



Personal Statement's / Supporting  
Letters

How to stand  
out from the  
crowd

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International

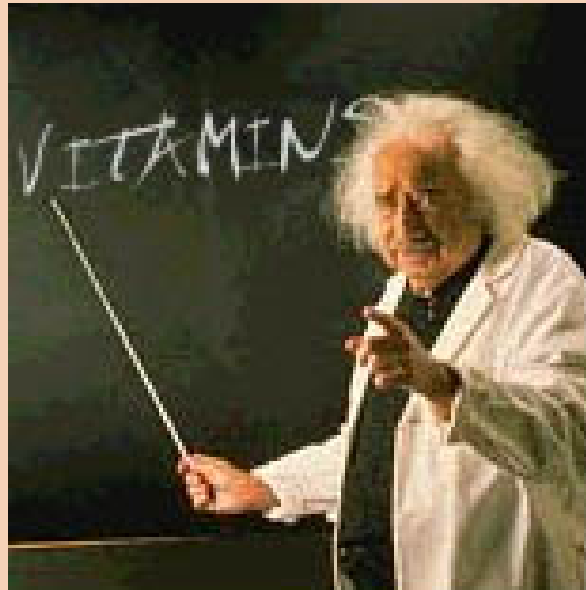
## Why is a good application important?

- Some subjects are over-subscribed
  - Medicine
  - Law
  - Pharmacy
  - Dentistry
  - Veterinary Science
- So are many “famous” Universities
- Many individual courses can also be oversubscribed in undersubscribed academic areas

## Understand how we use an application

1. We look at your predicted grades (10 seconds)
2. We look at your achieved grades (30 seconds)
3. We read your Personal Statement (2 minutes)
  1. Many A.Ts will make a decision here to offer
4. We read the Reference (1 minutes)
  1. Many A.Ts will make a decision here to offer or reject
5. We ask for further information ( several days)
  1. A final decision must be made

## Get into the right mindset



“Just who am I writing this darned thing for?”

## What the PS/SL is for

- To tell the Admissions Tutor
  - About your interest in studying his/her subject
  - About your skills that will make you good at studying his/her subject
  - What your aims are / how you see your career developing
  - About how studying his/her subject will meet your aims
  - About which skills will be developed on his/her course
  - Why you love his/her subject

## What the PS/SL is not for

- To tell us him/her why you want to study at their university
- That you are a nice person\*
- To tell us how good you are at sports\*
- To tell us what your parents/guardians do
- An exercise in Google/Yahoo use / A chance to copy
- To provide us with witty quotes or a bibliography

