

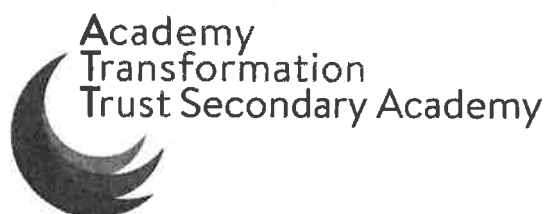


Pool Hayes
Academy

Personal Statement Writing Workshop

Name:

Subject/Course:



Universities I am interested in

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Open Days I am interested in

1.

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Apprenticeships I am interested in

1.

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Aims of a Personal Statement (or Covering Letter)

Hints & Tips

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Action Plan



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. *Submit my first draft to* _____ *by* _____

I . Why This Subject/Course?



To justify my choice of subject/course. I need to convince the admissions tutor that I am right for the course, committed to it and going to finish.

Answer the following questions using BULLET POINTS. If you get stuck, ask for help.

1. **If I studied this subject at school (or a subject related to my course) , which three topics/components have I most enjoyed and why?**

2. **Which three topics/components am I most looking forward to studying at university and why?**

3. **What form of study am I looking forward to? Why? (examples include practical work, research, independent study, etc.)**

4. **Why is this subject/course important to others and/or life in general?**

5. **How does this subject/course play to my character/strengths?**



Examples (NOT "I want to do Geography because it is interesting.")

"I have very much enjoyed exploring the complex themes in Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights' which challenged my perception of relationships. I have also enjoyed writing fiction inspired by deeper text studies which enhanced my appreciation of the technical side of writing."

"Psychology underpins many areas of life from developmental psychology, looking at the behaviour of children, to psychology used in schools, courtrooms, and the police force. Many institutions benefit from utilising aspects of psychology and it is a particularly useful tool in diagnosing psychological illness. This requires psychologists to have a strong knowledge of the brain and its functions."

"I wish to study architecture at university to bring together my interests in science and art, as well as develop skills in designing buildings and their interiors. Specifically, I hope to gain a profound understanding of the history of building design and the various styles as well as learn about modern materials and technologies used to design and construct."

"I have a passion to further increase my knowledge of physical geography through independent study and research. I also wish to apply and develop my understanding through practical placements and research projects."



2. What Enthusiasm Do I Have For This Subject?

To tell them more about my enthusiasm for the subject. Who would a lecturer rather be teaching - a student who has chosen the subject simply because it is something to do at university; a student who sees his time at university as a stepping stone to something better; or a student who has a genuine passion for the subject and wants to learn?

Answer the following questions using BULLET POINTS. If you get stuck, ask for help.

1. What evidence do I have of interest in this subject and what have I learnt from it?

Example evidence includes: lectures, courses and/or debates attended, self-taught skills, trips and places visited (including fieldwork), documentaries watched, blogs written or followed, journalism, people who have inspired me, clubs led, tutoring, coaching, campaigning etc.? (please note that work experience goes in section 3)

2. What transferable skills and knowledge have I gained from OTHER sixth form studies, and how do these support the study of my chosen subject? Examples might include problem solving, essay writing, independent research, data analysis, etc.

3. What have I recently read (book, article, magazine, journal, etc.) about or related to this subject, found interesting and why?

4. What is in the news, fashionable and/or new in this subject?

5. If you are doing independent research or writing an extended essay e.g. as part of an EPQ, what is it about and what is your analysis of the topic?



Examples

"Themes of social work are often featured in the news; I have recently watched a news programme which evaluated and compared the level of mental illnesses such as depression in correlation with variables such as weight, age, gender, wealth and geographical location."

"My A-Level studies are providing me with a variety of skills. Maths is helping me to develop vital problem solving abilities, whilst teaching me the fundamentals upon which applied maths are based. In physics, the topics of statics and dynamics of particles have helped me learn the technique of modelling in order to simplify problems and analyse data efficiently."

