

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

You've decided what you want to study
and where, so what's next?

Now it's your chance to impress universities
and show admissions tutors your motivation
for studying.



Why do you want to study this subject?

How will a degree in this subject help your future career?

What skills have you developed from voluntary activities or work experience?

What have you done outside of school or college to further your interest in your subject?

Think of the academic skills you already have. How will these be used in your degree?

Why should you be accepted on to the course?

PERSONAL STATEMENT ONE

Ever since I was a child I would create wild, creative and fascinating drawings of my dream home; a home which would spell comfort and luxury. A reality? Most probably not. However, that will and desire to create a building which is architecturally beautiful, has continued to run through my veins. I have without a doubt been influenced by programmes such as Grand Designs on Channel 4 or Mega-structures on Channel 5. One has taught me how delicate yet strong a structure can be, whilst the other has shown me that in this world there is a continuous desire to go one step further into the impossible. The Millau Viaduct, created by Sir Norman Foster, is a structure which continues to fascinate me, for these very same reasons. My fascination for architecture has thus driven my desire to become an architect. I often find myself enticed by Architectural Review, a journal which reveals the latest news and headlines in the architectural world. One article which sets itself out from the rest was one about South Africa and the issues surrounding poverty and prejudice among the black community. Although South Africa has emerged from the shadow of apartheid, still a huge number of people live in poverty in townships. The article reviewed how architects have set about improving the lives of those who live in the townships. One construction was that of the Usasazo School in the Khayelitsha Township. This is already delivering improvements to the education system the route to a better future for many. Another construction is the Police Station which covers the cape Peninsula's local rail network has set about reducing the crime rates, which are considerably high in South Africa with around 20 murders per 1000 people. These two examples have shown me that architecture can not only improve the environment which we live in but also society as well.

Having this desire to study architecture at university, has led me to take work experience opportunities at architectural firms. During the summer term of 2009 I was accepted for a week's work experience at Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners in London, where I was invited to create a small sanctuary for architects who worked late into the night, somewhere where they could relax, unwind and sleep. That week was without a doubt one of the most interesting and fascinating experiences I have had, not only because of an intriguing and enjoyable topic, but also the kindness and helpfulness of everyone who I worked with. I have also worked in the retailing business for a week, at a golf shop, and I have had experience working in a charity shop (once a week for a year). These have also been experiences that I will never forget.

I have played for the highest teams in rugby and football and I also enjoy more individual sports such as squash, skiing, and scuba diving (reaching the level of Dive Leader in the BSAC branch), and am the secretary of the Scuba club. I also enjoy playing music. In the past I've played the Bassoon to grade 4, and I still play the Alto and Baritone Saxophone. I hope to complete grade 8 at the end of the year. Because of my love for the Saxophone, I have thrown myself into a various groups such as the School wind band, swing band, and the schools saxophone quartet. I have also enjoyed playing music outside the school at my church. I also enjoy art and frequently attend Life Drawing sessions to try and improve my drawing skills. It is because of these skills that I have been appointed head of house music and art. I have also taken part in school plays, and have achieved my Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award.

My childhood ambition of building my luxurious home will never completely leave me, but as I have matured I have realised that the creation of affordable homes of every description for people in all parts of the world, made with sustainable resources, is infinitely more important. I wish to study Architecture so as to be able to part of the future of the world's buildings.

Please note: The personal statements used in this leaflet have been written specifically for this workshop to help you identify areas that need improvement. They should not be viewed as simple templates.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT TWO

Computing can at times be very maddening but when I solve a problem the feeling of satisfaction reinforces my desire to build upon my knowledge of this intriguing subject. It's an exciting time to be studying computing in our rapidly increasing technological world and I'm keen to take a role. I am studying C and Java while for my year 13 project I am enjoying analysing a company's situation, identifying the solution and writing a program. Furthermore the units on arrays and data representation have held a particular interest. Each lesson has given me fresh ideas to contemplate, developing my scientific knowledge, while testing my problem-solving abilities. I am looking forward to learning much more about programming, databases and operating systems. Mathematics has been an absorbing choice of A level and my logical mind has found the modules on algebra, statistics and integration particularly appealing. I think I would enjoy studying topics on calculus and probability.

