



*Achieving excellence through Curriculum and Culture*



# Personal Statement Workshop

Work Hard

Be Kind

Aim High

# Our Ambition



Plymstock School

Achieving Excellence through Curriculum and Culture



WESTCOUNTRY  
SCHOOLS TRUST

*Is to empower our young people,  
through education, to have the  
knowledge and skills you need to  
be successful in life and make a  
positive difference to your  
communities*

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# WHAT ARE WE GOING TO COVER

- What is a personal statement
- Content of a Personal Statement
- How to Write a Personal Statement



# THE PURPOSE OF THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Demonstrate that you **know** about the course you want to apply for
- Explain **why** you want to study that particular course
- Describe **how** you are suited to study that particular course you

# TASK

- Complete the worksheet during session.



# KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

**4,000 characters including blank spaces. 3 sections.  
Minimum 350 characters in each section.  
(around 500-650 words in total)**

# DO'S AND DON'TS

- Don't use elaborate language - if this is not something you usually do it will show.
- Don't lie!!
- Don't leave it until the last minute you will need to make several drafts and it can be time consuming.
- Do not use italics, bold or underlining
- Check all grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes make a poor impression!!!



# THINGS TO AVOID

- 1. From a young age I have (always) been [interested in/fascinated by]... [1,779]
- 2. For as long as I can remember I have... [1,451]
- 3. I am applying for this course because... [1,370]
- 4. I have always been interested in... [927]
- 5. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed... [310]
- 6. Reflecting on my educational experiences... [257]
- 7. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding [career/profession/course]... [211]
- 8. Academically, I have always been... [168]
- 9. I have always wanted to pursue a career in... [160]
- 10. I have always been passionate about... [160]
- 11. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world... [148]



# HOW TO BEGIN: AREA OF INTEREST



# SUPER-CURRICULAR



## Reading

(books, articles, websites, journals...)

## Listening

(podcasts, news programmes...)



## Watching

(films, documentaries, TED Talks, YouTube...)



## Writing

(EPQ, essays, articles, blog posts...)

## Societies

(debating, politics, poetry, coding...)



## Projects

(programming, robotics, host event...)

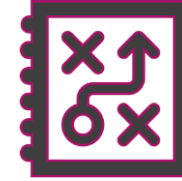


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## Competitions

(Olympiad, CREST, Essay competitions...)

## Trips

(museums, galleries, exhibitions, tours...)



## Academic Courses

(MOOCs, lectures, seminars, webinars...)

## Experiences

(work experience, summer school...)



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# SUPER-CURRICULAR: DEVELOPMENT

What did you learn?

What did you think?

What surprised you?

What are you going to do to learn/discover more?

What can you do with this new knowledge?



What do you agree with?

What do you disagree with?

What impact has it had on you?

# Question 1

- Why do you want to study this course or subject?
  - This paragraph is normally the hardest to write.
  - You don't have to start at the beginning.
- Some starting points:-
  - Reasons for wanting to study the subject – career aspirations
  - What sparked your interest in the subject
  - Wider reading

## Question 2 – How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

- Choose 1 or 2 key areas of academic interest
- Build up links between areas of interest, super-curricular activities you have done and your own opinions
- Demonstrate development through creating clear links
- Mention what areas you are interested in within the subject
- Be specific
- What have you done to further this interest?

# Question 3 – What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experience useful?

- What did you do?
- Why did you do it?
- What did you learn from that activity?
- Reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned not just what you have done
- Apply learning to experiences
- Give **specific evidence** and **examples** of areas of interest and achievement.

# Tips

- Only include it if you have something worth mentioning
- You don't have to include every book you have read
- Make sure you explain what you learnt from the book or article
- It's your personal statement not that authors – don't use quotes unless explained
- You must include the author when referencing a book and full title





Beginning

## AREA OF INTEREST

What sparked your interest?

Development

## SUPER-CURRICULAR UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE & INTEREST

How has this impacted what you think?

Summary

## REFLECTION

Why have you come to this conclusion?

# DEVELOPING YOUR CONTENT

- What are you interested in?
- What supra-curriculars have you undertaken?
- How have these helped develop your interest and knowledge in the course/subject you are wanting to apply for?
- What supra-curriculars could you?

When asked why I wanted to study medicine, initially I had no definitive answer. However, volunteering at Age UK gave me the answer; the tailored approach needed when interacting with each person at the centre highlighted the fact that you cannot distinguish 'how much' someone is affected by dementia. Each relationship is unique meaning each interaction is adjusted which has allowed me to empathise with them in order to understand their emotions.

During this opportunity, I have wanted to further understand the pathophysiology behind how Alzheimer's and Parkinson's is caused, in order to gain a better understanding of why the clients expressed certain feelings at a given time. After reading a paper on a review of common neurodegenerative disorders, I learnt that in Parkinson's specifically, there can be more than an 80% loss of dopamine-producing cells. This increases the chances of depression, which would potentially explain why clients diagnosed with Parkinson's sometimes withdrew themselves from social situations. This led to me attending seminars on how neurodegeneration occurs at a cellular level - amyloid beta monomers clump together until plaques form which induces an inflammatory response, causing healthy neurons to become diseased, and this process inevitably leads to brain and cognitive decline.

