

Personal statement

My interest in progressing further to a law degree is because I want to improve my career aspirations and increase my knowledge, skills and qualifications. I want to increase the quality of my life as an individual, for my family and my overall career and professional position in life. I strongly believe that a degree in law is a qualification that gives one a solid foundation, and broadens one's potential career choices.

I believe that I am a mature and hardworking student with 6 years of working experience in the medical sector as a Nurse in the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire hospitals. Working in this environment, one is continually caring for others and you learn to be a team member; how to get along with people from different ethnic backgrounds, how to be sensitive to the feelings of others. As you are continuously dealing with the general public, you gain the ability to deal with potentially difficult people with confidentiality and integrity.

Previous work experience with a publishing company included having work experience in their legal affairs. During this time I was able to see different types of legal work being carried out on the protection of the intellectual rights of the authors' works and even a case of unfair dismissal within the company. In the past I also spent some time in the public galleries of the local courts and I was able to observe how lawyers and judges interacted, giving me some insight on the day to day affairs of the legal and judicial world.

Recently I have read *The Rule of Law* by Tom Bingham and *Letters to a Law Student* by Nicholas McBride. These books gave me an insight into the world of a law student and how law is such a fascinating subject which you never stop learning from as the law is always changing, as advances are made in different fields and as the world advances in terms of technology.

I want to become a lawyer, and help people defend their rights and have access to justice. I am specifically interested in the medical field of law as, having worked in the hospitals for 6 years, I have seen a number of cases of neglect or mishap and my working on the ground experience would be useful in dealing with cases of such nature. However, this is not a fixed option as there are other fields of law (Marital, Corporate, etc.) I have interest in and I believe I will cultivate and develop as an individual as I progress in my educational path.

The need for legal professionals is present in all fields and sectors of society, as well as the personal affairs of individuals in the resolution of matters affecting their lives. This is why I feel this is such an exciting and important area to learn about and move into.

Doing the Access course has helped me to reach the required academic level before starting university. I have thoroughly have enjoyed doing the Access course and the excitement connected to learning new things and creating a better future.

Midwifery is a caring and demanding profession which will require hard work and commitment, both during training and practice.

I became interested in midwifery because I feel that I have the personal qualities of empathy and a caring nature alongside the ability to work hard, which would make me a dedicated and effective midwife.

I started my working career breeding horses for racing and moved out to New Zealand. Working in a different country was very challenging but very rewarding, I was able to live, work and experience the different cultures within New Zealand and all that it has to offer. I learnt a lot working there, experiencing and becoming involved in a variety of situations. I am not afraid of hard work and, working in the breeding industry, I was quite often on call 24 hours a day as mares give birth very quickly, quite often at night. This often meant unpredictable working hours with shifts lasting all day and running into the night on frequent occasions during the breeding season. Working closely with animals led to some serious and emergency situations. Therefore working within a team in a calm and clear manner is important when dealing with high risk situations. I feel that my extensive experiences and skills will be transferrable to working in a midwifery environment and feel that I have a lot to offer both emotionally and practically.

I have the ability to keep calm in a crisis and fully understand the challenges of the role, such as staff shortages, increasing birth rates and the long working hours. I feel I would be able to empower women to make choices about their own care, to trust their own instincts and to trust their bodies. It is important for women to trust their own bodies as that is what nature intended and being a midwife focuses on the natural outcome and not intervention. I do understand that midwifery is in the primary sector, dealing with normality and respect that I will be working with other healthcare agencies when necessary to improve other outcomes with women and their babies. I therefore enrolled on an Access to Higher Education course encompassing Biology, Psychology and Sociology. This course has improved my time management to help me juggle all of my current commitments: work, voluntary work and college. I am really enjoying returning to study and have received very positive feedback so far on the course which encourages me to look forward to the opportunity of studying at degree level.

I have been reading midwifery journals to gain knowledge about current articles within the profession. I feel that keeping up to date with current issues would benefit me as a midwife and as a prospective student, thus enabling me to give the best care to women and their babies. As I have been researching I have become more interested in birth defects and why they happen. This is a sensitive subject but it is imperative to demonstrate awareness of these issues for future practice. I am currently volunteering at Aqua natal classes on a Monday night allowing me to talk to pregnant ladies and listen to their stories. I am currently registered on a two day course in January and February to gain a qualification in becoming a breastfeeding volunteer to increase my knowledge as much as possible. I am also waiting to start volunteer work at the Oxford John Radcliffe hospital part time a few hours a week for 6 months on a busy maternity ward. I am looking forward to this as it will give me an insight into how a busy maternity ward operates.

I am an Access to Higher Education student with various experiences in caring for the vulnerable and I hope to realise my life aspiration of being a nurse. The first major experience which steered me in this direction was the loss of my little sister, who passed away as a result of poor care in hospital. Throughout my life this has inspired me to provide the care to other people that my sister deserved. I have lived away from my family since the age of 16 and have learned to be self-sufficient and deal with a range of challenging experiences. I am a keen follower of the NHS in the news and fully understand the need for nurses to be compassionate and caring. I feel that my experiences have made me compassionate, which is why in my previous employment I was selected to train and manage others, and provide one to one employment and life mentoring for vulnerable adults.

