



University of
Nottingham

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Applying to Competitive Universities

Post-16 Widening
Participation & Outreach

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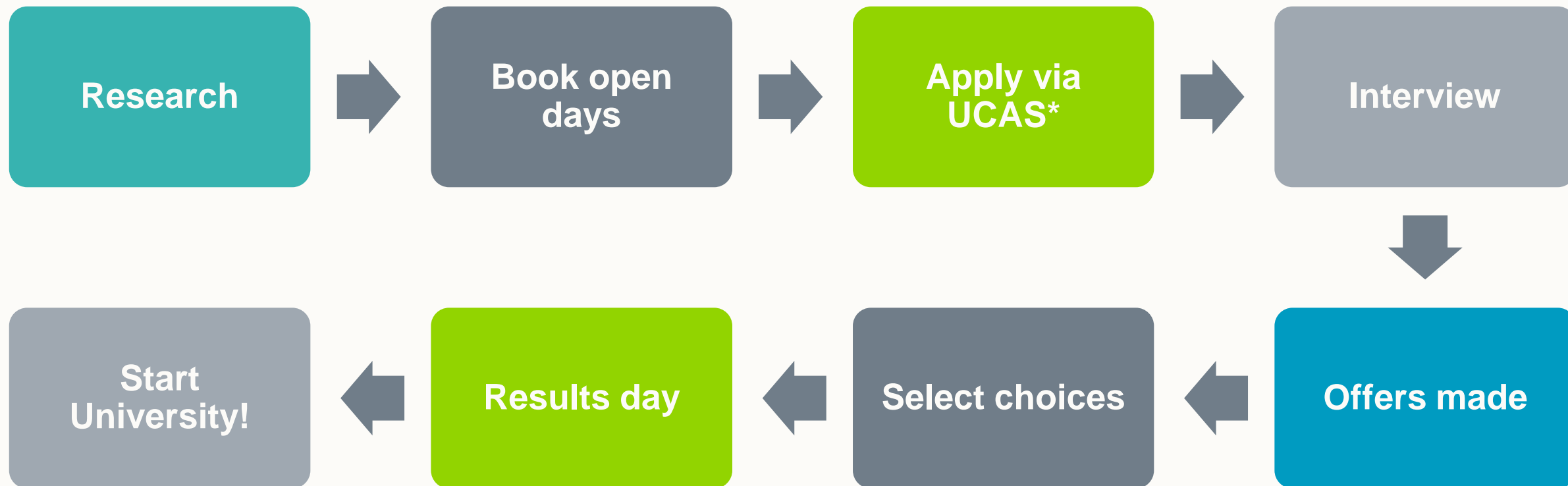
Aims of the session

- Understand the term 'competitive university'
- Understand the different university selection processes
- Explore how to demonstrate your skills and experiences





Overview of UCAS cycle



*you may be required to sit additional admissions tests for certain courses before submitting your UCAS form



What makes a course/university competitive?