Computers touch almost every aspect of our daily lives and are invaluable in mathematical research, while mathematics forms the basis of our understanding of science and technology. I was very pleased when I realised I could study a degree that allowed me develop both my passions.

In Psychology A level I especially liked the modules on memory and have conducted research in these areas. I am a member of the British Psychological Society. Creativity is important in the study of all these subjects and I hope I can apply the skills learnt to my degree course.

At weekends and during school holidays I work in a thriving public library which has a comprehensive range of IT facilities. My interpersonal and communication skills have been greatly developed while working there. Working with other members of staff has helped me understand the meaning of team work and flexibility. I have found helping the public with a varied range of enquiries challenging and stimulating. Work experience at an estate agent first helped me learn the value of how to organise and manage my time efficiently, and the ability to work independently when required.

In the sixth form I am the student representative for the School council. My main role is organising extra-curricular activities. I am proud that I have been awarded numerous Head Teacher commendations, certificates for attendance and just recently my form award for outstanding effort and achievement. Community Service in the sixth form gives me the opportunity to work with a Year 7 mathematics class which I have found very rewarding. Furthermore I am involved in a buddy system assisting newcomers to the school. For many years I have been a member of local sports clubs and have experienced many sporting activities including gymnastics, tennis and swimming. Badminton is important to me and my involvement with a junior badminton team taught me the values of patience, leadership and delegation. I am interested in family history and have enjoyed the methodical research this past time requires. My musical abilities focus on my electronic keyboard.

My career path is yet unplanned but I know that I have a desire to be further challenged. I am dedicated to my A level studies so I can take a degree course that I know will be stimulating. I know that university life is full of possibilities with the opportunity to try fresh activities, meet different people and the chance to be involved with another community. It's an exciting time and I'm enthusiastic about my future.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT THREE

A beautiful smile is infectious. A smile of one who suffers from periodontitis may be infectious for different reasons. My keen interest in dentistry stems from an early age. I believe I possess the necessary skills and attributes for such a career; I am a diligent and motivated individual who is fascinated by the ever-expanding field of dentistry. Having always been meticulous, it is my attention to detail and precision in my work that makes me such a fitting candidate for the vocation of dentistry.

My desire to pursue dentistry was confirmed when I spent time at two different dental practices, one in the NHS and the other private. During my placement at the private clinic, I learnt a great deal, including dental vocabulary, how to conduct a thorough check-up and also the principles of more complex procedures. I was fortunate enough to be allowed to use the facilities to perform fillings myself, on old dentures, and was praised for the competency I displayed. Spending a morning at the labs, I observed how bridges, crowns and other fittings are produced. I was intrigued by the innovative dental materials and instruments used, and how the technology continues to advance. Time at my NHS placement highlighted to me the considerable differences between the two practices in terms of workload and expectations, allowing me to appreciate the varying demands of the profession. I will also be undertaking a placement shadowing an orthodontist at a local NHS hospital to further my experience.

Additionally, I have completed placements both at a care home for the elderly and disabled, and a primary school where I was involved with the reception class. These helped me improve my interpersonal skills, learning to evaluate and adapt when dealing with people of different ages and abilities. I gained a better insight into palliative care and the importance of patience in a healthcare profession. Having the responsibility of other peoples' safety taught me to be circumspect at all times. All these qualities will aid me in my chosen career.

Working on the pharmacy team at Boots the Chemist, I have enjoyed customer interactions, where being attentive and empathetic is essential in providing excellent customer care. I am currently training on a Healthcare Advisors Course to broaden my understanding of the medicines I sell.

My A-level choices of Biology, Chemistry and Physics reflect my avid interest in the sciences. Product Design has helped me build on manual dexterity, precision and accuracy – abilities I know are fundamental for such a profession as dentistry.

