

EXAMPLE

UCAS Personal Statement REVIEW

for

Example Student

Subject: Computing

Our reference: ENG154

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Original Personal Statement

I am pursuing a degree which, I feel, will give me an opportunity to combine together my four passions: Computing, Mathematics, Physics and as more of a hobby - Music. I believe that there is a strong creative fusion between all of these disciplines which requires an inquisitive mind in order to achieve individual success. Mathematics and physics are both universal languages and tools which are vital to the success of implementing programming languages and research for natural language processing and other theories which lie within the subject of computing. I have decided to study these subjects to advanced higher level to ascertain what a degree in these subjects might be like.

It was when I was introduced to the Super Nintendo Entertainment System at the age of 8, that I was attracted to the world of computing as I was highly interested in the logic of computer games and the roots of their operation. I still feel this way, which is why I have undertaken Java Programming in my spare time and, with 3 years experience, am in the midst of recreating some small games such as Tetris and hangman as well as still participating in various online gaming communities.

On the other hand, I am also intrigued by Moore's Law and how the limits of his law imply that numerous breakthroughs in physics (by creating transistors which are of atomic size) - perhaps within the next 15 years, could in some aspects mean that technological advancement could stall. I have been investigating recent advancements in the use of molecules to store data by creation of tautomers of a chemical named 'naphthalocyanine'. I feel that it is advancements such as these which make Computing a foreseeable component in the advancement of future medicines as well as acting as the backbone in areas of future society and perhaps even causing the limit of Moore's law to be reached earlier than previously expected. I am currently writing an article on this for the school's science and engineering magazine named 'Quark.'

Recently I became a member of the I.T division of the year book committee at school and, in liaison with the Home Economics department, I have been managing the development of a separate website for this department which has made use of various beginners skills I obtained in HTML and CSS. In my spare time I also undertake various musical activities as hobbies, such as school choir. I have taught myself guitar for 5 years and achieved the advanced higher practical outcome (Grade 5). I participate, with permission from the schools music department, in taking some of the younger classes and giving them practical guitar tuition and I am registered through the school as a student-body maths tutor during my free periods. I am in a band and luckily I have had the opportunity to play along side some well known musicians from the underground music scene in Scotland and In Wales and has taught me a lot about how to respect opinions of other people, to work as a team and to improve my confidence. Generally, I feel I am quite down to earth.

I am highly interested in a broad spectrum of music including orchestral and classical music, which is why Carl Orff's musical production of 'O Fortuna' (A Latin poem amongst a collection named 'Carmina Burana') and its appearance in the movie 'The Omen' lead to my decision of the title 'Fortuna' as a suitable name for our band. During the October break I did volunteer work at standard life insurance co which taught me a lot more about the key roles of databases and mainframes within a company as well as project and team management. I also contributed to the 'Continuous Improvement Programme' which is part of Standard Life's new policy to save GBP 100m by 2009. On the whole, I feel that a degree related to my passions remains the right choice for me as I continue my path towards growing my understanding of these subjects and applying them to different areas.

Review

~~I am pursuing a degree which, I feel, will give me an opportunity to combine together my four passions: Computing, Mathematics, Physics and as more of a hobby Music. I believe that there is a strong creative fusion between all of these disciplines which requires an inquisitive mind in order to achieve individual success. Mathematics and physics are both universal languages and tools which are vital to the success of implementing programming languages and research for natural language processing and other theories which lie within the subject of computing. I have decided to study these subjects to advanced higher level to ascertain what a degree in these subjects might be like.~~

This is a poor opening (clumsy and uninspiring) but will provide us with concepts going forward.

It was when I was introduced to the Super Nintendo Entertainment System at the age of 8, that I was attracted to the world of computing as I was highly interested in the logic of computer games and the roots of their operation. I still feel this way, which is why I have undertaken Java Programming in my spare time and, with 3 years experience, am in the midst of recreating some small games such as Tetris and hangman as well as still participating in various online gaming communities.

The content in this paragraph can be developed into a cute little anecdote suitable for an introduction.

So: 'I was first attracted to the world of computing when I was introduced to the Super Nintendo Entertainment System; the logic of computer games and the roots of their operation fascinated me. Ten years later, my enthusiasm remains energetic. A few years ago I recreated Hangman and Tetris, and now have been coding Java for over three years. Wishing to expand my skillset into the online space, I have supplemented my knowledge by learning HTML and CSS.'

Writing about childhood events is extremely cliché, and it's certainly not true that you decided you wanted to study computing when you were eight years old. In your case, however, video games provides a nice segue into your real reasons for pursuing university-level study.

Note now that the introduction achieves two things: 1. By stating that you self-taught a language such as Java you *demonstrate* passion; 2. The story involving programming Tetris is what makes this statement *personal*.

~~On the other hand,~~ I am also intrigued by Moore's Law and how the limits of his law imply that numerous breakthroughs in physics (by creating transistors which are of atomic size) - perhaps within the next 15 years, could in some aspects mean that technological advancement could stall. I have been investigating recent advancements in the use of molecules to store data by creation of tautomers of ~~the chemical named~~ 'naphthalocyanine'. I feel that it is advancements such as these which make computing a foreseeable component in the advancement of future medicines as well as acting as the backbone in areas of future society ~~and perhaps even causing the limit of Moore's law to be reached earlier than previously expected.~~ I am currently writing an article on this for the school's science and engineering magazine named 'Quark.'

