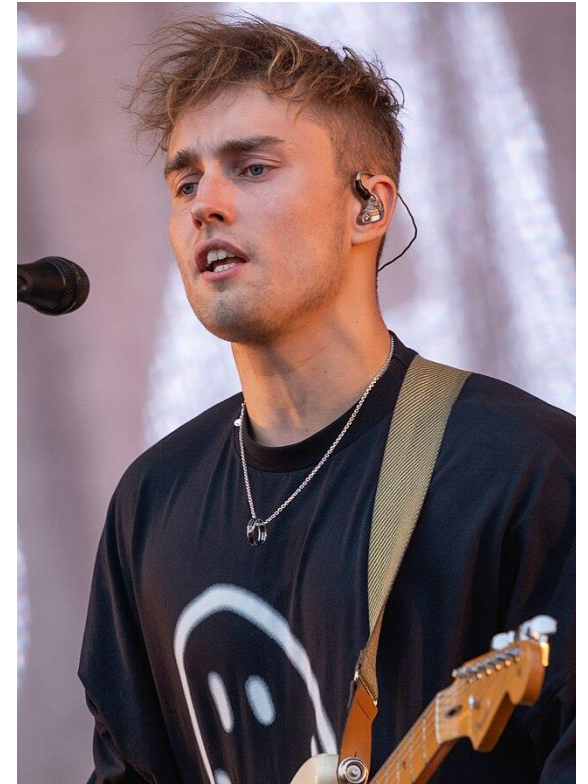
# Why do you want to study this course or subject?

## Example A:

I love politics and I want to study a Politics course for the following reasons; I want to get a degree; I want to gain more experience and knowledge in this area, and I want to improve my political skills to have a better career in future. I have never studied politics, but I love watching The Crown. I watch the news, and I have visited the Houses of Parliament in London.

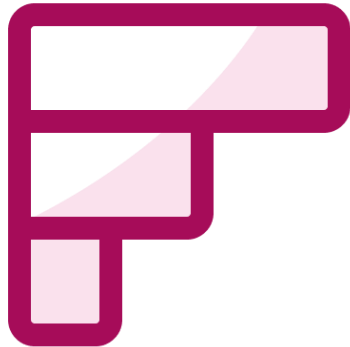
## Example B:

I want to study a Politics degree because I am passionate about using my platform to inform people. At school I was part of my debating society which often featured political topics such as the pros and cons of democracy. Throughout my career I have had to do lots of planning and researching for my songs, which is a skill I know is very important to study politics. I'd love to be able to use my degree to affect positive change within our government.



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**Which is better?**

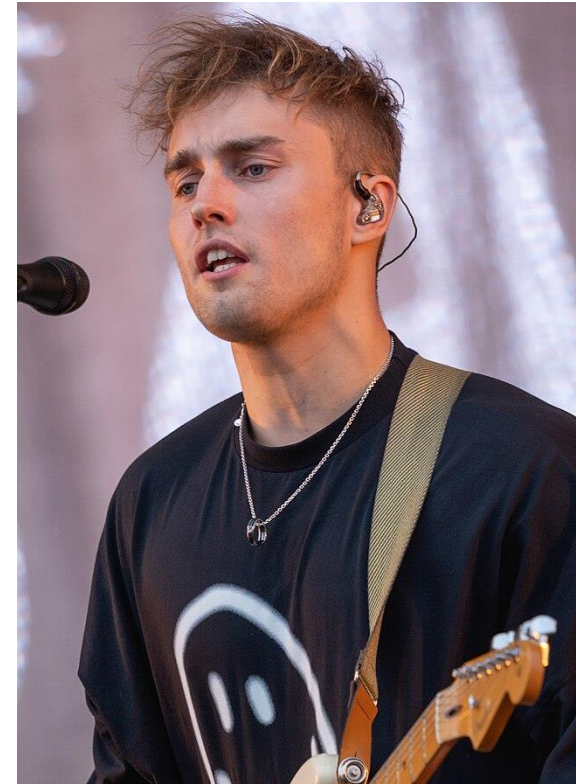
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# Why do you want to study this course or subject?

- Clearly shows his passion for politics and WHY he loves it
- Relevant experience that links to the course
- Awareness of the skills needed to study politics
- Link to future plans
- Specific

## Example B:

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

- What about the subjects that you have studied at level 3 has inspired you to choose your course?
- Does what you are currently studying link to the chosen course?
- Transferable Skills
- Academic achievements

## Example of achievements:

### Example A:

I am the all-time top goal-scorer in the Premier League, which I am very proud of. In order to achieve this, I had to learn to be resilient and work well in a team. These are both skills that will be essential in studying Sport Science at University because I know that university can be difficult, so it is important to be resilient. I will also have to do lots of group work and projects and be able to listen to other people's ideas.

