

PERSONAL STATEMENTS – RUSSELL GROUP WEBINAR

5TH OCTOBER 2022

Note

RG refers to Russell Group and PS refers to Personal Statement

The people below, who were at the webinar, are staff representatives of RG universities

Steph – University of Leeds

There is only the 1 PS – don't focus on just 1 university

Focus on the course/why you are passionate about it/what skills you have that link to the course

Universities only see the PS, not the other universities you have applied to

How to be course specific? –

- Show you have an interest in course – super-curricular activities important – eg writing competitions if applying for English courses or visiting museums/listening to podcasts
- Research main parts of a RG course – highlight interest in research – eg EPQ is a good example or read journals etc
- Joint honours courses – apply in same subject area – draw similarities/link together
- May be able to submit a separate PS but this is not common

Start to write and see what comes out! – then condense to the word count – no right or wrong way of constructing it – make it formal with paragraphs

3 sections – this is just one suggestion –

- Course (1st paragraph)
- Super-curricular activities /transferable skills/work experience (2nd paragraph)
- Contribution to university life /career ideas (3rd paragraph)

STAR method – Situation / Task / Action / Result – how to structure your PS (and other things such as CVs) – see website for more details

Be careful with plagiarism factor! Universities use software to detect if applicants have copied from texts and so on

PSs are read by Admissions Tutors – lecturers tend NOT to read them – not at Leeds, anyway

Location – personal decision – may like London – capital/busy pace or smaller campus university – Leeds a campus university in a vibrant city, for example - try and visit at least 2 universities in person

Louise – University of Liverpool

Speak to universities if you have to – they MAY need a new PS or your application will be enough – could ask for you for one additional paragraph, for example – make sure that the courses allow for 1 PS

Common mistakes? – PS too general / trying to impress us with contacts

PS needs to be easy to read – don't have to use overcomplicated, fancy language – it may cut into your character count too (4000 characters) - get to the point! Be expressive but in a professional and accurate way – get others' opinions on how it reads/sounds

David – University of Newcastle

Personal skills – useful? Only if relevant – if you are a star hula hooper, probably not relevant but if you are a good organiser, it could well link to the course

Extra-curriculars – key – make sure they are relevant/link to the course you are applying for – sport interest out of school -useful to include as universities are involved in sports teams etc – shows you want to be part of university life

Scholarships – different criteria so need to check – depends on institution – not generic across them all

Frankie – Durham University

See university websites for guidance – PS is just one part of a whole application

Key – we read every one so helps to be able to distinguish between applicants with similar academic qualifications/predicted grades

We don't interview for all courses – exceptions are primary education and Foundation courses

Aim for things that make you stand out – from last 12-18 months – draw out your skills

EPQs – piece of independent research – very beneficial – similar to independent study you will be doing at university

Can be lower requirements if taking one – Durham don't do this but they do value them -mention in PS

Don't need EPQ to make a good PS! If you are not taking it, include more of what you do outside school instead

Don't repeat what you are studying in the PS – takes up space – should have better things to write about- showing independent research is better

If no offers and want to defer – think WHY you would want to defer – what you want to do – you don't have to defer – you can try for UCAS EXTRA – think outside the box – look at other universities, not just RG ones perhaps if issue over grades – check the UCAS website – www.ucas.com – has tips on this – and talk to those in school to support you

AMANDA WATSON
CAREERS ADVISER
OCTOBER 2022