"In following my fascination of how environmental and social influences play a role in essentially who we are and the neurology behind this, I read 'Suspicious Minds: How Culture Shapes Madness' by Dr Jon and Ian Gould, and 'Phantoms in the Brain' by V.S Ramachandran. Their focus on the nature of delusions and the dynamic relationship between our brain and our surrounding environment fascinates me."

"In my own time I attended a short course on life drawing and portraiture. This allowed me to explore different technical skills and enhanced my understanding of measurement and form."

"I decided to focus my extended essay on the 1936 Berlin Olympics, as sports history is a module I anticipate studying at degree level. I was also keen to prove my ability to learn independently, and gain more experience of researching and writing at a higher level. I gained a thorough understanding of the consequences of the Nazi dictatorship and the political hardship that sportsmen and women faced during that era."

3. What Experience, Achievements And Aspirations?

To tell them about my experience and achievements in the subject, and my future aspirations.

Answer the following questions using BULLET POINTS. If you get stuck, ask for help.



Please note 'experience' includes work experience, work shadowing, volunteering and relevant part-time jobs.

1. What experience do I have that is relevant to the subject/course and what did I gain from it?

2. What irrelevant experience do I have and what transferable skills did I gain from it?

3. What relevant experience am I intending to do and what do I hope to gain from it?

4. What achievements do I have that are relevant to this subject/course?

Examples might include: competitions, prizes and qualifications (other than school based), scholarships and sponsorship.

5. What career do I intend to pursue after university and why?

6. If I am planning a gap year, what are my reasons and how will the experience be useful for university?



Examples

"I became drawn towards the legal profession and subsequently my work experience in Year 11 was at one of London's largest solicitors. During the two weeks I was there I spent a brief time in the commercial, matrimonial and police prosecution departments. All these aspects of law were interesting but my experience in the criminal law department was particularly stimulating and is the area I wish to pursue a career in – ultimately in the capacity of a barrister."

"I have gained work experience in two architectural bureaux in Serbia over the last two summers. This introduced me to the level of work and commitment required to be an architect and introduced me to many elements of the job. The work included sorting files, portfolios and proposed projects as well as learning to use ArchiCAD versions 8.1, 9 and 10. I also enjoyed visiting sites and was present when a 3m long copper cross and its base were placed on the roof of a church."

"For the last year I have volunteered with young people with special needs through which I have gained many key skills that are needed in nursing. Due to communication difficulties I had to adapt the way I communicate with each individual even using methods such as Makaton. I have also become more competent in my observational skills, for example looking out for seizures."

"I am looking forward to a trip this summer to the Philippine islands to work for a month with the Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation. The project will involve mapping the marine grazes of coral reefs and logging the data onto survey forms which can then be used to keep a tag on the endangered parts of the reefs."

4 What Skills And Qualities?

To present my skills and qualities. Which will benefit me and the university? Universities are particularly keen on anything that shows evidence of responsibility, leadership, enterprise and originality. Universities are also particularly keen on anything that shows evidence of working independently, under pressure and away from home. They want to feel confident that I am going to mix and work well with other people, make the most of the opportunity on offer, can listen and add to discussion groups, and help make the course a success

Finally if necessary use this section to refer to any personal circumstances that may affect results e.g. illness, family bereavement, trauma, etc.

What extra curricular activities/interests do I have?



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1.

2.

3.

Example activities/interests: other part-time work, young enterprise, dofe, cadets, ncs, scouts/guides, music, travel, voluntary/charity/community work, clubs, societies, sports, positions of responsibility/leadership, events/activities I've organised, non-exam subjects, dance, reading, languages, IT skills, fitness, debating, art, drama, first-aid, musical instruments, choir, photography, mentoring, tutoring etc.

Example skills: organisation, planning, problem solving, leadership, coaching, mentoring, teamwork, communication, time management, listening, teaching, managing, performing, driving, computer/technical, interpersonal, presentation, goal setting, analytical, research, etc.

