

Guidance Counselling Notice

UCAS

For those applying to UCAS next September

Visit www.ucas.com

Do not register

Find five colleges you would like to go to

Use the attached doc to write a draft 500 word personal statement

VERY IMPORTANT RE APTITUDE TESTS

Some course such as Medicine Veterinary Medicine Dentistry, Physiotherapy etc ask you sit an Exam called the UKCAT or the BMAT.

If you google these you will find the company that you take the test with - the deadline is in mid-May of sixth year.

Some students decide to sit the test in the summer of fifth year.

U

PERSONAL STATEMENT

REASONS FOR APPLYING

I wish to apply for the Horse Dentistry Course because it is my ambition to become a horse-dentist. Horses have been part of my families daily life for generations. I feel there is a need for a person with qualifications to supply the Irish Equine Industry with this vital dentistry service. I am very interested and would be totally committed to this course and I know that I would love the job very much. I love working with horses and this course would give me the knowledge and skills to do horse dentistry to the highest standards. I love the lifestyle that exists in being a service-provider to the equine industry and community and have come to know a lot of people involved in show jumping and eventing circle.

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

My main hobby is showjumping in which I have had great success.

At the age of thirteen I came second in an Equitation Class in the RDS (Royal Dublin Show). This class was judged on the rider's effectiveness and style. From the age of sixteen and seventeen I competed at Grand Prix and Novice levels with my own ponies and with livery horses and ponies. I competed in the 148cm Pony Grand Prix in the RDS in 2001. Last year (2002), I won the 5/6/7 year old National Pony League Championship. I also represented Ireland in Leige, Belgium, in a team event on my own pony last year. I also won training Bursary in the Connaught region for extra riding tuition. At the end of the year I received three awards through the Connaught region of the SJAI (Showjumping Association of Ireland).

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

As well as horse-riding and equine related activities, I also enjoy playing Gaelic football and hurling and watching television. I have been a member of teams in our local football and hurling Club since I was ten years old.

WORK EXPERIENCE

During the recent summer holidays I worked with a man who works-as-a horse-dentist for five weeks. My tasks were to insure all the dental instruments were kept sterile. I also answered the phone to take customers name and details. I also held the horses while the dentist worked. Next year I intend to persue further work experience with another horse dentist. I have also been working from our own yard with my older brother Niall, where we break and train horses and ponies for showing, eventing and pleasure riding

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement is particularly important when

- Strong competition for places
- Special circumstances
- Low predicted grades
- Poor reference
- Failed conditions for entry

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Points to remember:

A personal statement should

- ① DISCUSS YOUR CHOICE OF COURSE
- ② SHOW THAT YOU HAVE SKILLS SUITED TO UNIVERSITY LIFE
- ③ SHOW THAT YOU ARE SOMEBODY WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM LIFE AT UNIVERSITY
- ④ SHOW THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE
- ⑤ SHOW YOURSELF TO BE AN INTERESTING PERSONALITY

PERSONAL STATEMENT : STEP by STEP Guide

Organise your statement into paragraphs.

You should think about including

CHOICE OF COURSE

WORK EXPERIENCE

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

INTERESTS/EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

SPORTING INVOLVEMENT

Always write a concluding paragraph to bring the reader's attention back to your choice of course(s).

Use a spell check and let someone you trust read it over.

Try not to repeat material already dealt with in the application form.

Remember, you could be asked at interview about anything you put in your form.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

APPLY APPLICATIONS

- Work can start now using a WORD processing package.

This can be pasted directly on to your application form.

PAPER APPLICATIONS

A separate sheet is provided for printing the Personal Statement.

This has an adhesive back and is stuck on to the application form.

In both cases you are limited in the length of the personal statement.

It must fit into the space provided.

What makes an effective Personal Statement?

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT SHOULD:

• DISCUSS YOUR CHOICE OF COURSE

It should explain why you wish to do the course(s) you have chosen. This may be a problem for those students who have opted for a diverse range of courses. However, advice from admissions tutors suggests you ensure that a clear reason is given to justify a range of different courses. Admissions tutors overwhelmingly suggest that they want students to enthuse about their course. It is here that you might talk about your career aspirations, if you have any at this stage. If you are applying for a deferred entry then you might try to explain what you intend to do in the year between finishing your course and entering university.

