



**University of
Nottingham**

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



Applying to competitive universities

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**Student Recruitment Outreach
Officer (Post-16)**



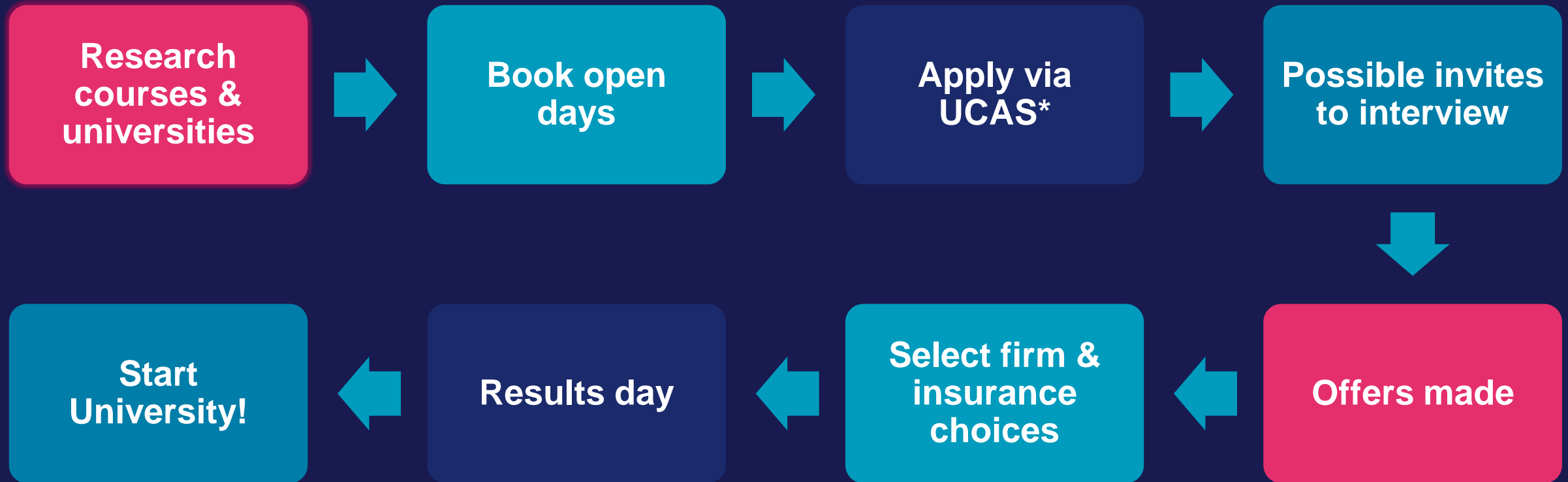
Aims of the session

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





UCAS Application process



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



**Volume of
applications**



Reputation

What makes a course or university competitive?

