



*Last month the UK announced that it is overhauling its college admissions process. For our friends at The Colony Group, Futureworks Consulting is breaking down these major changes in the article below. We are also offering Colony Group clients a free assessment of a student's chances of getting admitted to top universities in the UK.*

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## **UCAS is scrapping the Personal Statement and Universities like Cambridge are welcoming the change**

If you are considering applying to the UK for college, then it is important that you understand the overhaul that UCAS has announced to its application process. UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, is the UK's shared admissions service for full-time undergraduate courses at over 380 universities and colleges across the UK. Essentially, it is similar to the Common Application

Recently UCAS announced that it is scrapping the Personal Statement and many students have questioned if this change has been driven by ChatGPT while others are worried that there will be no Personal Statement altogether. Neither is true, so let us break down the changes and why and when they are happening.

### **Widening Access for All Students**

In the Future of Undergraduate Admissions report by UCAS, published on 12th January, UCAS acknowledged that the personal statement has been criticised “as a mechanism to ‘widen the gap’” between students. Essentially many see the Personal Statement system as affording an advantage to more privileged students who have greater access to expert guidance or to networks of students who have made successful applications in the past. As reported by The Times, UCAS consulted with 1,200 students, 170 teachers, and over 100 universities and colleges before making these reforms.

According to Varsity, a Cambridge University student newspaper, Sam Lucy, Director of Admissions at the University of Cambridge, told the publication that the change will “mean that less well supported students can engage more effectively with the process”.

### **The Personal Statement will be replaced by Questions that Students should always have been answering**

Students will have to answer 6 focused questions instead of the free-response 4,000 characters Personal Statement. In our opinion, these are the questions that students should have always ensured they answered

in their Personal Statement. So, in reality, this should not change your approach to the UCAS application too much. This change, however, makes the process much more transparent for all students, and in turn, ensures that universities can evaluate students more fairly.

Kim Eccleston, head of strategy and reform at UCAS, said: “We believe this...will help guide students through their responses by removing the guesswork, as well as capturing the information universities and colleges have told us they really need to know from applicants when it comes to offer-making.”

As of 2024, students will be asked to respond to a series of structured questions focused on six key areas:

1. Motivation for the course - why do you want to study these courses?
2. Preparedness for the course - how has your learning so far helped you to be ready to succeed in these courses?
3. Preparation through other experiences - What else have you done to help you prepare, and why are these experiences useful?
4. Extenuating circumstances - Is there anything that the universities and colleges need to know about, to help them put your achievements and experiences so far into context?
5. Preparedness for study - What have you done to prepare yourself for student life?
6. Preferred learning styles - Which learning and assessment style best suit you, and how do your course choices match that?

### **When do these changes come into effect?**

These changes will come into effect next year – in the 2024/25 admissions cycle. This year, you still need to write the 4,000 characters Personal Statement.

For the 2023/24 admissions cycle, UCAS will introduce ‘Entry Grade Reports’ for applicants. This personalised tool will display the range of grade profiles that have been accepted for entry to courses over a five-year period to help students evaluate their options better.

### **What other changes are being planned for the 2024/25 admissions cycle?**

Academic references will be replaced with three structured questions for referees to answer. UCAS made this change in response to the feedback that the ambiguous nature of the academic reference section made it challenging to compare applicants against each other.

Further, [Cambridge](#) has already announced that they will be making some changes to their admissions testing. Several university admissions exams, including BMAT (medicine), ENGAA (engineering), NSAA (natural sciences), and TMUA (mathematical skills) tests, will be discontinued

Consequently, the seven UK medical schools that use the BMAT in their admissions process (Brighton and Sussex, Imperial, Lancaster, UCL, Cambridge, Leeds, and Oxford) will put alternative arrangements in place

The University of Oxford is not changing any of its entry-level admissions tests.

Best of luck to everyone as they plan for the 2023/24 admissions cycle!

Thanks!

Team Futureworks

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### **Questions?**

If you have questions about this article please contact us at <https://www.futureworks.co.in/contact-us/>

### **Free Assessment?**

If you would like a free assessment of your chances of making it to a top UK university please schedule your free assessment at <https://www.futureworks.co.in/free-assessment/>

**When you contact us please do mention that you are a Colony Group client, as you will get appointments on priority and will also get a longer free assessment session.**