



UCAS References and Predicted Grades

The Personal Statement and the Reference

All higher education institutions are now able to view a student's academic performance in all the examinations they have taken. Nevertheless, there are two more vital pieces of information that an admissions tutor will read in order to make a judgement about whether or not to offer a student a place. These are:

- I. A students' Personal Statement
- II. The Academic Reference

The Personal Statement

Most students find writing a Personal Statement the most challenging thing they have to do in the Sixth Form. This is typed onto the application form by the student. It is approximately one side of A4 in length. In it the student must demonstrate why they are a good candidate to be considered by the institutions to which they are applying. In particular they must demonstrate passion and commitment to their chosen subject. You can view the detailed guidance we provide to help students construct their Personal Statement [here](#).

The Academic Reference

The academic reference is constructed by a student's Learning Advisor from information provided by subject teachers. Each subject is asked to provide detailed but concise information on the student's performance in that subject, with observations that are relevant to their course choice. They are also asked to provide a predicted grade for the student. In most cases, this will be the grade the student achieved at AS level as there is a very strong correlation between their AS grade and their final A2 grade. Subjects may marginally raise this grade if they are aware of extenuating circumstances or consider that there are good reasons to believe the student can improve at A2, even though the content is more demanding.

In recent years, students have requested to have higher predictions added to their applications than the evidence available suggests, in order to access courses making higher offers. While we do not wish to be unsympathetic, the ultimate decision must rest with the subject teacher. However, we would wish to point out that it can be quite detrimental to a students' application if they apply for a course for which they are most unlikely to achieve the grades. We want our students to aim high, but they should be able to demonstrate a track record which justifies the grades predicted. Furthermore, we, cannot jeopardise our reputation with higher education institutions by providing them with information that is unrealistic.

A Common Message

In a strong application, the academic reference should reinforce the Personal Statement and the evidence of examination performance; the three should be in harmony.