The NHS's "6Cs of Nursing" are a guideline for the ideal personality for a nurse. I feel that I have met these criteria in several aspects of my life so far. I care informally for a close friend who has autism, providing her with emotional support. I find this relationship to be very rewarding; it is both a challenging experience and a happy one. I serve meals to the homeless in my community weekly with my church, after which I provide them with informal support regarding emotional, drug and housing issues. This has shown me the importance of respecting the dignity of others; I often find these people are not treated in the way they deserve because of the stigma associated with drug abuse and homelessness. What I see however is a group of intelligent, resilient individuals who deserve the same respect as any other person. The Nursing and Midwifery Council states that nurses "must treat people as individuals and respect their dignity". Working with the homeless has allowed me to really see how vital this is for building rapport and therefore making progress in the care of another person.

In my previous job, I was a mentor for young people with employment and life issues, meeting with them regularly to discuss their situation and increase their employability. In the same role, I took and passed a first aid course and was told by the examiner that I have a very caring and considerate manner.

I have worked previously for an insurance company, where I investigated fraudulent claims on top of my role as a claims handler. This is a long and skillful process which requires vigilance, conversation management, careful planning and, above all, competence to avoid financial risk. In my last position as an administrator, I was given extra responsibility to manage insurance claims on top of my duties, and trained staff to be competent in my role when I left the company to take the Access Course. I feel that these roles have contributed to my preparation for the nursing course because they have helped me become capable and courageous when dealing with stressful situations and provided me with listening and communication skills to deliver information in a sensitive and professional manner; this is essential for managing expectations of patients and their families. These roles also increased my attention to detail, which is vital for procedures such as drug administration. I am committed to my church and volunteering, simply because caring for other people makes me happy. It is a challenge to balance these activities and my studies, but one that I rise to because I am focused on the end result: a career as a nurse. I have found that commitment requires passion for the subject and a great deal of perseverance. The Access Course has helped me develop these skills, by furthering my knowledge in subjects such as Sociology and Psychology which have helped me to understand the way people function, and prepared me for the organisation of a high workload and meeting deadlines, both of which are requirements of the nursing course.

The importance of diet in the treatment and prevention of disease is a vital aspect of modern health care. I am applying to study Dietetics at university because *this field* offers the opportunity to train towards a role which would allow me to support and educate patients in the importance of regulating diet, in addition to exercise and other relevant therapies, to lead a healthy lifestyle or deal with a specific health related goal. Coming from a family of nurses and health care practitioners, the variety of roles within the NHS and their interaction within the wider healthcare industry are ones I am familiar with.

It is clear that I have taken an alternative route to applying for Dietetics. My initial university application was for Illustration at Cardiff as this was my focus when I left school. However, diet and nutrition have both played an important role in my life and work experience. Working part time in a restaurant developed my interest in making healthy eating an enjoyable experience and, while continuing with the first year of my degree, I decided to gain some work experience with a number of different Dietetics Departments within the NHS.

My first was in Gloucestershire NHS Trust where I spent a week shadowing an Oncology specialist; an experience that was illuminating. It gave me a great chance to see how a dietitian structures their working day, how they interact with patients and gauge their individual needs. I found in particular the unique field of Oncology dietetics fascinating because it showed me the huge impact dietitians can have on a patient's healing process.

To build upon this experience, I secured a further shadowing with a Diabetes specialist. As I already had a good overview of practice in my preliminary experience with the Oncology Dieticians, I was able to be involved further in the treatment and technical side of the process. I was shown, for example, how to calculate nutritional needs for each patient, as well as be more involved with the patients. I thoroughly enjoyed being so involved, and built up a professional rapport with the specialists in the department; seeing how passionate they are about their roles further strengthened my motivation to pursue dietetics as a career.

Thus I made the difficult decision to leave my Illustration degree after my first year and enrol on a Science Foundation Course at College to put me on track to pursue this goal. In addition, after researching entry criteria for Dietetics courses in the UK, I have enrolled on a GCSE Maths evening course to improve the C grade I achieved at school. My Access to HE course consists of Chemistry, Biology and Psychology at level 3; all subjects required to study Dietetics at university level. I find Psychology useful because it has given me a broader perspective behind many mental health issues regularly encountered by Dieticians, such as Anorexia, and Bulimia, both of which vary in severity and pose difficult challenges to Dieticians. Chemistry and Biology have provided more scientific teaching of the specific chemical and physical processes of the human body, and how nutrition and diet play a role in the way our systems function and perform.

In addition to my studies, I work part time in a restaurant, where I have recently been promoted to the role of assistant manager. I have worked hard over the past few months to develop a 'healthy alternatives' menu, as well as offering a variety of Vegan, Dairy and Gluten free alternatives. I have found the implementation of this particularly rewarding. With my goal of studying Dietetics in mind, this project has allowed me to conduct research and experiment with recipes and ingredients to create meals which are beneficial to health as well as being enjoyable to eat.

Alongside my role as assistant manager, I am also a chef and have recently set up a food blog on a popular social media website which allows me to share my healthy recipes with hundreds of followers.