Example qualities: self-disciplined, motivated, confident, committed, professional, positive, decisive, creative, persistent, friendly, fun, understanding, patient, enthusiastic, reliable, respectful, trustworthy, caring, kind, honest, independent, tolerant, happy, teachable, adaptable, responsible, courageous, mature, focused, dedicated, ambitious, hard-working, resourceful, compassionate, active, etc.



Examples

"I play tennis and I have played for the basketball and rugby teams of my school. This has taught me to work collaboratively and has improved my desire to succeed. "

"I work part-time at a hairdressers, which allows me to work as part of a team as well as independently, using my initiative to complete tasks around the salon."

"I have been a volunteer at the local scout group, mentoring and teaching children between the ages of six and eight. This has taught me to be more patient and adaptable, especially to overcome challenges."

"Both my roles as prefect and being part of the editorial team for the school magazine have helped me develop my time management, organisational and interpersonal skills."

"I have developed my problem solving skills through playing chess at school; this requires concentration and analytical thought."

5. The Closing Sentence

To give a memorable encapsulation of me AND why the university should take me over everyone else. It should be eye catching, individual, personal, honestly meant and short if possible. Make sure it is relevant to what comes before it. The final impression/sentence is very important – it leaves a lasting impression.

Stage 1:



Stage 2:

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Examples

"I hope I have risen to all the academic challenges of the sixth form, and intend to continue to do so in the wider environment at university."

"I feel that I have barely begun to learn about the history of art due to its massive breadth and I look forward to furthering my knowledge at university."

"I believe that my interest in aerospace engineering, logical approach and attention to detail make me a strong candidate for this course and my desire to learn more will encourage me to make full use of my university education."

"Through furthering my studies at university I hope to better understand philosophical theories and in the process of learning and reflecting, learn more about myself."

Example Personal Statement

I hope to study Geographic Information Science (GIS) because I would like to understand how the world around us has been analysed and mapped. I am particularly looking forward to the GIS mathematical modules as I hope these will allow me to undertake more in-depth concepts to further my ability and understanding of GIS. Binomial Expansion has been a topic of particular fascination which led me to learn about fractals and how the maths of fractals has been used to accurately measure lengths of coastline, perimeters of countries and so forth. Combining this with modules including programming will, hopefully, enable me to understand the basis of GIS software for computers such as Google Earth. At school I have enjoyed studying and completing presentations that have made use of websites such as www.worldmapper.org which I felt is an amazing way to represent the Earth.

Beyond the classroom I enjoy reading many related publications by authors including Paul Longley and Christopher Lloyd. Their books on GIS have been very interesting and have allowed me to better understand GIS. 'Mathematics: From the Birth of Numbers' by Jan Gullberg is a book which I have found very interesting as a way of increasing my knowledge of mathematics.

I also enjoy watching related natural history which has been both fascinating as well as useful for school and general interest, especially the Blue Planet Series. I have been to geography talks given by Professor Ian Stewart, as well as others, on a range of issues. I've recently been on a 3 day pre-university course at Exeter University, which though for Physics, I felt gave me a great deal of knowledge and experience about university life in general, as well as helping me to consider the career paths that will be open to me once I complete the course. These include mapping, geo-informatics, finance and management, or taking a PhD after the course has finished, all of which require a logical mind like mine!

As part of the school team in Year Nine, I undertook research into the Earth and its plate boundaries working for the 'Crest Award'. We visited Southampton University to carry out some research and experiments which was mesmerising, particularly the dry ice demonstration. Getting our hands on some of the equipment was amazing. I'm a Senior Prefect and School Ambassador which has enhanced my confidence, leadership and communication skills. Through playing tennis for my local club and practicing Taekwondo I have learnt how to maintain motivation, set goals and be decisive.

