This information sheet has been created for you to use as a general guide when writing your personal statement. It's a good idea to remember that there will be differences from subject to subject, institution to institution and admissions tutor to admissions tutor. If you're unsure of what to include in your personal statement, please consult the websites of the universities to which you are applying, or use UCAS entry profiles available on the UCAS website.
Getting Started
Starting to write your personal statement is often the hardest part, but these simple steps should help.

Start as early as possible
You can expect to redraft your personal statement several times, so those who leave it until the last minute often struggle! Beware of internal school / college deadlines if you're given one.

Consider carefully
Why have you chosen your subject area(s)? What are you looking forward to studying within the course?

Prepare a skills audit
A skills audit is a great way to start identifying your strengths. This is a listing exercise where you write down all the experiences you have and then draw out any skills, e.g. time management, teamwork, presentation skills, that may be relevant to your course.

Write a first draft
Try writing small parts of your statement, starting with the bits which you feel most confident with (for example, why do you like the subject?). Don't worry about the word count at this stage. This won't be your final version, but it helps just to get your ideas down on paper.

Write another draft
Go back to what you've written a few days later and critique it. If you think it's badly worded, change it. If you don't feel it's relevant, delete it.

Show it to others
Once you've created a full draft version, ask someone to proofread it and see whether you've missed any crucial details. It can be difficult to really sell yourself on paper, but other people who know you will be able to spot if you're being too modest!

Admissions tutors may look for:
• A clear interest and motivation for the subject you are applying for. Why do you want to study the subject? How did your interest develop? How have you pursued your interest in the subject? Have you any particular areas of interest within it - if so, why?
• Evidence of interest in the subject area outside of your curriculum studies, including wider reading where relevant.
• Work experience - voluntary or paid. For some courses, this will be an essential element of your application, for example physiotherapy, teaching or medicine. Tutors will be expecting applicants to show a clear grasp of the profession they want to study.
• Extra-curricular activities - interests, hobbies or responsibilities to show that you are a well rounded person, can manage your time and have energy and enthusiasm. Interests that are directly relevant to the course are of particular importance.
• If you are planning a gap year indicate briefly how you are going to spend your time. Make sure you check with universities you are interested in that they will accept a deferred entry for your particular course.
• Any career plans you have, if relevant.

Useful Tips
Focus on the subject you're applying for, as this is the most important part of your personal statement. At least half of your statement should be about the course and why you want to study it. This is a formal piece of writing, so check your grammar and spelling thoroughly to ensure no mistakes. Remember that there's no spell check facility on the UCAS system, so it's a good idea to use a word processor such as Microsoft Word when drafting.

You shouldn't use abbreviations, slang or make any jokes. You can sometimes do this without realising, so it's useful to ask someone else to proofread your statement for you.

Use proactive words like directed, co-ordinated and organised to describe your past experience where relevant and write positively overall.

Be honest. If you say that you've read a book when you haven't, you will run into trouble when asked about it at an interview. There's no need to lie. UCAS uses a plagiarism screening device called CopyCatch, so make sure that your personal statement is all your own work. Plagiarising any part of your personal statement could land you in trouble.

Try not to over-edit your personal statement. It's important to edit your first draft, but don't get carried away with trying to make it perfect. The longer you spend editing, the less time you have to work towards the grades you need.

And finally, keep an eye on the word limit. You only have 4000 characters, including spaces, to use for your personal statements. Beware; this includes line breaks too!