Volume of applications



Reputation



Leading to a profession



League tables



Application processes

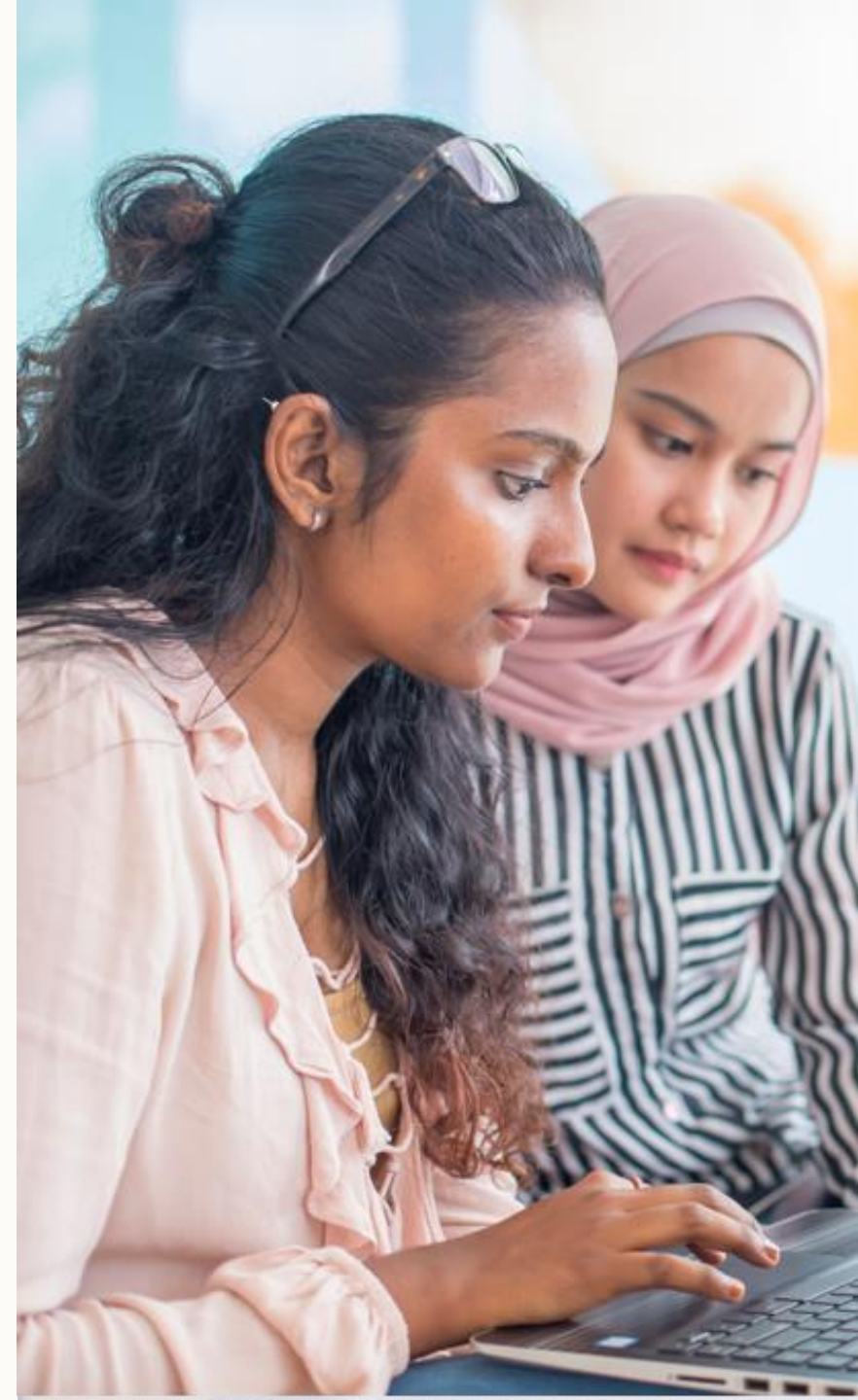


Requirements

- Academic achievements
- Compelling personal statement
- Strong teacher reference

Variable Requirements:

- Volunteer/Work experience
- National admissions test
- Interview
- Portfolio





National admissions tests

- UCAT, LNAT, STEP
- Subject/University specific tests
- Tests your aptitude
- Tests skills such as verbal reasoning
- Must be completed within set deadlines





Portfolio



- Subjects with an art element e.g. architecture
- Show your drawing & design skills
- Specific advice given on number & types of images



Advice from
architecture student



Advice from staff
portfolio reviewer



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What are universities looking for?





Four key ideals for Personal Statements

- A genuine interest for the subject(s)
- Intellectual curiosity
- Engagement with the subject outside of the curriculum
- A well-rounded individual (extra/super-curriculars)





Netball team

*Duke of
Edinburgh*



A-Levels

**What could you
talk about?**



Student council

*Work
experience*



Further reading



EPQ



Examples are key

Demonstrate

Give specific examples and evidence what you are saying



Evaluate

Evaluate and express your opinion on any research/reading/work experience you have done

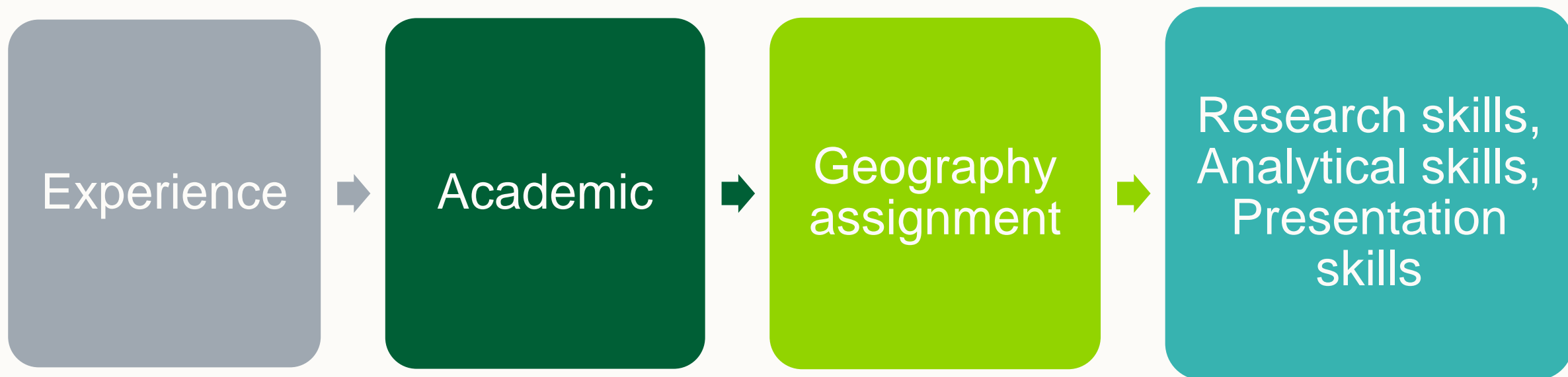


Reflect

Reflect on the skills you have developed through these experiences and how you will use these at University