As a member of the New Forest Youth Council, I have taken part in many events for the youth and have been working with disadvantaged people, which has taught me about greater understanding for others. More importantly I have learnt to work in teams. Examples of this can be seen through my current involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and completing the Community and Junior Sports Leader Awards and being selected to be on both the Leavers Ball and Year Book Committee's whilst I was in Year 11. In addition I enjoy reading a wide range of novels and particularly enjoy reading my favourite Isaac Asimov and his Foundation series.

There are many aspects of university which I am looking forward to such as having greater independence, meeting many new and different people from all walks of life and fully managing my life (finances, study time, extra-curricular activities etc). I believe I have built up all the qualities needed for a well rounded individual and have successfully overcome all the challenges which I have faced. In this way, I am hoping you will agree that I am well prepared for the broadness, depth, new experiences and challenges of university life.

It is impossible for us to find a personal statement that will appeal to everyone. We like this statement, it was written as part of a Personal Statement Workshop from The Life Skills Company and was successful in gaining the author multiple university offers.



Example Personal Statement

The relevance of Biomedical Science to everyone's lives is what makes it such an important subject: the way our bodies function; the added defences we can provide them; the investigation of medical issues and the development of cures. Ultimately this is why I wish to read Biomedical Science at University; to have a key role in research projects of the future.

I've enjoyed studying the respiratory and circulatory systems as they are impressively adapted to allow life to continue successfully. I was particularly interested to read about research into the development of a 'biological pacemaker' using gene therapy. Although the use of this discovery in humans is currently still in development, the thought that with more research this could be a possible minimally invasive alternative to pacemakers excites me. In September I attended a lecture about Alzheimer's disease and the molecular level research that is currently taking place. This built on the knowledge I gained from biology AS and I am particularly looking forward to studying proteins and molecular biology at a higher level.

My A level choices have provided me with numerable skills that transfer to degree level. Chemistry has helped me in terms of analysing data, Maths has improved my problem solving abilities and French has enhanced my communication skills. Writing an extended essay for a competition entitled 'Is religion the enemy of science?' enhanced my independent research skills and allowed me to reason critically, valuable skills for a course in Biomedical Science. The arguments of this essay were based on the importance of logical and empirical scientific evidence found by correctly following the scientific method of inquiry. I was awarded the attainment and achievement prize for my essay.

During my work experience at the Queen Victoria Hospital, I observed consultations in the orthodontic and maxillofacial departments, similar to my previous work experience in a dental practice. It highlighted to me how seriously people take their wellbeing and the importance of finding effective treatments to satisfy clients. I also had the chance to visit the prosthetic lab and saw how this department works closely with the orthognathic surgeons to correct the shape of patients' jaws, and that titanium is used to make metal plates, used for example in the skull, as it is so successfully accepted by the body due to the outer oxide layer. I'm intrigued to find out more about other modern advancements in medicine. I will be undertaking work experience with a Dietician during October.

I've always had a large involvement in performing arts. Over 14 years of dancing I've achieved merit in my Advanced 2 Classical Greek and Tap exams, merit in my Advanced 1 Modern and ISTD Ballet exams and distinction in my Advanced 1 RAD Ballet exam. I will be taking my Advanced 2 Modern exam next summer. In addition to this, I've been fortunate enough to perform at the Royal Albert Hall on two occasions. This has required me to be very committed and has played a huge role in developing my self-confidence and excellent time-management skills. As a result of my dedication to dance I've been given the role of Deputy Head Girl of Roshe Performing Arts. At school I've been appointed the roles of Senior Prefect and Science Captain. I use these roles to enhance my mentoring and leadership skills allowing me to share my enthusiasm in various paths with others. My part-time job as an actor for Scream Park Entertainment at Tulleys Farm required me to work well as part of a team, and in a physically and mentally demanding environment, my determination and motivation were essential traits.

I believe my social and educational backgrounds are well suited to a future in the field of Biomedical Science and I'm looking forward to developing my knowledge further at university. My drive to help unlock ground breaking discoveries in the Biomedical field makes me the perfect applicant to study this course.



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