



Activity name	Tranche 7 Personal Statements
Date	September 2022 to August 2023
Total number of students	~1044
Total number of target students	~435
Institutions involved <i>* Institutions that completed surveys</i>	Bideford College, Bodmin College, Bridgwater and Taunton College*, City College Plymouth, Coombe Dean School*, Cornwall College*, Eggbuckland Community College, Exeter College*, Hele’s School, King Edward VI Community College, Marine Academy Plymouth, Notre Dame RC School, Petroc, Scott Medical and Healthcare College*, Sir John Hunt Community Sports College*, St Cuthbert Mayne School, South Devon College*, Stoke Damerel Community College*, Strode College*, Teign College, Teignmouth Community School, The Ilfracombe Church of England Academy*, Torquay Academy*, Yeovil College*

Introduction

The Personal Statement sessions, aimed at post-16 students, aim to broaden students’ knowledge of HE by explaining the role of personal statements in the UCAS application process and developing students’ confidence by drafting and tailoring content for their own personal statement. The sessions aim to address the barriers of HE progression of a Lack of Knowledge of HE and Lack of Soft Skills.

The target for these workshops was an ‘increased understanding of the HE application process, including personal statements for 80% or more of students’, ‘increased understanding of techniques for drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for 80% or more of students’ and an ‘increased confidence in drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for 80% or more of students’. The sessions were evaluated using post-activity evaluation surveys, including quantitative and qualitative questions.

Results

The following figures and tables show the response rates for these surveys.

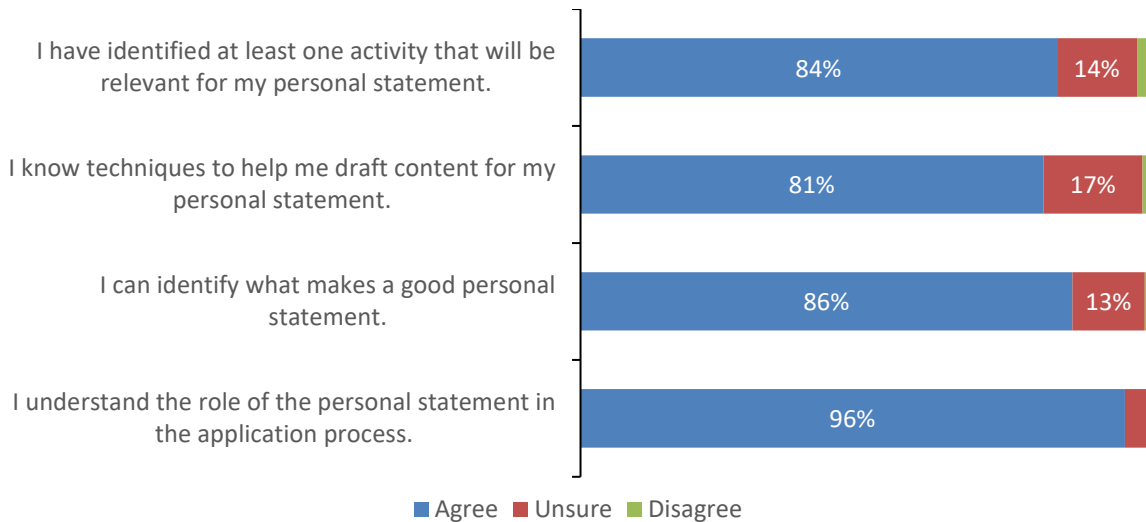


Figure 1. Students' understanding of various aspects of personal statements.

The Personal Statement workshops have increased students' understanding of the HE application process and their understanding of techniques for drafting and tailoring content for personal statements.