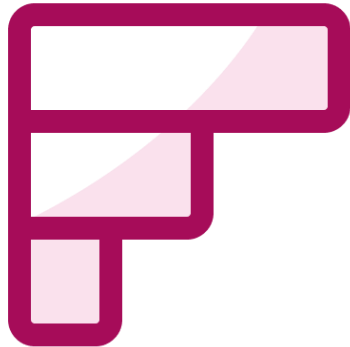
### Example B:

I spent 18 years as a professional footballer, throughout this period I played for 3 different teams, and I also represented England at several major tournaments. In the 1994/95 Premier League season I was part of the Blackburn Rovers squad that won the Premier League, we had to work perfectly as a team to achieve this, we also had to communicate a lot and be resilient when we suffered losses. I have done lots of Sport and I enjoy it.



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# Example of achievements:

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- Shows his own personal achievements
- Brings in the skills learnt through the achievement
- Links to the course and university life



# Academic Analysis

It's important for students to link their academic studies to the course or subject they want to study.



I did an EPQ about the ethics of animal testing. I enjoyed it a lot because I learnt about science.



I did an EPQ about the ethics of animal testing, during this I had to research, condense information and make good notes. This is a skill I know is important to study Philosophy. I also enjoyed learning about ethical dilemmas and I want to study it in more detail at university.

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

- Hobbies and Interests
  - Show you have interests outside of your studies - show your personality!
  - What can you offer the university? Do you want to join/create a society?
  - Link back to why you want to study the course!
- Work Experience:
  - Placements
  - Shadowing
  - Helping out at school/college
  - Part time jobs.
- Extra and Super Curriculars
- Volunteering
- Personal life experiences e.g. caring for a family member, overcoming a challenge

- Young enterprise
- Work-based learning/CPD
- Shadowing
- Online learning activities e.g. Springpod, MOOCs etc.
- Tutoring
- Trips and visits (online or in person) e.g. Museums, exhibitions, galleries, sites of historic interest, relevant sites connected to your course e.g. magistrate courts for law etc.
- Podcasts, TED talks, documentaries etc.
- Duke of Edinburgh/Duke of York awards

## Example of hobbies and interests:

### Example A:

Outside of my studies I am passionate about singing and performing. I spend lots of time touring around the world performing, this means I have to have excellent time management to stay on top of my studies. This is a skill I know will help me when I have to revise for exams at university. I also love dancing which requires me to be committed and resilient, I am looking forward to joining the ballet society at university.

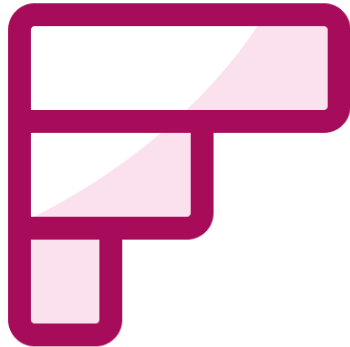
### Example B:

I have lots of hobbies outside of school. Ever since I was a child I have loved dancing, currently I am part of a ballet club that meets every Thursday and Saturday and we also have monthly performances, I have to be very organised. I also enjoy singing and writing songs. Whenever I am not at school I spend my time practicing my singing with my vocal coach and writing new lyrics. I am a very busy person and often fill my free time with hobbies and socialising.



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- Shows passion and variety of hobbies.
- Shows some personality.
- Brings in the skills learned through the hobby.
- Links to the course and university life.



How are students reacting  
to the new layout?


## Yr 12s: What are your thoughts on the changes to personal statements for 2026 entry?

The results of this poll reflect mixed reactions among Year 12 students regarding the proposed changes to personal statements from 2026 entry.

While 26.7% are opposed to the changes, only 16.1% are fully in favour, indicating a generally more sceptical viewpoint. 13.7% are unsure how they feel which suggests there could be a gap in communication or understanding around the changes and an additional 18.1% feel indifferently, neither for nor against the new personal statement format.

Notably, 23.2% say they have not heard of the changes, which sits at the second highest voted for option just slightly below those who say they are not in favour of the proposed changes.

Addressing this awareness gap is crucial, with the new personal statement format due to be introduced in September 2025, and nearly a quarter of voters say they are unaware of the alterations, this highlights a need for more effective communication and outreach to ensure that students feel well informed and fully prepared to begin their university applications.

 Poll: Yr 12s: What are your thoughts on the changes to personal statements for 2026 entry?





## What students are saying on the poll thread

*"Personally I would just prefer the normal personal statement format - it would probably suit me more.*

*Though I see how some people would benefit from the initial framework to a "personal statement" that the three sections would provide"*

*"I've noticed that everything gets dumbed down - what was wrong with writing a long one pager? This seems like they have to guide every paragraph and spoon feed students with what they need to write rather than allowing personal voice to shine through. It wasn't broken, why fix it?"*

*"Yes they will make it easier for people applying to set their thoughts out in the way the university wants them to read, but let's face it, most schools know how to help students do that anyway. All it does is restrict how most people apply for university for the benefit of a few people who don't know how to and don't want to learn how to."*

# What Russell Group Universities expect to see

- More in-demand courses so students need to stand out!
- Do research, read around their course!
- Write formally but make sure their personality comes through.
- Don't lie, if they are invited to interview, they may be asked about their personal statement.

- Generally, all sections are equal
- Applicants should try to aim for an even distribution within their response to each of the questions
- Students should ensure that their personal statement contains the content they want to share and not to worry unduly about which section the information is contained within
- Reminder to keep the information specific to the course they're applying to

# Questions?