• SHOW THAT YOU HAVE SKILLS SUITED TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

It is useful to show an admissions tutor that you have what it takes to survive university life and the rigours of an Higher Education course. Hence you could mention genuine skills which show that you are, for example; self-disciplined, self-motivated, hard working, committed and sociable.

• SHOW THAT YOU ARE SOMEBODY WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM LIFE AT UNIVERSITY

Universities spend large sums of money providing opportunities for students ranging from the obvious sporting facilities to specialist clubs and societies, theatre, extra lectures, research opportunities, as well as facilities to aid social life eg. bars, concerts, and nightclubs. You might well show that you are somebody who already takes advantage of opportunities and will continue to do so. You might even state that you are looking forward to the options available at university. Remember, at the end of the day, you are at university to study. Some students have suffered because they have not got the balance right between work and social life.

• SHOW THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BENEFIT FROM THE COURSE

It is useful to inform the admissions tutor that you enjoy your existing course by explaining which areas interest you most. You might also indicate which areas of the degree/HND interests you. If you have chosen a course which is vocational (ie. leads to a specific career) then you might have to indicate why you wish to pursue such a career and what experiences have influenced your decision (eg. work experience). It might also be useful to discuss particular skills that you have developed throughout the course which will help you on the degree/HND eg. essay writing, note taking, problem-solving.

• SHOW YOURSELF TO BE AN INTERESTING PERSONALITY

Few people are incredibly outgoing, have travelled the world twice over, been captain of the hockey team, and have completed a period of work experience in exactly the area suited to their degree/HND. Most of those applying for university are under twenty years of age though increasing numbers of mature students are entering university. However, show the reader that you have seized opportunities that have arisen despite how modest the experience. Be imaginative but honest about the areas which you have experienced and how your interests or responsibilities may set you apart from many other students. Try to be specific (eg. provide detail or an example) rather than general about your interests and experiences.

KEY TERMS

The following advice should help you write a Personal Statement which is easy to read and is professionally written. Read the following advice to help you connect your sentences and paragraphs together as well as help you vary the language you use in the Personal Statement.

- **IN ADDITION**

"In addition to my work experience I have also gained valuable skills throughout my voluntary work."

- **AS WELL AS**

"As well as my involvement in team games I am also keen on playing individually competitive sport."

- **REINFORCE**

"My involvement in the school voluntary programme has reinforced my decision to study a degree in Nursing."

- **STRENGTHEN**

"My decision to study a degree in Economics has been strengthened by my enjoyment and success in my A level course."

- **FURTHER MORE**

"Further more, I am particularly suited to a degree in Chemistry because of my love of the subject and my keen interest to further my knowledge of the subject."

- **BESIDES**

"Besides my involvement with sports I am also involved in amateur dramatics."

- **NOT TO MENTION**

"Being involved in the voluntary work programme not to mention my work experience has provided an opportunity to work with a diverse range of people."

- **MORE RECENTLY**

"Although I have taken part in classical music concerts, more recently I have decided to learn to play the piano."

- **ENABLED ME**

"The opportunity to play in the school football team enabled me to work as part of a team."

- **PROVIDED ME**

"The work experience provided me with an opportunity to work with a range of people."

- **OPPORTUNITY TO**

"The opportunity to work with people was provided by my work experience."

ADVICE ABOUT USING 'I'

Beginning many sentences with 'I' is very easy to do, especially when writing about yourself. Instead, try to create varied sentences with a range of alternative starting points:

DO NOT WRITE	INSTEAD WRITE
I am Captain of the Hockey Team	Being a Captain of the Hockey team ...
I enjoy playing sport	Having enjoyed playing football ...
I am studying A levels in	My A level subjects have ...
I enjoy socialising	Socialising is important to me because ...
I have taken part in	Taking part in ...
I have gained a number of skills	The skills I have gained from ...