**Leading to a
profession**



**League
tables**





Application processes at competitive universities



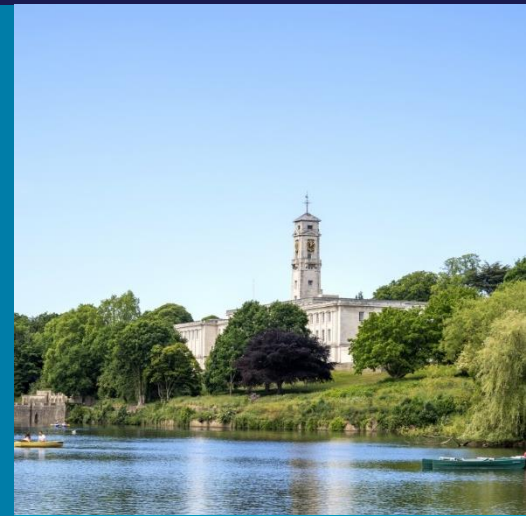
Selection process



**Academic
achievements**



**National
admissions
tests***



**Compelling
personal
statement**



**Strong
teacher
reference**



Interviews*

***Subject/university specific**



National admissions tests

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





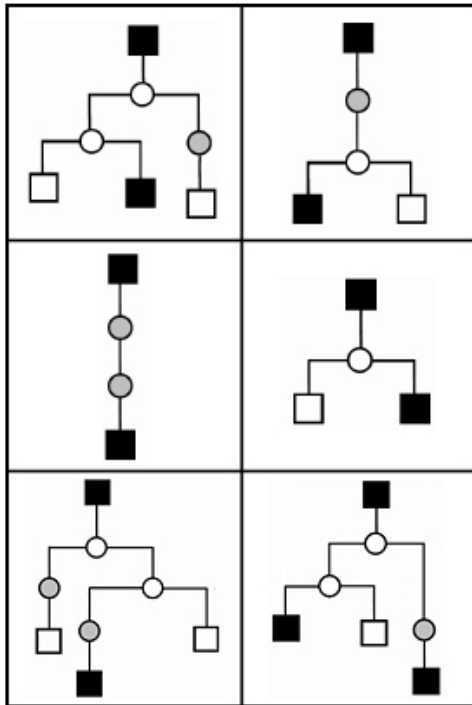
- The [Law National Aptitude Test](#) (LNAT) is 2 hours, 15 minutes long. It is made up of two sections: multiple choice questions and an essay section
- It provides universities with further information about your aptitude for law, but we take your entire application into consideration
- Check the LNAT website for key dates for **your** application cycle



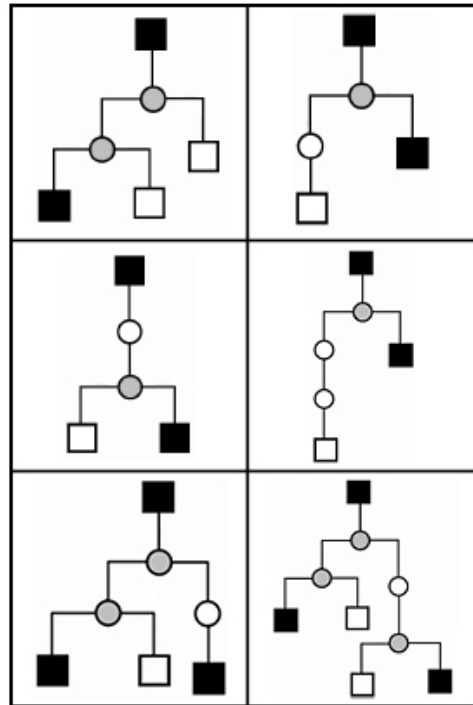


UCAT test practice - abstract reasoning

Set A

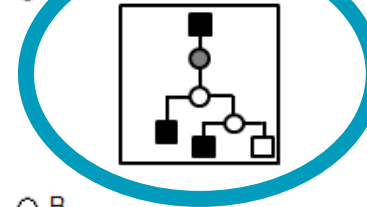


Set B

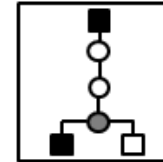


Which of the following test shapes belongs in Set A?

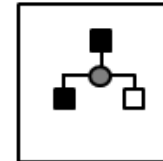
☐ A.



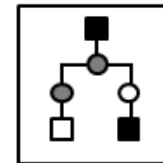
☐ B.



☐ C.



☐ D.





