

# All about you

## Sheet One

The first 'sheet' you should complete is a comprehensive list of all potentially relevant activities you've undertaken. This could be virtually anything, but some good things to get you started are:

### Hobbies and interests

- Sports clubs/teams
- Collecting things
- Following a team or pursuit
- Other clubs or activities
- Singing, dancing or playing an instrument

### Clubs and groups you belong to

- Guides, Scouts, Boys'/Girls' Brigade
- Young scientists
- Charity work/volunteering

### Work experience

- Organised through school
- Part-time jobs

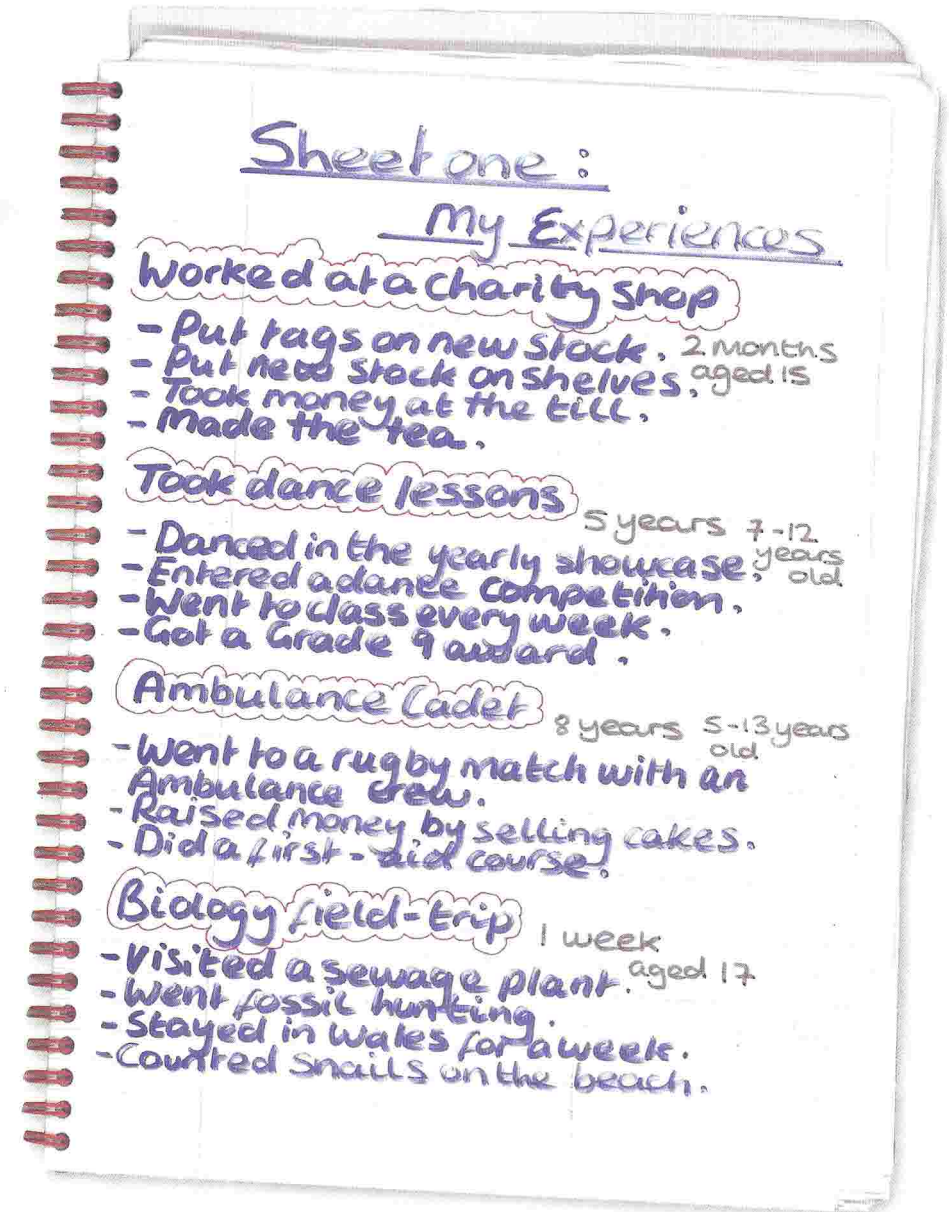
### Activities through school/college

- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Debating Society
- School Council
- Prefect
- Head Girl/Boy
- Field trips and 'residential' activities
- 'Pencil Monitor' Year 6

You can arrange this information in whatever way is easiest for you; a list (as shown in our example on the opposite page), a mind map or put them all on post-it notes and stick them to a wall.

Don't worry about whether your examples are 'good enough'. All you're doing is creating a really big list so that when you come to write your statement you've got lots to work with.