Throughout my school life I have participated in a number of activities and taken on roles of responsibility. For two years I have been a school prefect, where responsibilities include organising events and acting as an ambassador for the school. In Year 9 I was a School Council representative, and I am currently an active member of the Sixth Form Working Party. Holding such positions has developed my communication skills and sense of diplomacy. Moreover, I am a mentor for a Year 10 form, providing counsel and guidance. I was awarded Student of the Year 2009 for my efforts and dedication in the Dorset Enterprise and Skills Challenge – an exciting contest in which we formed a company and competed against others. Teamwork and cooperation were vital, along with organisation and the ability to work under pressure to meet deadlines. My role as backstage crew director for my participating team in "Rock Challenge," a global dance competition, enabled me to establish strong leadership skills.

Outside of school, my hobbies lie in the arts: I hold LAMDA certificates up to grade 5 in drama; I have played the guitar for six years and have recently taken up piano; I am creative and enjoy designing. I believe I have the qualities, skills and attitude necessary to succeed. I am adamant that dentistry is the career I wish to pursue.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT FOUR

The imagery that can so accurately depict a natural landscape or the sentence that is made witty purely by the amount of adjectives at its end, these are things from which I take great pleasure. This is the main reason why I am eager to take part in your course.

During my time at Sixth Form, I learnt to speak up for myself. I find that because literature and philosophy are subjects that can easily bring people closer together. It allows for people to be different and to still be right, as there is no truly right answer which is something that moves me.

My teachers and I were shocked with the grades I achieved at A level, as it was known how much I had prepared with an abundance of well written practice exams as well as A/B grade coursework modules. I have found that, despite my timed essay practice in class, I was still effected by the stress of needing to achieve at A level and this has subsequently been suggested by my teachers as the main explanation for my poor performance. I am retaking English Literature units 6 and 4 as well as Religious Studies units 12 and 9. After in depth discussion with my respective teachers, I am confident that I will do far better in my exams this time around. In my gap year I have started my own online custom jewellery business with my sister, with a percentage of the profits going to some well known charities and I aim to do some volunteer work later on in the year.

To look upon my results sheet is to see a very clear difference between exam and coursework performance. I am an independent learner at heart and I love bringing my own ideas to coursework and exploring different ideas and I have been praised many times by teachers for my original perspective on different pieces of literature and on different moral issues.

Throughout my education, I have been eager to help others. I taught for a day at a local Primary School and this gave me great confidence in public speaking and improved my leadership skills. I took part in a Peer Listening course in my time at Sixth Form and am now qualified to conduct private sessions with students to talk about their issues. I feel that there is something very beautiful in peoples' differences. Literature is something that celebrates this as it allows us, the reader to enjoy a different perspective on life. This I think allows for us to become far more accepting as we are given the opportunity to become less biased as we see the world through somebody else's eyes.

I love reading and some of my favourite authors include Phillip Pullman, J.K Rowling and Hugh Laurie, although I do enjoy the odd biography with Alan Carr's being my current favourite. I also enjoy reading New Scientist magazine and I have a vast collection of non-fiction books that I love. I find great enjoyment in reading poetry and E.E. Cummings' "I Carry Your Heart With Me" is a favourite of mine. I also enjoy listening to music in my spare time and I appreciate the poetry and beauty of lyrics. I adore film and I think that the speech at the end of 'The Great Dictator' is one of the greatest moments of cinema to date.

Your course will allow me to further explore different pieces of literature and different ideas from writers and people. I am an open minded, accepting person and I enjoy exploring different ideas in many forms. I am a very hardworking student and I hope to learn as much as possible in this course about different aspects and effects of literature. I also hope to learn more about life from my university experience. I am confident that I am ready to do so.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT FIVE

I was born running at least that is what my mother tells me; always running never standing still. As I was growing up participating in sports has always been central to my life. Throughout my life I have thought about many career and future job possibilities but these choices have always been focused on sports. I can see a definite career pathway developing before me and I know that going to University would give me the opportunity to pursue my dream and achieve my goals.