Portfolios



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



**What are universities
looking for?**



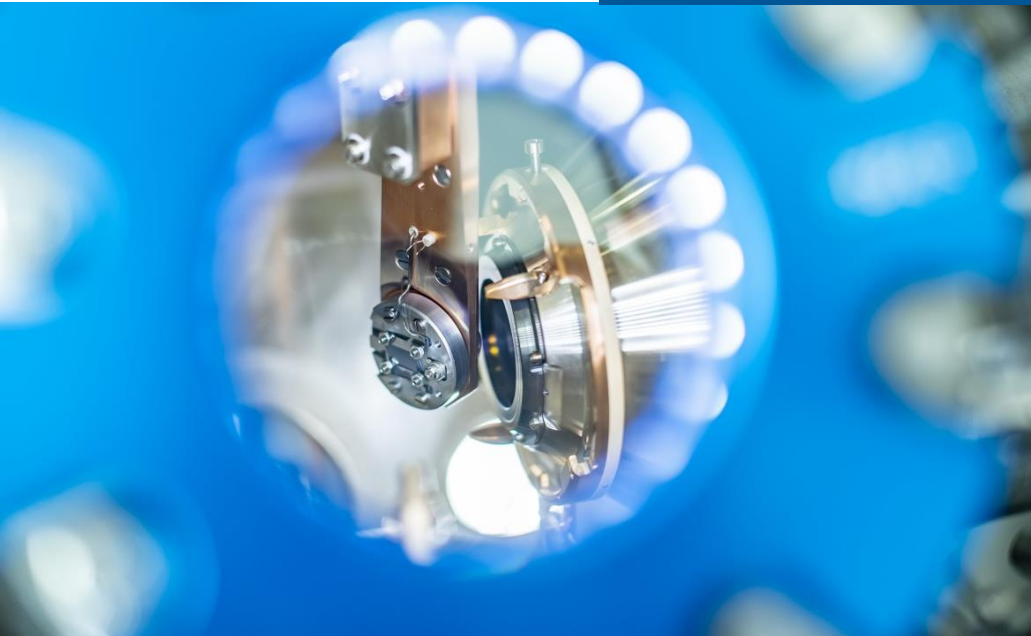
What are universities looking for?

**A genuine
interest for the
subject(s)**

**Intellectual
curiosity**

**Engagement with
the subject
outside of the
curriculum**

**A well-rounded
individual
(extra-
curriculars)**





Structure and content



Personal Statement

Good structure

Use of language

Academic content

Careers content

Extra-curricular content





Netball team

*Duke of
Edinburgh*



A-Levels



Student council

Personal Statement



Further reading

*Work
experience*



EPQ



How to start



Demonstrate

Give specific examples and evidence what you are saying.

Evaluate

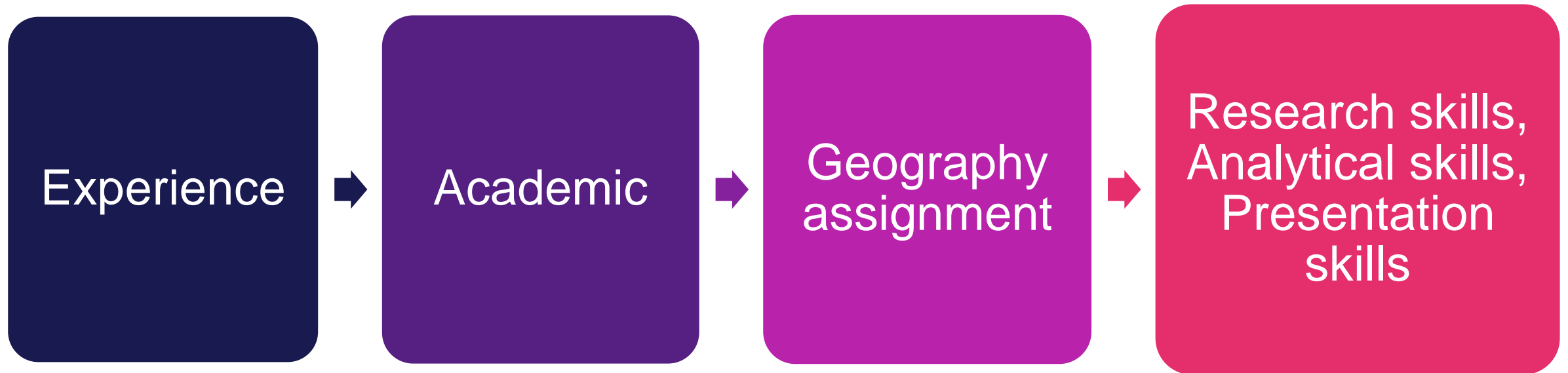
Evaluate and express your opinion on any research/reading/work experience you have done.