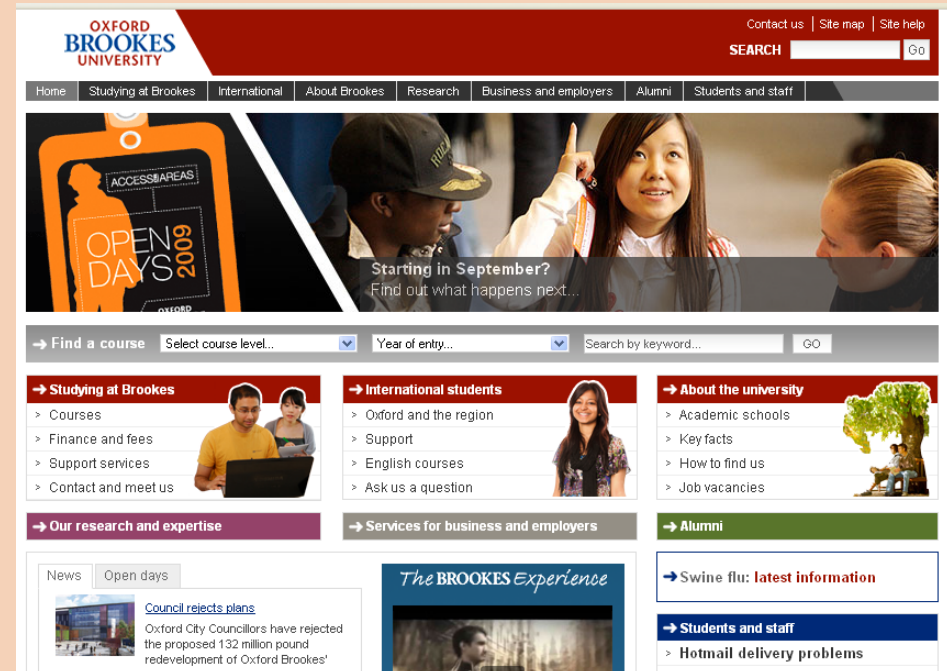
## What must be included

- The subject area
- Previous experience of the area
  - Or evidence of deep research and thought
- A skills audit
- Passion (genuine interest)
- Insight
- Brilliant construction

# Arming yourself

- Finding out what to write
  - UCAS Entry profiles – read everything ([www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk))
  - Admissions website
  - Admissions Statements
  - Departmental website
  - Focus on 2 or 3 courses only
  - Ask for further information\*
  - Prospectuses?
  - University websites?
  - Me?

\* don't waste my time



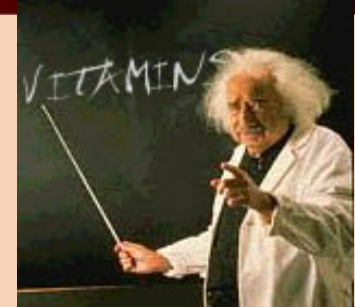
The screenshot shows the Oxford Brookes University website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Studying at Brookes, International, About Brookes, Research, Business and employers, Alumni, and Students and staff. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image featuring a student and a staff member, with the text "Starting in September? Find out what happens next...". Below the banner is a search section with fields for "Find a course", "Select course level...", "Year of entry...", and "Search by keyword...". The main content area is divided into several sections: "Studying at Brookes" (with sub-links for Courses, Finance and fees, Support services, and Contact and meet us), "International students" (with sub-links for Oxford and the region, Support, English courses, and Ask us a question), "About the university" (with sub-links for Academic schools, Key facts, How to find us, and Job vacancies), "Our research and expertise", "Services for business and employers", and "Alumni". There is also a "News" section with a link to "Council rejects plans" and a "Swine flu: latest information" section.

## Arming yourself 2

- Create a checklist from the Entry Profile/ Admissions Statement etc.
- Understand the language
  - Must have...
  - Should show....
  - Must show....
  - Preference given to....
  - A knowledge of “X” is helpful....
  - Demonstrable skills in....
  - Must demonstrate knowledge of.....
  - Industry knowledge....
  - Relevant work experience needed....
  - Current events....
  - Attention to detail....

## The first draft – an interview

- List the basic questions
  - What does he have to ask you?
  - He has a checklist...have you?
- Answer the basic questions
- Remove the basic questions
- Restructure your answers so they flow in a logical order
- Expand the answers and give examples
- Apply the “so what?” rule
- What other questions might he ask?
  - Extend beyond the basics, demonstrate your understanding
- Ask a tutor to read it
- Rewrite it, again, and again, and again.....



## So What?

- Community Service .....Helped repair an orphanage?
  - Time management, teamwork, responsibility, independent work, something unexpected....
- Travel....?
  - Multiculturalism, budgeting, fear, excitement, languages....
- Extra Curricular 1....Sports?
  - Delegation, responsibility, diplomacy, conflict resolution, motivation, self-reliance, team work, forward planning....
- Extra Curricular 2....Drama Production?
  - Teamwork, Time management, cultural sensitivity, marketing and communication, resource management....
- Always apply the “so what” rule – make it relevant
  - Why /how does it relate to the study of..your career plan...your interest...your passion

## Anything Else?

- Be creative (but don't lie)
  - Market yourself – you are amazing
  - The greatest piece of fiction based on fact you will write
  - Don't use quotes
  - We want to know what you think – not what Shakespeare thought
- Avoid Clichés
  - Having seen people injured in a fire I wanted to become a doctor – why not go into fire prevention?
  - I want to cure cancer... - then become a scientist, not a doctor
- Spelling, grammar, concision, metre, tone
  - does it sound nice and interesting?