I am currently studying a BTEC National Diploma in Sport, focussing on fitness and development. Studying sports at this level offers me the opportunity to look at sports in a wide and varied context, combining practical study with academic elements. I am now able to appreciate how the human body works not only from a physical aspect. I am aware of the importance of psychological preparation and how it is equally important to physical conditioning no matter whether you are performing at an elite level or non professional. Out of the 18 units we have been studying I have enjoyed completing the units based on how the body responds to exercise and investigating what the body is capable of, its limits and what ultimately affects the body's performance. These units were also the units I excelled well in. I also feel that I now have a basic level of knowledge and understanding in sports development, particularly overcoming barriers to improvement and it is these areas that I look forward to understanding more of through your course.

When at school I like to help out with events such as Opening Evenings. I am currently helping to plan a celebration evenings of Post 16 work. I have completed my Sports Leadership course and have also completed my National Pool Lifeguard Qualification. I currently work part time as a Life Guard at a local sports centre and in addition to this I also have also gained experience of putting my Sports Leadership skills to use by organising sports events for children aged 5-13 at weekends. Working in a sports centre has given me the opportunity to see how a sports centre operates and gain experience working with the general public. Above all it has given me a taste of being in a work environment and how to work with others as part of a team.

At primary school I developed a love for cross country running and represented my school in a number of events across the country. Later I developed a love for swimming and joined Beckenham Swimming Club. However running was and remains my passion. I joined Blackheath and Bromley Harriers which allowed me to train with others and develop my skills. I was Sports Captain at both my primary and secondary schools. This was a role I was very proud of as it gave me the opportunity to work with younger children and be a positive role model to others. Above all it gave me the opportunity to show others that Sport is a subject we can all excel in as it teaches important life skills such as discipline, determination and team work. More importantly it makes us aware of ourselves and the responsibility we have to keep ourselves fit and healthy.

I work well as a team and enjoy new challenges and I believe University will offer me all these things and more. Going on to University to study Sports Science is a natural progression for me as sports has been such an important part of my life that I cannot imagine doing anything else. The experiences I have gained so far have shown me that it is not just the sporting industry that is for ever changing within our society but our lifestyle as well. The sports industries have help people to find solutions to leading healthier and less stressful lives. Education plays a key role, it teaches us we should all develop an awareness of health and exercise and participating in sports is not just for elite athletic; it is for everyone. It is exciting that I could be part of these changes and make a positive contribution to people lives and our community

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PERSONAL STATEMENT SIX

After finishing sixth form at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX I would like to take an Animal Management course at Hadlow College. This course is perfect for the career I hope to get as it teaches animal conservation amongst many other useful topics such as animal behaviour which will help me in future. I intend to work in shark conservation or conservation of marine life as this is the topic area that I have been interested in for years and have a real passion for. I plan to work in a zoo on the days which I am not attending college which will further my understanding of different animals and help me gain more confidence in handling and working with them. I know this course would be the right step for me to take next partly due to the style of the course, because there is lots of a hand on work with the variety of animals held on site, as well as written and project work. I will benefit from the different approaches to learning that the course offers. I am determined to achieve well and enjoy the course.

In the sixth form I am currently studying Geography, Sociology, Psychology and Media Studies. Geography will be useful in animal management as links can be made between different earth processes and animal conservation such as global warming, causing the ice caps to melt which would spark a conservation scheme in this area e.g. helping polar bears. In this subject I have attended two field trips to Wales. These called for me to apply skills learnt in the classroom, such as map work, data collecting, using different equipment and teamwork to a real life situation. I believe that being able to transfer skills is extremely important, and this will be required for animal management so it will therefore be of benefit to have gained some experience with this. Another subject that has links into animal management is Media studies, as I am doing my coursework on the representation of dangerous animals in the media with reference to the film Jaws. After this film came out the impact it had on the number of sharks was outstanding as many were killed due to the bad representation shown in this film. As a result shark conservation schemes were set up to help protect sharks and raise their numbers. Studying Sociology has given me the opportunity to practise and develop my essay writing which will help me with the written work that is set on the animal management course, as well as assignments and presentations.