Reflect

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

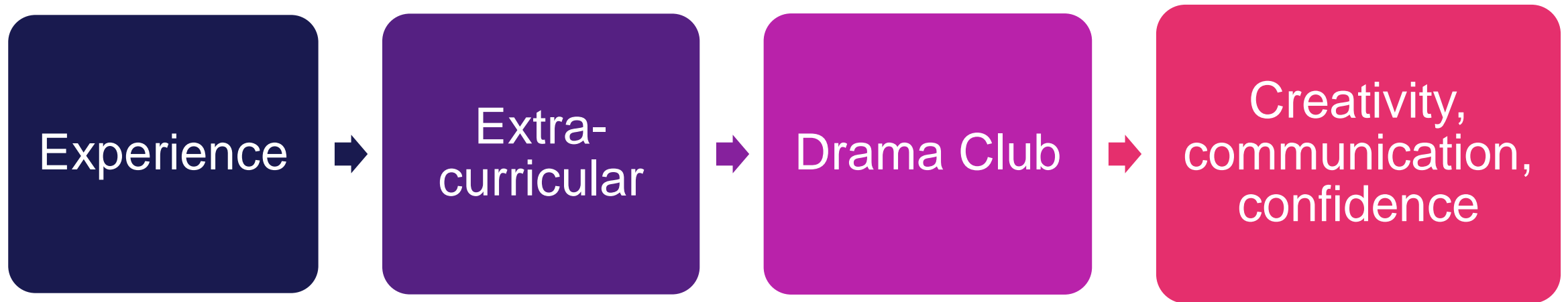


How to start your personal statement



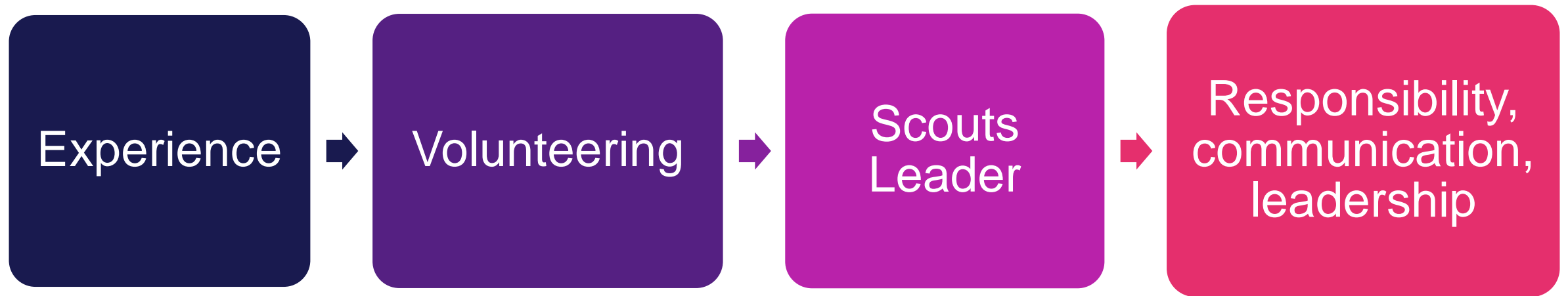


How to start your personal statement





How to start your personal statement





Situation Whilst volunteering at a primary school

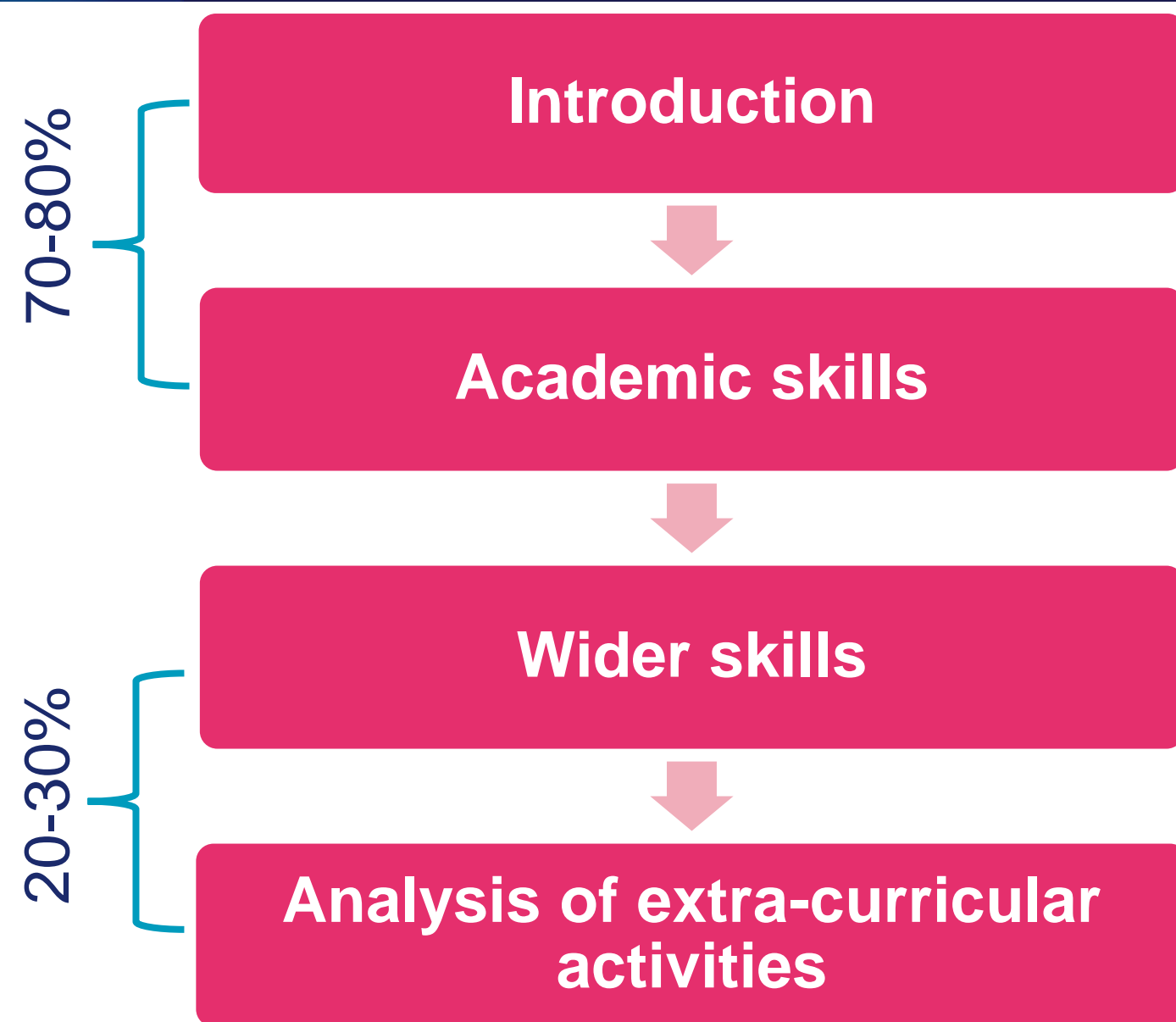
Task I worked with students as a tutor and mentor,
(Demonstrate) providing mathematics support for them

Action I worked with small groups of primary school
(Demonstrate) students, using resources and materials to provide an overview of a topic.

Result The students improved their understanding, resulting in
(Evaluate and reflect) 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.

