



THE SUNDAY TIMES
**SCOTTISH
UNIVERSITY OF
THE YEAR 2012-13**
HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
WINNER 2011-12

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LANGUAGES

Professor Kevin O’Gorman

Can you match the celeb to their degree course?



Which of the following degree courses would you be most likely to study?
(You can choose more than one, but you must choose at least one)

...and which of these would you be most likely to study when you are at university?

What will I study?

Where will I study?

**How do I write a good
Personal Statement?**



Why? What? Where?

Why choose Higher Education?

- Improve Job prospects and expand career opportunities
- Gain valuable transferable skills
- Make new friends
- Experience a new city?

What and Where will I study?

- * Over 55,000 Courses
- * Over 300 HE Institutions in the UK
- * Including 15 Universities in Scotland



Fact or Fiction...?

Harry Potter and the
Age of Illusion Studies

Education Studies at
University of Durham

Equestrian Psychology

Nottingham Trent Uni

Astrology

FICTION

David Beckham Studies

BA Sports at Staffordshire
Uni

Trampoline Studies

FICTION

Brewing and Distilling

Heriot-Watt University

Surf Science and
Technology

University of Plymouth



What will I Study?

Is it ... a subject you have already studied? e.g. History or Music

Is it ... a subject that relates to a career idea? e.g. Accountancy or Physiotherapy

Is it ... a brand new subject? e.g. Engineering or Japanese

Still not sure...? Combined Studies?



Finding the course that's right for YOU

- Course content – applied vs theoretical? Dig beneath the title!
- Type of assessment
- Minimum Grade/Subject Requirements (*Contextual exceptions)
- Study abroad / Placement opportunities
- Professional Accreditation
- Graduate employability



Finding the University that's right for YOU

Geographical location

HE Institution size and population

Accommodation

Facilities

Reputation (?)

Does it feel right?



Benefits of going to College first ...

- More like school
- Part-time, day release and full-time
- Stay local = less debt

National Certificates (NC) 1 YEAR
- Standard Grades as entry requirement

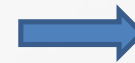
Higher National Certificate (HNC) 1 YEAR
- 1 or 2 Highers as entry requirement
- Equivalent of the 1st year of a degree
- Provide entry to the 1st or 2nd year of a related degree

Higher National Diploma (HND) 2 YEAR
- 1 or 2 Highers as entry requirement
- Equivalent of the 2nd year of a degree
- Provide entry to the 2nd or 3rd year of a related degree





College to University



HNC/D Social Science

BSc (Hons) Psychology

HNC/D Engineering

BSc (Hons) Electrical Engineering

HNC/D Art & Design

BA (Hons) Fashion

HNC/D Applied Science

BSc (Hons) Chemistry or Biology

HNC/D Visual Comm

BSc Product Design

HNC/D Sports Coaching

BSc (Hons) Sports Science

HNC/D Interactive Media

BSc (Hons) Computer Science

HNC/D Accounting

BA (Hons) Accounting

HNC/D Legal Services

BA (Hons) Law

HNC Construction



BSc (Hons) Building Surveying

Sources of information...

Visit the UCAS website www.ucas.com

Request university / college prospectuses

Visit university / college websites and check their social media

Attend Open Days & Applicant Visits

Arrange an informal visit for you and your parents or friends



PERSONAL Statements... what to include /avoid!



What do Admissions tutors look for??

- Academic Qualifications
- Teacher / Tutor Reference
- The Personal Statement
- Interview?



10 things to put in your personal statement

1. Explain your reasons for wanting to study the course (ENTHUSIASM)
2. Explain how you're right for the course (EVIDENCE)
3. Say what you've done outside the classroom... (e.g. wider reading, gallery trips, work experience)
4. ...Why it's RELEVANT to your course
5. ...And RELEVANT to your chosen career



10 things to put in your personal statement

6. Can you demonstrate transferable skills...? (e.g. team work, planning, communication)
7. Expand on the most RELEVANT ones with SPECIFIC examples (e.g. sport, music, drama, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, prefect or pupil council, volunteering, part-time work)
8. Show that you're a critical thinker
9. What's the long term plan?
10. Keep it POSITIVE, talk about your STRENGTHS, display ENTHUSIASM 😊

Mixture of subjects chosen? Try to blend your statement and seek advice if required!



10 things to AVOID in your personal statement

1. Quotes from other people (“so many people use the same quotes and worst case scenario is a quote placed at the beginning with no explanation”)
2. RANDOM lists
3. Over-use of CLICHÉS and the word ‘passionate’ (e.g. ‘from a young age’, ‘since I was a child’, ‘I’ve always been fascinated by’, ‘I have a thirst for knowledge’, ‘the world we live in today’...)
4. Bigging yourself up with sweeping statements or unproven claims (e.g. “My achievements are vast” – Show, don’t tell!)
5. Negative comments or excuses



10 things to AVOID in your personal statement

6. **Stilted vocabulary** (e.g. 'fuelled my desire', 'I was enthralled by' or 'that world-renowned author ...' OR worse still 'I was encapsulated by the bibliography of Winston Churchill...', 'It was in fifth year that my love for Chemistry came forth')
7. **Overuse of !!!, poor grammar, incorrect spelling and txtspk**
8. **Trying to be funny** - can be a huge risk and may just seem weird
9. **IRRELEVANT personal facts** – apply the 'so what?' rule
10. **Plagiarism, lies or exaggeration**



Real examples... good or bad – YOU decide

‘Cinder-Ellie gave her fairy godmother a pumpkin, which the latter duly transformed into a UCAS form. Cinder-Ellie started to write. She mentioned her work experience at Charmichel International where she worked as an accounts clerk, and her part time job at Tesco. Cinder-Ellie felt that these jobs had both equipped her with excellent communication skills, first rate customer service, and the ability to work successfully as part of a team.’



Real examples... good or bad – YOU decide



1. 'Interests and Achievements in School: Participated in television programme made for schools; Gold Certificate in UK Maths Challenge; completed Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award; represented school in athletics and hockey; participated in Sports Days; regular member of Debating Society and Languages Club; ongoing community service.'

Versus...

2. 'I started DJing when I was 14 and continued it for three years. It was a great responsibility and I really enjoyed the music. I also did three sessions of casual stage crew work which involved setting up and monitoring sound systems for concerts and festivals. Again this was a position of responsibility and we had to work under pressure and to a deadline.'

Real examples... good or bad – YOU decide

'Where would one be without maths? There would be no shops as they use Maths and of course humankind would be in a state of disarray.'

'I also intend to take up windsurfing. My father's friend has windsurfed for years and has told us he is prepared to sell me one of his older boards so that I might learn.'

'...I have a strong grip of the English language.'



Practical writing tips

1. Start writing your notes asap to leave enough time for checking and editing (NB – 47 line / 4000 character limit)
2. Gather your evidence and turn it into specific examples - ABC ...
ACTION – BENEFIT – COURSE RELEVANCE
3. Choose a strong opening and finish on a positive note
4. Proof read and ask others to check
5. Imagine you are the admissions tutor – would you want this person on your course?





Good luck with
your
application!