

Personal Statements



This activity will help you to identify how your skills match what creative employers and universities are looking for in applications and personal statements.

Norwich University of the Arts has strong relationships with creative industries.

We know these are the top 10 soft skills* they are looking for:

- Resilience
- Meeting deadlines/delivering a brief
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Showing attention to detail
- Communicating with colleagues/partners
- Responding to feedback
- Demonstrating a positive attitude
- Working in a team
- Handling customers and clients
- Interpreting a brief

*Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others.

➔ If you have any further questions or would like us to review your draft copy, please contact us at student.recruitment@norwichuni.ac.uk

norwichuni.ac.uk

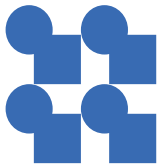
Task 1

All about you

Working with pen and paper or on your computer:

- Write these 10 soft skills on individual notes. On an 11th note, select/draw an image of yourself (or just write your name.)
- Place the image of you or your name in the middle of your workspace.
- Place all the soft skills that you are good at close to your picture or name. Now place all the skills you do not have or find more difficult further away.
- Write 1-3 bullet points giving examples of how your experiences match the skills you feel positive about (these can be experiences within school/college or in outside clubs/hobbies/jobs:

e.g. Responding well to feedback – when you designed a logo for a project, your team did not think it worked. You then took on board their ideas and asked questions, before redesigning it to fit the brief and client more effectively



Tip!

Ask a parent, teacher or classmate (who knows you well) for their perspective on your thoughts. They may have useful advice, recommendations or point out skills you cannot see.

It might be useful to photograph or screen shot this for your records.

Task 2

What are they after?

From 2026 UCAS will be asking applicants to fill in 3 questions to help you scaffold your personal statement. Each answer will have a minimum character count of 350 and an overall character count of 4000.

- **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**
This is an excellent opportunity to tell us why you've chosen this course, this university etc. What your hopes are for the future and what you hope this course will help you to achieve.
- **How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?**
This may not necessarily be subjects that are directly related to the course you are applying for, but can also talk about skills you've picked up in other classes/subjects. Perhaps teamwork, working to a brief etc.
- **What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?**
This might include things like summer schools, part-time work, volunteer work, working or studying abroad, clubs or societies you're part of, mentoring within school – i.e. prefect or student mentor. We want to see how your experiences outside of school have informed your choice of subject/university!

Put down notes/words/phrases based on the above questions. It might be helpful to begin with single words and phrases and then build these into longer sentences. These don't have to be fully formed just yet, and whatever works best for you – post-it notes, jotting down quick ideas, or scrawling down a stream of consciousness.



TASK 3

Putting it all together

Begin to think about how you can combine the soft skills you've noted down in task one along with the notes you've made in task two to build longer sentences and begin to answer the statement questions. Turn your bullet points into short sentences and paragraphs. Don't worry, they don't need to be perfect just yet!

Check the green and red flags below to help you with your questions:



Green Flags

Add detail and character by using some of the following suggestions:

→ Mention a specific piece of work or project

What have you learned from this project?
e.g. "taking part in a game jam gave me an idea of what it's like to work in an indie studio. I learned new digital 3D skills using Maya and was responsible for the asset design for a game about climate change."

→ You could include quotes

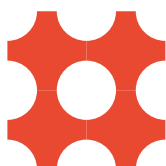
This could be from someone who has inspired you into the pathway you have chosen e.g. David Hockney describes a good drawing being a "mixture of the head, hands and heart."
This is an idea I want to bring into my Fine Art practice.

→ What are the cutting edge trends in your subject area?

What are the trends, key practitioners' new ideas, ways of making or thinking in your field? What do you think about them?

→ Mention things you are doing outside the classroom

Often, the things you do outside the classroom tell us more about your skills and outlook. For example: *"at the weekends I work for Topshop as a personal stylist. I am keen to get to know the customer, their personality and lifestyle before making recommendations. Observing lots of people help me get ideas towards character types for my acting."* This shows us you are likely to have good interpersonal skills, empathetic, a strong improviser, a good listener and problem solver.



Red Flags

These are some things that could weaken your personal statement, so try to avoid the following:

→ Emotional statements

Although it is good to open and close with something punchy and thoughtful, beware of making bold, emotive statements without evidence. For example, saying it is your 'destiny to be a world leading Textile Designer' or a 'famous actress' are the types of statements not recommended.

→ Long quotes

We are interested in you, rather than what a lot of other creative people have said at this stage. These can be included in a personal statement but should not be the main event.

→ Listing generic skills

Instead tell us a story to explain how your skills have developed and make it interesting. Show how your character shines through these skills and talk about how they have been applied.

→ Waffling

If there is a lot to read, it can lead to a loss of focus (you may have noticed this when reading this worksheet, so well done for getting to the end!) Break down your text into clear paragraphs to make it easier to read.

→ Make sure you don't exceed the word limit

Finally, ensure your character and relevant experiences are expressed but do not feel that you must hit the word limit.. Often the answers that are well written and shorter can be quite refreshing for those reading them



↑ Molly De Smith
BA (Hons) Textile Design