Art has always been something I've greatly enjoyed in a variety of forms, but recently I have desired to explore the meaning and wider context of art in more depth. I appreciate studying, understanding and analysing pieces, which has naturally drawn me to art history and other anthropological heritage studies. It is the perfect time to study art history because the modern period of contemporary art is fascinating. All factors that inspire and affect the creation of artwork throughout history are currently at a peak. Within modern life the combination of developed technology, polarising global issues and striking individuality is apparent. There is no other art movement or historical era that has the same composition of developments and obstacles. In order to tackle and negotiate this perplexing period of time and the art that emerges as a result, it is crucial to consider the story of what has come before. To cope in these times I want to learn how artists have coped before.

I have found a particular fascination with artists that demonstrate causation within their artwork, For example Francisco Goya. Goya's artwork went through a drastic change as a result of a political scenario but also his own personal struggles. Living through the Spanish inquisition, his astonishing pieces were satirical and widely regarded as frightening and horrific, making a mockery of superstitions of the time. He is a brilliant representation of how exterior life factors can deeply affect an artist's work. The context around Goya and his morbid paintings has been a major motivation towards my historical art endeavours.

I see architecture as the union of one's truth, identity, desire, and discipline. It requires loving labour, and inventiveness with a sense of reason. It is the output of the interrelation of the creative mind with its existing surroundings. Intentions of form and movement transition to the material world when educated from the physical, mathematical, and liberal sciences and values in a sequential manner.

I have enjoyed this procedure of creative development, careful regulating and refining, and physical effort to helm base material into assorted bodies of work since childhood. Working in my father's carpentry workshop back in Iran was a key factor of evolving this passion. The use of only basic tools with pencil and paper in the making of a project would put an extra emphasis on focusing on all the delicate steps and calculations, and understanding the root principals of 3D space, therefore I view it as a necessary stepping stone before one exercises more current design and craft methods.

I chose my A-levels both consciously and ardently to further advance my strength and leverage around architecture before reaching degree level. An understanding of mathematics and physics is essential to the communication of practicalities and theories without flawed logic. Sketching and drafting at this level gave me the skill to confidently and accurately present ideas. Studying the diverse artistic formats ranging from Basquiat to Le Corbusier proved to be an opportunity to further my understanding of the human condition and the core perceptive and expressive art elements. In addition, I have recently begun creating with digital mediums such as Sketch-up and InDesign in order to broaden my realm of design ability.

My unforeseen relocation from Iran's capital, Tehran, to England's South West two years ago has caused an in-depth exposure to a new culture. The contrast between the tight and never-ending nature of Tehran's urban fabric, and the scenic, secluded, coastal towns of Devon and Cornwall made me reconsider past perceptions. I gravitated towards the new angles and viewpoints I had found. I felt a sense of comfort in the duality of past and present-day experiences as I grasped new concepts frequently.

# VOCATIONAL COURSES

As a young adult, I have become aware that within society many individuals and communities still face discrimination, inequalities, and human right abuses, often ingrained in societal values and systems. When I think about social work, it resonates empowering change through positive relationships, accountability, upholding human rights and respect for diversities within society. The social work degree would provide me with the knowledge and skills, underpinned by theories and legislation such as the Children and Social Work Act 2017, to promote social justice and work in partnership with individuals, families, and communities to improve their life chances. I have grown up in a loving and stable home, surrounded by extended family. When there has been challenges in my own life, I have benefited from support and mentoring. This has developed my resilience to overcome setbacks. I have considered careers which would enable me to support individuals. However, my passion to pursue social work as a profession stem from a desire to understand how lived experiences and adversities can have impacting factors, and in turn being able to support individuals holistically.

I completed a week of work experience with the Edge of Care Team, within Children's Social Care. During this I spent time with various practitioners, i.e. Social Workers and Youth Justice Workers. This gave me a valuable insight into how practitioners, in collaboration safeguard and promote the welfare for a child. I have learnt from this experience the need for professional boundaries, adaptability and working with trauma informed and strength-based practice, to form resilience within a fast paced and complex environment. I have volunteered in a Day Care Centre, supporting individuals with Dementia, where I gained a deeper understanding of Dementia and the often-unseen impact on people. Often experiencing fear and disorientation, I could see the difference it made when practitioners responded with compassion, dignity, and patience. I learnt the importance of valuing and understanding individual needs, and the difference this made to a person's feeling of safety and security. Considering my ethical principles, life experiences and the learning gained, I feel passionately that a career in social work is the path that I want to pursue.



I play tennis twice a week with a club that's plays in local competitions and I play in both singles and doubles matches. Double matches requires strong team work, an ability to support your partner to devise a game plan but be able to adapt it as required and fast reactions. I enjoy the social side of the club and take responsibility for organising the social activities and fund raising events. This gives me an opportunity to develop my organisational and planning skills. Fitting in all these activities while keeping up with my academic studies demands good time management and I feel I do this very well.



Through both my academic studies and extra-curricular activities I have learnt how to work effectively as part of a team, developed excellent communication skills and a strong work ethic. I would love to pursue a degree in Law, to help me one day fulfil my ambition to become a Barrister. I feel I have the drive and determination to achieve this, combined with the qualities and skills required to be successful at university and within the legal profession. I would embrace the opportunity to further expand my knowledge and understanding of Law at Undergraduate level within your institution.

# NEXT STEPS

- What gaps have you identified?
- How are you going to fill these gaps?
- When are you going to fill these gaps?



# FINAL TIPS

**1) Show, don't tell   2) Discuss, don't list   3) More about less**

What did you learn?

What's your  
opinion?

Are there any links?

Ask why?

Keep extra  
curricular brief

Read it out loud

Get feedback

Be specific!