UCAS - PERSONAL STATEMENT ADVICE

**GENERAL**

The importance of the personal statement varies from one institution to another, particularly depending on whether interviews take place or not. A university such as Nottingham for example puts more emphasis on the personal statement as the department rarely interviews applicants. Others such as York, Durham and Oxbridge are likely to interview and can therefore find out more about the student face to face. Royal Holloway use the personal statement to help make decisions on students who have fallen just short of their offer, using the statement to rank their reserve list.

**SPECIFICS**

The following are a few ideas for GC Music and Music Technology students to consider when writing up your personal statement:

* Evidence of musical performances/compositions, other than those required for A level, that demonstrate a range of styles and a willingness to try new ideas
* Name an actual piece performed in an ensemble, perhaps in county youth orchestra or outside gig-based concerts if appropriate
* Mention listening preferences, and anything that demonstrates a natural curiosity in different musical periods and genres – if applying to Oxbridge – it’s always a good idea to have some sort of *specialist interest* such as early Baroque opera or the music of Kurtag for example.
* List anything that demonstrates commitment and hard work!
* Gap year objectives
* Evidence of *independent learning* e.g. EPQ, and background reading
* Make sure the statement is an interesting read for the admissions tutor, who has to wade through hundreds of applications – what makes YOU STAND OUT?
* Include **relevant** work experience – running clubs or societies, putting on concerts, taking part in shows etc, local community activism etc
* Career aspirations – where do you see yourself after leaving University?
* Ensure the statement is free from errors of spelling and grammar

**DO NOT’S**

When I have quizzed admissions tutors they all agree on what NOT to include:

Avoid clichés. Phrases such as ‘I have been passionate about music since the age of blah’ provide no information as it is assumed that ALL applicants are interested or else they wouldn’t be applying. If you include a section on other interests do not write anything about ‘socialising’, playing video games etc…and if applying for a joint course make sure your joint statement is *balanced* without emphasising any one subject…you may offend the other admissions tutor in your ‘second’ subject otherwise.

Make sure you get someone to check it with plenty of time to spare – this is your **future**, it is not the time to leave it to the last minute.