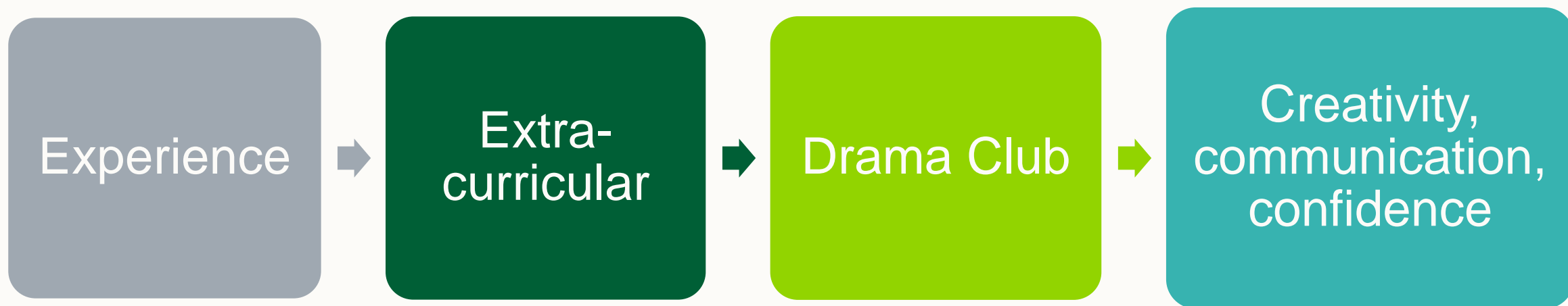


How to start your personal statement



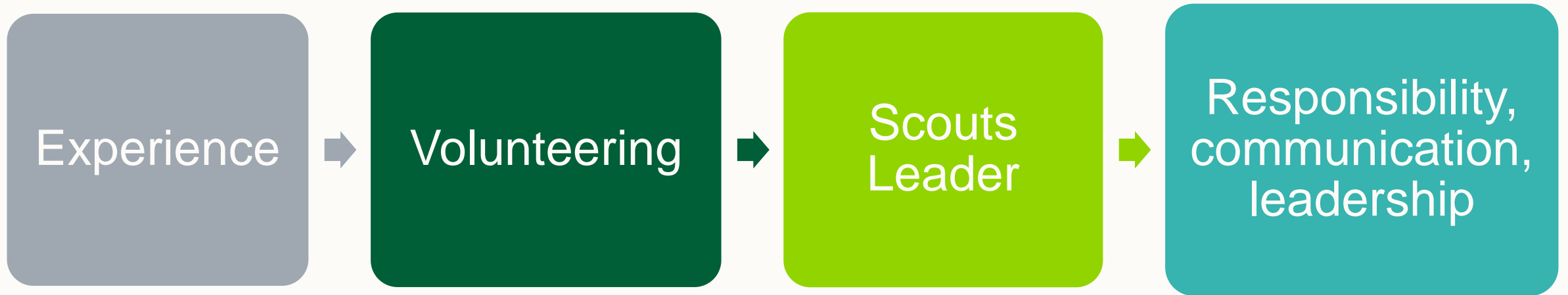


How to start your personal statement





How to start your personal statement





Build up those examples

Situation	Whilst volunteering at a school
Task (demonstrate)	I worked with students as a tutor and mentor, providing mathematics support for them
Action (demonstrate)	I worked with small groups of primary school students, using resources and materials to provide an overview of a topic.
Result (evaluate & reflect)	The students improved their understanding, resulting in them achieving higher marks in the maths test. I developed stronger communication skills and the ability to break down a subject by using resources. These skills will be beneficial when studying Primary Education in knowing how to respond to a diversity of learners.



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Structure & content





Structure

70-80%

Introduction

Analysis of academic activities

20-30%

Wider skills

Analysis of extra-curricular activities





1. Introduction: Subject choice



- Think about the subject you'd love to study
- Try to describe your area of interest
- Showcase your insight
- Think outside the box!