This paragraph is promising but has no connection to the previous one. The transition can be made with your comments on physics and maths from your initial opening paragraph. Also, let's swap the parts on Moore's Law and medicine. Thus:

'Studying mathematics provided me with the basic techniques such as algebra and calculus that are useful in computing. I look forward to studying these and algorithms in depth; mathematics is a vital tool in developing future technologies, such as natural language processing. Computing's integration with chemistry and physics is also stimulating. Recently I have been investigating recent advancements in the use of molecules in data storage through the creation of tautomers of the chemical naphthalocyanine for an article I am writing for my school's science and engineering magazine [Briefly, what have you found out?]. I find it exciting that such technology will become not only a critical component in the development of medicines but also the devices doctors will use every day.'

I am also intrigued by Moore's Law and its theoretical implications. Perhaps within the next 15 years technological advancement could stall as the costs of producing ever-shrinking chips soar [Now, sprinkle some light criticism of this position or Moore's Law in general].'

Recently I became a member of the I.T division of the year book committee at school and, in liaison with the Home Economics department, I have been managing the development of a separate website for this department which has made use of various beginners skills I obtained in HTML and CSS. [This will go better with the Java section above (see above)] In my spare time I also undertake various musical activities as hobbies, such as school choir ['I am part of the school choir' says the same thing in half the words]. I have taught myself guitar for 5 years and achieved the advanced higher practical outcome (Grade 5). I participate, with permission from the schools music department, in taking some of the I give the younger classes and giving them practical guitar tuition and I am registered through the school as a student body maths tutor during my free periods. I am in a band and luckily I have had the opportunity to play along side some well known musicians from the underground music scene in Scotland and In Wales and has taught me a lot about how to respect opinions of other people, to work as a team and to improve my confidence. Generally, I feel I am quite down to earth. [Unfortunately this is irrelevant to computing and therefore must be cut.]

I am highly interested in a broad spectrum of music including orchestral and classical music, which is why Carl Orff's musical production of 'O Fortuna' (A Latin poem amongst a collection named 'Carmina Burana') and its appearance in the movie 'The Omen' lead to my decision of the title 'Fortuna' as a suitable name for our band. [As above.] During the October break Last October I did volunteer work at Standard Life, insurance co which taught me a lot more about the key roles of databases and mainframes within a company as well as project and team management [This is good but needs elaboration – what did you actually do that gave you project/team management?]. I also contributed to the 'Continuous Improvement Programme', which is part of Standard Life's new policy to save GBP 100m by 2009 [How? What did you learn?]. On the whole, I feel that a degree related to my passions remains the right choice for me as I continue my path towards growing my understanding of these subjects and applying them to different areas.

Conclusion should be light, ambitious, confident and forward looking. In a couple of sentences you should reaffirm that you are the perfect candidate for this course and that you're looking forward to a career in academia/IT (as applicable) following graduation.

Overall/general comments

This statement is bursting with content, most of which is very good as it displays ambition, self-motivation and, to some extent, passion.

Your personal statement should be 70-75% academic. This means that much of the extracurricular music content had to be deleted. You can use the saved space for discussing.

Structure should be: Introduction, motivation, work experience, extracurricular, conclusion.

Subjects, such as computing, are common nouns and should start with a lowercase letter.

Paragraph your personal statements with a single line.

Revised personal statement with gaps for improvement.

I was first attracted to the world of computing when I was introduced to the Super Nintendo Entertainment System; the logic of computer games and the roots of their operation fascinated me. Ten years later, my enthusiasm remains energetic. A few years ago I recreated Hangman and Tetris, and now have been coding Java for over three years. Wishing to expand my skillset into the online space, I have supplemented my knowledge by learning HTML and CSS.

Studying mathematics provided me with the basic techniques such as algebra and calculus that are useful in computing. I look forward to studying these and algorithms in depth; mathematics is a vital tool in developing future technologies, such as natural language processing. Computing's integration with chemistry and physics is also stimulating. Recently I have been investigating recent advancements in the use of molecules in data storage through the creation of tautomers of the chemical naphthalocyanine for an article I am writing for my school's science and engineering magazine [Briefly, what have you found out?]. I find it exciting that such technology will become not only a critical component in the development of medicines but also the devices doctors will use every day.

I am also intrigued by Moore's Law and its theoretical implications. Perhaps within the next 15 years technological advancement could stall as the costs of producing ever-shrinking chips soar [Now, sprinkle some light criticism of this position or Moore's Law in general].

[Here you need more discussion like paragraphs 2 and 3. Try following up P3 with '... In a recent article in the New Scientist, there was an article on the topic of [Topic] that captured my attention. [Explain article]. [Explain why this is interesting and important]. [Add some personal insight or criticism regarding the matter, so as to explain your position on the issue and demonstrate critical thinking.]

Last October I did volunteer work at Standard Life, which taught me a lot more about the key roles of databases and mainframes within a company as well as project and team management [This is good but needs elaboration – what did you actually *do* that gave you project/team management?]. I also contributed to the 'Continuous Improvement Programme', which is part of Standard Life's new policy to save GBP 100m by 2009 [*How?* What did you learn?].

Outside academia, I have a passion for music. I have self-taught guitar to a Grade 5 standard and routinely give the younger classes practical tuition. [A sentence on another hobby e.g. sport].

[Conclusion – something like, 'I believe my academic ability, balanced curiosity and strong ambition make me the best candidate for the course. I wish to use the knowledge I gain at university for [Application] and have high ambitions for a career in [Career]']

FiveOffers wishes to thank Pedram Valiani for agreeing to let it use his personal statement.

Pedram received offers from all five of his choices.

NB: A report such as this will be delivered to the client in Microsoft Word format.