

## **School of Arts, Languages and Cultures Master's Programmes:**

### **Guidance on a Personal Statement/Case for Support**

Within your statement, your primary aim is to provide convincing reasons why you want to do the course and how you are an excellent candidate. Precise details will depend upon which Master's you choose to apply for, the expectations you have of the programme, and how you think it will shape your future career. Some Master's programmes include specific requirements for admission relevant to the programme of study – please check the admissions criteria for your programme and ensure you refer to them in your case for support. Your statement should not exceed 500 words.

#### **Your interests and expectations**

Explain why the Master's programme appeals to you and the areas within the subject that you find interesting, including specific modules or other course opportunities. Provide evidence to demonstrate your suitability and interest for the course. What are the intellectual problems, or practical opportunities, that enthuse you? If you know exactly why you wish to pursue this Master's - to go onto PhD study or to follow a career path for instance -- or a particular area you wish to pursue for your dissertation/final project, then address this as well. In general, what do you expect to get out of your Master's and how will it contribute to your career aims?

#### **Your academic credentials**

Tutors will pay particular attention to:

- your first degree
- your final classification and average grade
- your intellectual development, and achievements, as an undergraduate
- where relevant to the chosen programme, professional experience, especially if your first degree is in a different subject area

Many applicants will have similar academic backgrounds to you. Why are you the ideal person for this particular Master's programme? What have you achieved that makes you stand out (e.g. a particularly high mark, an award for academic achievement, or a prize for project work). Drawing from specific examples in your career to date, explain how your intellectual interests have grown and developed. Discuss authors or texts that have inspired you, theories or problems that drive you, academic talks that you have attended, study groups that you have been part of or academic societies you have joined. Include work experience where relevant, particularly if you are interested in a vocational Master's, if your first degree is in a different subject area from the programme that you are applying to, or if your first degree was obtained some time ago

#### **Your strengths**

Look closely at the course programme key skills and required knowledge. Using specific examples from your previous studies, work experience, or extra-curricular activities, discuss how you meet the course aims and requirements. Explain your skills in detail -- the admissions tutor will not be able to appreciate your capabilities/achievements simply by reading the title of your final year dissertation/project, for instance.

### **Writing tips**

- Start positively - grab the reader's attention
- Keep your comments brief and focused
- Highlight your skills and achievements; don't underplay your best attributes
- Use your statement to show that you can structure your thoughts and write coherently; each topic should lead logically onto the next
- Get your facts right; stating that you want to work with an academic who no longer works at the University will not impress admission tutors
- Your statement should be evidence-based wherever possible
- Stick to the word limit