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Bad advice from teachers is harming university chances

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Teenagers applying to university are given such bad advice by teachers that it can harm their chances of being offered a place, a study suggests.

Research by the [Sutton Trust](#), an education charity, found that teachers had little or no clue of what admissions tutors at leading universities looked for in personal statements.

Forty-four students from poor backgrounds who had identical predicted A-level grades were graded on their personal statement.

Less than a quarter were awarded the same mark by the admissions tutor and teacher, according to an analysis by Steven Jones of the University of Man-

chester. Twenty statements were one grade out; 13 were two grades out; and one was three grades out.

One teenager applying to study medicine wrote a detailed account of watching an operation while on work experience.

The teacher said that this would harm the application because it was too "long and impersonal"; the admissions tutor said it would "strongly improve" the candidate's chances of being offered a place, describing the section as "excellent analysis of a complex case".

The Sutton Trust called for better training for teachers on advising candidates and said that universities should be more transparent in what they looked for in personal statements.