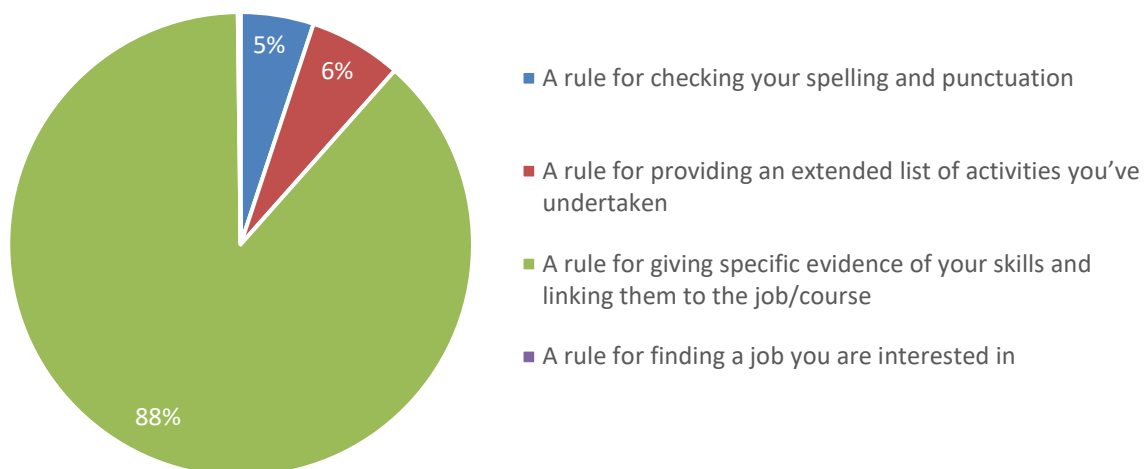


Figure 2. Students' understanding of the best definition for the 'ABC' rule.

The Personal Statement workshop has equipped students with a useful technique – the 'ABC' rule – to draft their personal statements.

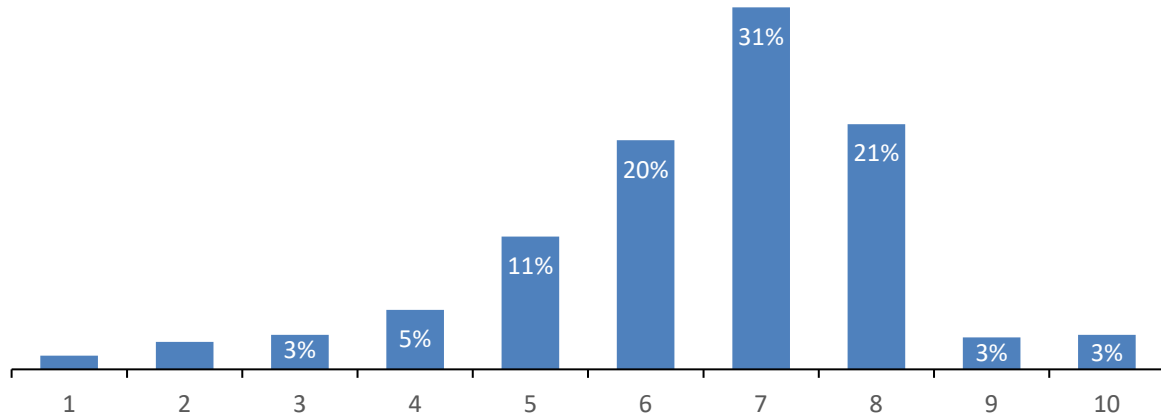


Figure 3. Students’ rating of how confident they feel in their ability to draft a personal statement with 1 being not at all confident and 10 being extremely confident.

The Personal Statement workshop has helped most students to feel confident in their ability to draft their personal statement.