# Poor Examples

“After finishing my HND in Computer Science at XXXX University, I

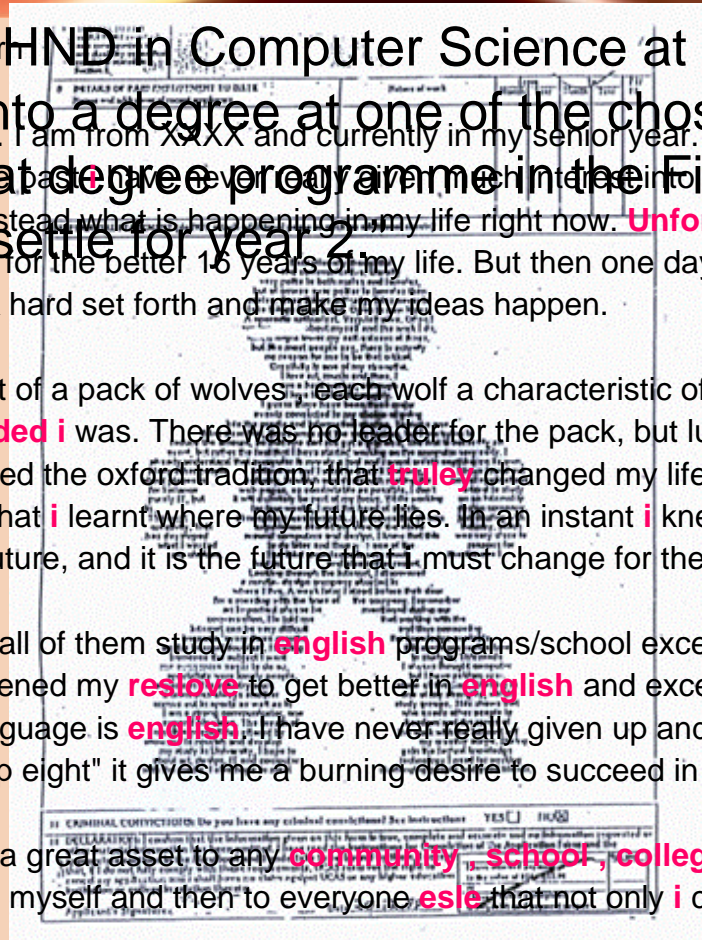
plan to move onto a degree at one of the chosen universities. I plan to enter that degree programme in the Final Year (year 3) but would also settle for year 2.”

Whoever you are, I am from XXXX and currently in my senior year. I am XXXX years old and study in XXXX. In the past I have never had any interest in my future. I did not know what would happen but instead what is happening in my life right now. Unfortunately I was blinded by the temptations of life at least for the better 16 years of my life. But then one day I realised to be successful means that I need to work hard set forth and make my ideas happen.

I considered myself to that of a pack of wolves; each wolf a characteristic of my own whether it was my past, present future or yet divided I was. There was no leader for the pack, but luckily this past summer I went to this program in oxford called the oxford tradition, that truly changed my life. I studied there Politics and economics and through that I learnt where my future lies. In an instant I knew that I can help people with what I could learn in the future, and it is the future that I must change for the better of course.

I have four other siblings, all of them study in english programs/school except me, I guess I was the odd one out. Yet that only strengthened my resolve to get better in english and exceed them and many other students whose native language is english. I have never really given up and my way of life is "If you fall down seven times, you stand up eight" it gives me a burning desire to succeed in anything I do.

Over all I think I would be a great asset to any community, school, college. I would excel and pass many students and prove first to myself and then to everyone else that not only I can do it but never doubted myself in the beginning.”



## Good Examples

- It will be unique
- It will focus on you, your skills, the course(s) you have chosen and your aims
- It will make a point just once
- It will flow logically
- It will create an argument supporting your admission
- It will indicate your in-depth understanding
- It will show how the course will help you meet your aims
- It will show you to be a joy to teach
- It may show that you have the required independent study skills not to be a burden to the academic staff\*

Questions?

Thank you for your attention

[www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)