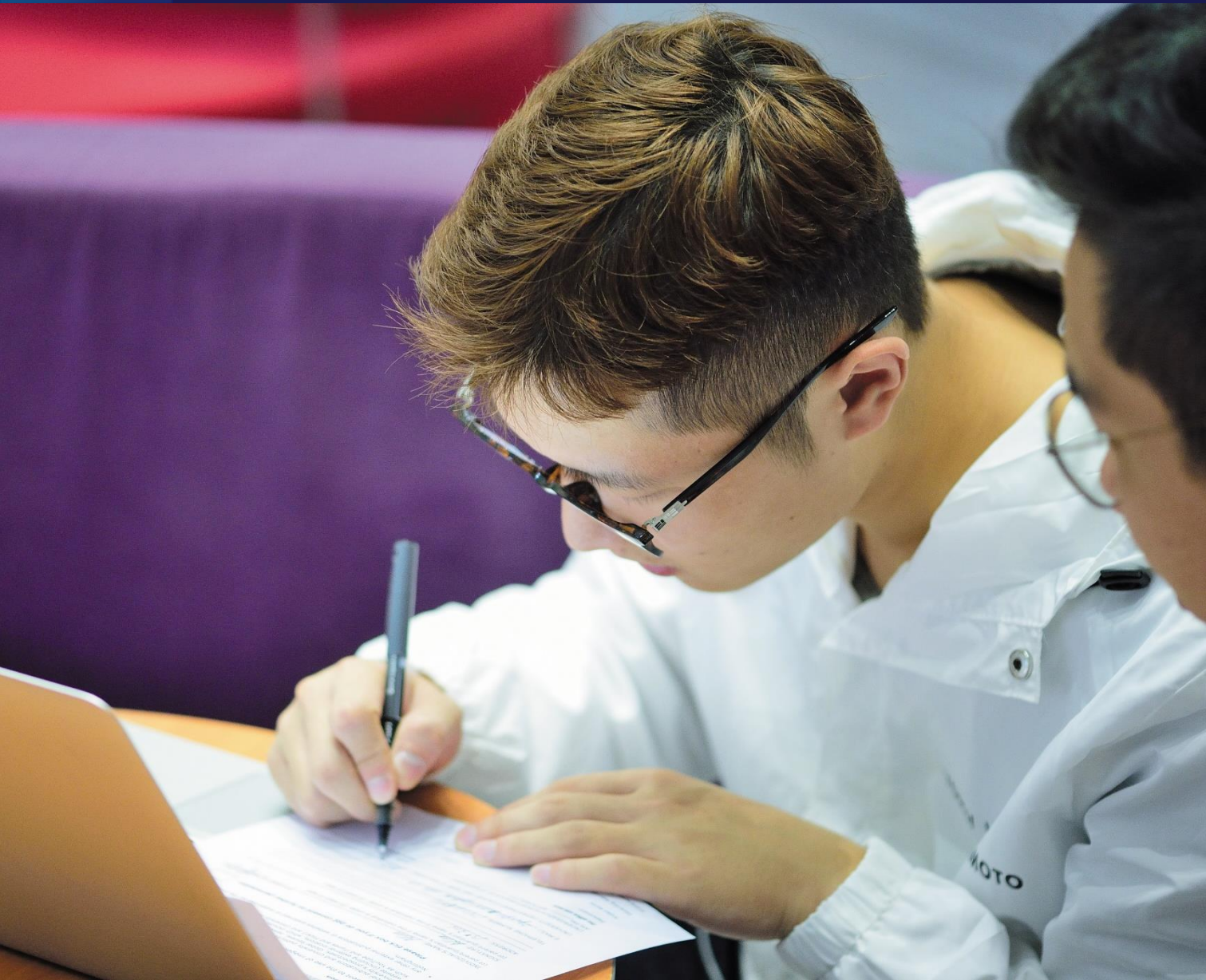


Personal statement structure





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

Skills and knowledge gained from current studies

Showing your interests beyond the curriculum

Analysing further reading and research

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

Remember to demonstrate and evaluate





2. Topic of interest

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. Careers and Aspirations

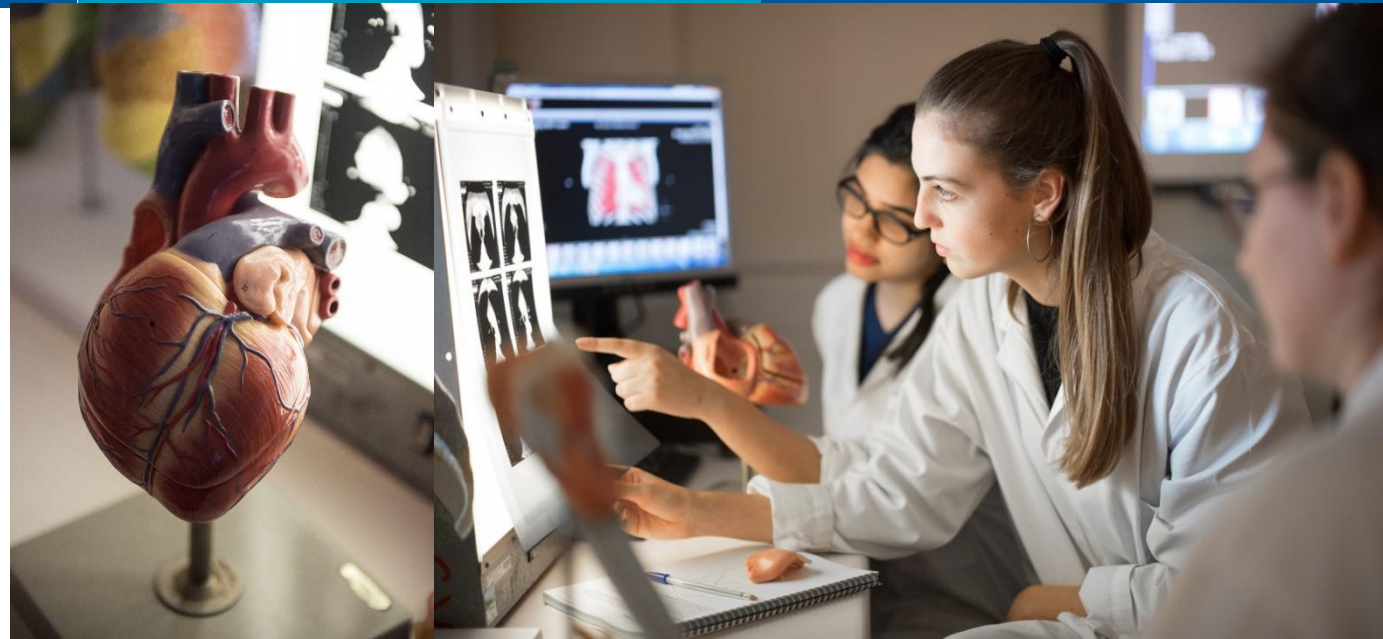
Aspirations for the future and how university will support this

Showcase your insight into the career area

Demonstrate related skills and knowledge gained from work experience

What do you hope to gain by going to university?

Remember to demonstrate and evaluate





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. Extracurricular

**Skills gained
from clubs,
sports,
hobbies,
volunteering,
etc.**

**Demonstrate
transferrable
skills, link to
your course
where possible**

**Be relevant,
consider skills
which have been
developed more
recently**

**Be selective, no
more than 20%
of your
statement**

**Remember to demonstrate
and evaluate**





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



Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)

Informal
conversation

Practical's &
demonstrations

Interview Formats

Group interviews

Panel interviews



Interviews formats

Questions can range from:

- Directly about you
- Your experiences
- Scenario-based questions
- Activities designed to demonstrate your skills





Interview questions practise



Briefly describe a topic related to this degree course that you find interesting and why?

What do you hope to achieve from studying this degree subject?

Why do you want to study it here?

How do you think that you will manage the transition from your current studies to degree level study?



Interviews styles



General courses:

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

Courses working with people or animals:

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



Next Steps



What students need to be doing

Enhance application

- Work experience
- Further reading outside of the syllabus
- Developing academic skills
- Leadership positions
- Exposure to the subject





Top tips

**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**