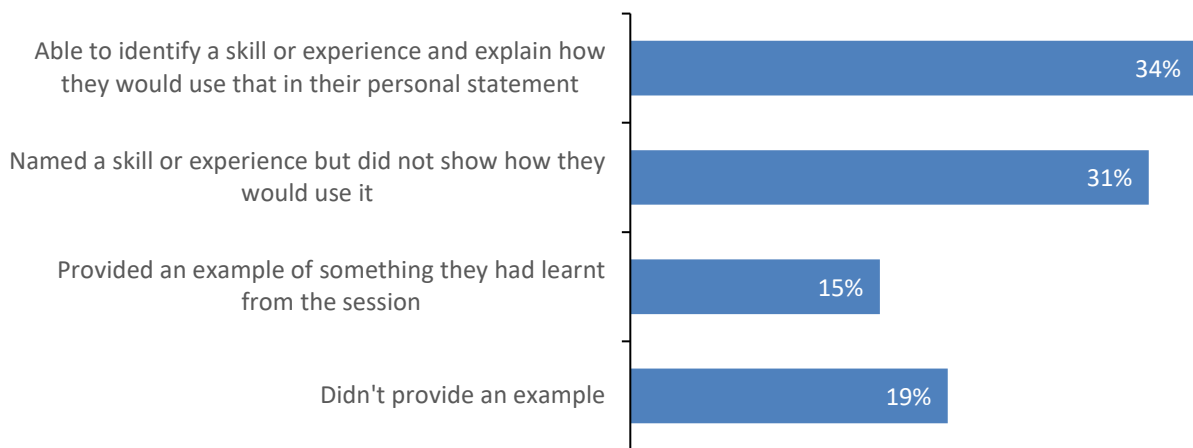


Figure 4. How students responded to providing a skill/experience and how they would use it in their personal statement.

The Personal Statement workshop has provided students with the opportunity to identify skills and experiences that they have had and to understand how they could use them in a personal statement.

Table 1. Students’ feedback on the most useful thing they had gained from the workshop.

Thematic category	Number of responses	Quote from students
How to write and structure a good personal statement	200	<i>“Knowing what I need to put in my personal statement in the sense of 25% about me and 75% about course relevance.”</i>



The ABC rule	40	<i>"I think the ABC rule really gives insight on what to write in a personal statement."</i>
The dos and don'ts of writing a personal statement	30	<i>"Knowing what and what not to put such as cliché."</i>
Helpful conversations and resources to help for further information	25	<i>"The links to resources that will help me in writing my personal statement."</i>
A general understanding of HE and the application process	20	<i>"Knowing the UCAS points and how they affect application."</i>
A better understanding of what a personal statement is and its purpose	19	<i>"I understand the role of personal statement in application process to university."</i>
A better understanding of knowing where to start	17	<i>"Knowledge on how to start a personal statement."</i>
Increased confidence in how to write a personal statement	11	<i>"Less critical of my writing and more willing to start now"</i>
A better understanding of student finance	5	<i>"Idea of all bursaries available."</i>

Evidence from feedback after the Personal Statement workshops students indicates that they had learned the fundamental structure and techniques they can use to help them write a strong personal statement. experiences that they have had and to understand how they could use them in a personal statement.

Outcomes Achieved

Table 2. Personal Statements – Outcomes achieved in T7.

Barriers to HE Progression	Short-term outcomes and targets	Indicators	Evidence
<i>Knowledge of HE</i>	Increased understanding of HE application process, including personal statements for ≥ 80% of students	Students are able to identify the role of a personal statement	96% of students understood the role of the personal statement in the application process – Achieved
	Increased understanding of techniques for drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for ≥ 80% of students	Students are able to identify strategies for writing a personal statement	81% of students agreed that they knew techniques to help them draft content for their personal statement – Achieved
<i>Soft skills</i>	Increased confidence in drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for ≥ 80% of students	Students report increased confidence in drafting content for personal statement	78% of students reported a confidence rating of 6 or more in their ability to draft a personal statement – Almost achieved



Conclusion

The target of 'increased understanding of the HE application process, including personal statements for 80% or more of the students' was exceeded, with 96% of the responses indicating this. The target of 'increased understanding of techniques for drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for 80% or more of students' was achieved, with 81% of students indicating this. The target of 'increased confidence in drafting and tailoring content for personal statements for 80% or more of students' was narrowly missed with 78% of students reporting a confidence rating of 6 or more for their ability to draft a personal statement.