I have done work experience and gained an excellence award, this taught me many new skills for example knowing how to act appropriately in the work place which will help me when working with animals. I was able to work as part of a team and work independently in different sections of the company. I was able to apply and practise the skills learnt in my work experience to my part time job. This job has also given me more responsibilities within the work place, such as working independently, training new people on my section and using my initiative once I have finished the tasks set. Earning my own money has given me more independence, preparing me well for university life. I will be able to apply these skills in my working career in animal conservation. I will also have the opportunity to apply the practical skills and knowledge learnt during my course. I look forward to the challenges and experiences I will gain from this course.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT SEVEN

My choice of subject to study was made because, throughout my life, I have been fortunate enough to have strong laws protecting my rights and my freedom. I understand that this is a luxury that not everyone has and by studying Law at university I hope to change this in any way I can. Everyone has a right to freedom and security and I feel that law is the right career choice for me because I know that I can make a difference, however small it may be, and help fight the injustices that people throughout the world are forced to deal with on a regular basis. Growing up in Brussels, the “capital” of the European Union, has given me a comprehensive knowledge of many different cultures and I have developed a passion for the European political and legal system. I have therefore decided to take this interest to a higher level.

Although I am of Irish nationality and am fluent in Irish, I was born in Brussels and have lived there most of my life. This is something that I am very grateful for because over the years it has allowed me to obtain many attributes such as my fluency in French, my respect for different cultures and my knowledge of how the European Union functions. I have also managed to remain true to my roots by studying the Irish language in school. In March 2009, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to participate in the MEP, the Model European Parliament held in the European Parliament chambers in Brussels. This was a valuable experience in which I learnt how the Parliament works and I represented the United Kingdom’s largest political party.

From a young age I have been involved in helping others through various charitable activities. These include volunteering at my church’s local charity fair and taking part in a walk in aid of the “pink ribbon” cancer charity. I have also been involved in fundraising for a Brussels based mental health charity. Throughout my time at school I have helped manage my school’s annual charity event, “Springfest”. These have taught me responsibility and organisational skills, which I feel are important attributes that can only help me in my future studies. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to represent my class in school as the elected class president which required both leadership and communication skills. Being nominated as class representative motivated me to take on more responsibilities and throughout the summer of 2009 I worked as a counsellor and group leader on an Irish language summer school. I am also interested in fashion and last year I put on a charity fashion show in my school. Although this was a very big responsibility, and took a lot of self-discipline, I thrived under the pressure and was proud to produce a full line of clothing.

Sport is a great way for me to take a break from my studies and I enjoy challenging myself physically through a wide range of activities. These include swimming, kickboxing, skiing and football. I particularly enjoy the communication element of team sports. I find refuge in music, whether it be listening to it or playing the piano.

In my spare time I am a passionate reader. I enjoy reading both English and French literature and Amelie Nothomb is a particular favourite author of mine. From an early age I have enjoyed writing and I have also recently developed an interest in writing poetry. At the age of 7, I discovered a love for acting and have since then enjoyed being part of a theatre group. Through my acting I have grown in confidence and self-assurance.

I understand that studying Law will require a great deal of focus and hard work, something which I will not shy away from because I know that Law is the career I want to pursue. I expect my university education to be the perfect stepping stone in achieving this goal and I am looking forward to the challenge.

Notes

Your checklist

- Make a list of your relevant achievements
- Make a list of the skills you would benefit from gaining and think of an extra-curricular activity to improve these
- Sign up to a few hours of volunteering or work experience!
- Check your spelling and grammar, but also ask someone else to read it through (parent/supporter or teacher)

Communication / Team work / Multi-tasking / Problem solving / Organisation / Leadership

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