1. Introduction: Subject choice

Since I was a child, I have found myself to be utterly fascinated by how science works. I do not have to look far to find the source of my love for science. Just glancing around the living room my eyes fall upon a whole host of fascinating organisms, seen and unseen they create a brilliant miniature ecosystem with billions of tiny processes and reactions for me to sit and unpick.

My main reason for wanting to study Natural Sciences is the **enjoyment I take from grappling with new and complex ideas**. In Physics, I am particularly drawn to the **atomic scale** and have developed an interest in **quantum models which move beyond my current syllabus**. In Biology, I enjoy analysis on a larger scale; my **curiosity is fired by experimental questions such as how to model the distributions of species on islands**.



2. Academic Skills



Showing your
interests
beyond the
curriculum

Skills and
knowledge
gained from
current studies

Analysing further reading &
research

E.g. Academic
articles/MOOCs/Taster
lectures/Summer schools/EPQ



2. Topic of interest & Academic skills

I am especially fascinated by all aspects of human rights law and am passionate about bringing justice to people who are not able to represent themselves. Human rights are a key part in making society fair and this part of the law shows how it can be a glue that holds society together.

I have developed an interest in human rights law and read up on the recent case of two women who were challenging the new law that immigrants wished to join their spouses had to pass a "pre-entry" English language test. One of the main legal issues centred on whether the new policy breached the appellants' right to a family life. I was struck by the level of uncertainty in the wording of the final judgement. Although the appeal failed, the judges stated that a "significant number" of future cases, for example, those in which immigrants had learning difficulties, would be likely to breach human rights. My research led me to reflect on the fact that the application of specific laws depends on very subtle differences in the circumstances of different cases.



3. Wider skills & aspirations



Aspirations for the future & how university will support this

What do you hope to gain by going to university?

Showcase your insight into the career area

Demonstrate related skills & knowledge gained from work experience



3. Wider Skills

I recently set up and completed a week-long work experience placement at a local graphic design company. The experience gave me a real insight into the graphic design industry and reinforced my desire to study the subject at university.

During a work experience placement with a graphic design company, I was particularly interested in the challenges of creating clear infographics. To emphasize the most important information, I experimented with combining different hooks with a range of typographic fonts. I found that the most effective solution depended on creating a clear "narrative" within the image itself.



4. Extra-curricular



Demonstrate
transferrable
skills

Be relevant

Talk about your skills gained
from different activities like
sports

BUT

Be selective, no more than
20% of your statement



4. Extracurricular

Outside of the classroom, I have completed the Duke of Edinburgh Silver award. This helped me to develop a number of skills. I am passionate about swimming and have been a member of the school team since Year 11. During my GCSEs I was also a member of the netball team. Swimming at a high level has provided a perfect training in managing pressurised situations. As a school prefect, I help to organize events such as our recent talent show, I also take parents around the school for tours. For two years, I have worked in a busy local shop and this has developed my abilities to work with people. I feel confident interacting with people from all walks of life and backgrounds.

In completing my **Duke of Edinburgh Silver award**, I have developed skills in **planning tasks** and **leading a team**. I speak two different languages - **English and Portuguese** - and this has given me a **valuable perspective in understanding different cultures**. During my A-Levels, I **worked in a busy shop** and **swam for the school team** – by balancing these commitments with my studies, my ability in **organising and managing my time** has improved significantly.



Interviews





Interview Styles



- Various interview types
- Interview style dependent upon course and university
- Questions can range from:
 - Directly about you & your experiences
 - Scenario-based questions
 - Activities



Panel interviews

Informal conversation



Types of interview

Practical or demonstration-based/audition



Online vs In-person



Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)



Group interviews



Question topics

The Subject

- ⑩ Why this subject/course?
- ⑩ Why are you **suited** for this subject?
- ⑩ Greater depth of questioning about the subject
- ⑩ Career aspirations after your degree

The University

- ⑩ Why this university?
- ⑩ What will you bring to the university community?
- ⑩ What do you hope to gain from your time at university?
- ⑩ Any other areas of the university that you'd like to get involved with?

You

- ⑩ What **skills & qualities** do you have that are necessary for this course?
- ⑩ How do you use your spare time?
- ⑩ What career – and why?
- ⑩ Personal challenges you have faced and overcome



Interviews at UoN

Courses working with people or animals:

- Formal interview/MMI's
- Designed to assess your suitability & motivation for the course

General courses:

- Informal Interview/chat
- Designed to find out more about your interests, your passion for the subject etc.





**Do your research
and start early**

**Competitive
factors extend
beyond the volume
of applications**

**Be aware of
different
admissions
processes**

**Complete further
reading and
activities**

**Provide specific
examples**



Thank you!

Any questions?

Come along to an Open Day!

Friday 28 June

Saturday 29 June

Saturday 14 September

Saturday 12 October

How did I do?



Applying to competitive
universities
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