## Sheet one example



# Person spec Sheet Two

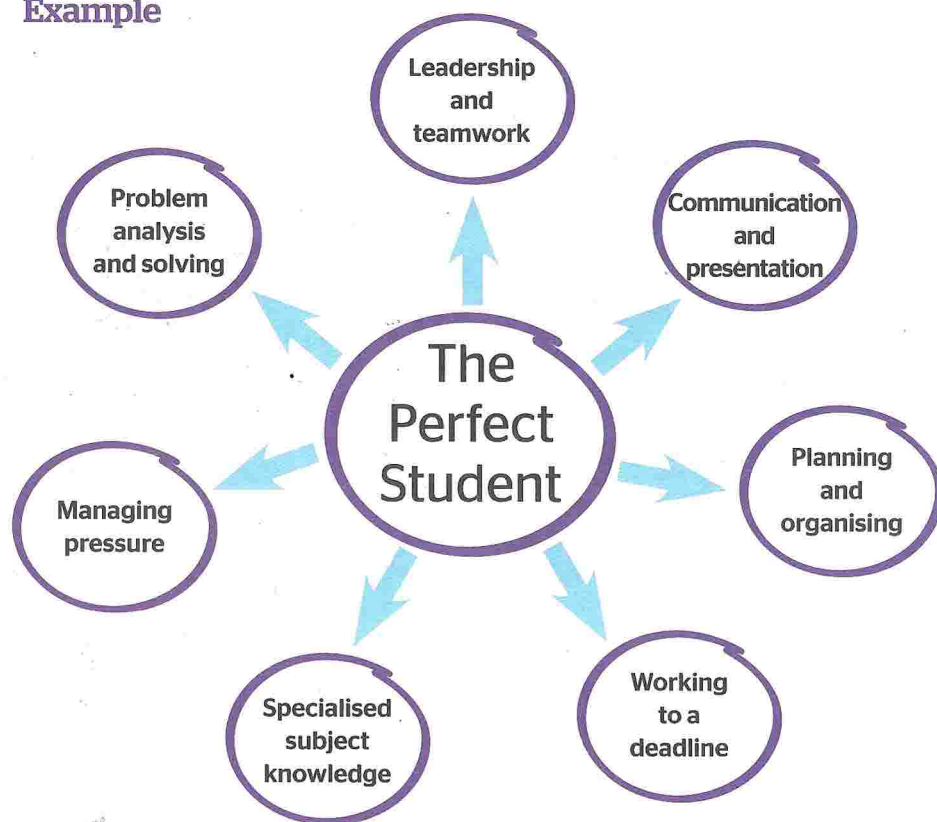
The second sheet is fairly straightforward. It's basically a 'person specification' describing the ideal student for the course you'd like to study. It should outline the skills, abilities and talents of the 'perfect' student for the course.

This is where prospectuses and Open Days will come in really handy as they can give you an insight into what is expected from students who study the course and what they should be able to do. If you're at an Open Day don't be afraid to ask tutors to explain what skills their ideal student would have - they'll be very happy to tell you.

To get you started we've included some standard examples of the type of skills that pretty much all successful university students should have.

These should be enough to get you started but you'll have to think about which ones are likely to be more important for the course you want to study so you can prioritise those.

## Example



Identify the skills the perfect student for your course would have - these are the most important for you to demonstrate



# Your personal statement Sheet Three

**This is going to be your personal statement. What you need to do is connect the skills you require to be successful on the course you want to study (sheet two) with the experiences you've gathered along the way (sheet one).**

The personal statement is a set of claims about the skills you have, which are backed up with real examples of how you've gained or developed those skills.

Remember, it's no good to make a claim about a skill without backing it up. If you tell us 'I've got excellent communication skills' we might be asking ourselves 'Where's the evidence?' Remember, anyone can claim to have a skill so it's crucial that you back up your claims with real and interesting examples.

There's also very little point in you telling us that you've done something without explaining to the Admissions Tutor how it makes you a better candidate for the course. So, if you tell us 'I've got my Duke of Edinburgh Award' we might be asking ourselves 'So what?' You need to make it clear to us how your experiences have developed the skills you need to succeed on your course.

## Things to consider:

### Quality not necessarily quantity

Try to be articulate and concise wherever possible. You need to convey a real interest in, and passion for, the course(s) for which you've applied. Redrafting and editing is important. Be careful not to repeat yourself, overuse individual examples or repeatedly demonstrate the same skill with different examples.

### Don't waffle

Remember you only have 4,000 characters to make the best possible impression, so use them wisely. Make everything in your personal statement as relevant as possible to your application. Your task is to demonstrate that you're the best possible candidate and secure a place.

### Work experience/sporting achievements

Be sure to include information on relevant interests, work experience and social activities and explain how these relate to your course or your ability to be a successful student. Make sure that you show yourself as a rounded individual. University life is not all about study. Remember, some institutions, like ARU, offer scholarships for some sports.

### Spelling and grammar

You must make sure that your spelling and grammar is checked. Ask friends or family to read your statements through - don't just rely on a spell-check. Be sure to look out for typing errors. Bad spelling, poor grammar or typos instantly create a bad impression and can make a tutor lose confidence in your application.

### Be individual and original

You need to be aware that Admissions Officers and Tutors see thousands of applications each year. If you're able to make yours stand out from the crowd, this will put you ahead of the rest.

## ARU 'three-sheet method' for writing a personal statement

### Sheet One

#### All about you

Your hobbies, achievements and activities



### Sheet Two

#### Person Spec

Describe the 'ideal' student for the course you want to study



### Sheet One

### Sheet Two

Combine your experiences with the skills to demonstrate your suitability



### Sheet Three

#### Your Personal Statement