***Your personal statement is an important part of the application form and should explain in no more than 500 words:***

Out of 80 children in the 4th grade, I, out of 2 other peers, was selected to participate in an inter-school science Olympiad against other institutions in the province. Such consideration astonished my innocent self, who had no particular interest in the subject. Having been informed 2 days prior, I had not known how to even prepare. To my surprise, I finished second. I now announce this moment as my proudest throughout my entire childhood. ~~Though~~, most importantly, this marked a realization in regards to my ability in the field of sciences.

Years following that, I explored scientific ideas which sparked my enthusiasm. This was seen through my participation in the ASEAN Youth Citizens Conference, an international scientific conference. Among others, I had discussions with a researcher from NASA, who enlightened me about recent advancements in astronomy, thus further expanding my scope of interest.

~~As I branched out into other similar pursuits however,~~ one concept stood out more than others—the world of genetic engineering. First introduced to me in 9th grade by my biology teacher, the future possibility of gene-edited, “designer” babies led me to wonder in disbelief. They do so by precisely adding new segments of DNA or editing single DNA letters. Despite its share of ethical concerns, CRISPR proved the evolution of technology in altering the outcome of inherited diseases, especially the once-believed incurable cancer.

Through this fascination in biology, I strive to apply my knowledge for the betterment of medicine. Over 2 weeks, I volunteered at a medical research facility in the remote island of Kei Besar, Maluku, Indonesia. I earned the opportunity to apprentice with resident doctors, nutritionists, and nurses. Through them, I studied basic clinical procedures, such as utilizing an ultrasound machine, drawing and testing blood, and making drug prescriptions. I also organized workshops about composting, waste management, and financial literacy for the children and mothers in the villages. This not only grew my passion in biological sciences, yet deepened my social conscience.

Moreover, the experience inspired me to participate in a research competition hosted by the International Science and Invention Fair (ISIF), where I specifically envisioned an innovation to aid people with disabilities. With the help of a computer scientist, my team assembled a low-cost sensor, catered towards the hearing-impaired, which detects one’s surroundings at any given time. We integrated coding with human physiology in order to address a medical concern.

As a candidate for the Undergraduate Preparatory Course, I would like to progress to Year 1 of University College London. UCL has been my dream university as it offers an exceptionally ranked program for my chosen major, biochemistry. They provide sufficient resources for my intended research in medical genetics—to enable the expansion of alternative treatments for genetic abnormalities. I wish to satisfy my ambition of enhancing the quality and advancement of healthcare in Indonesia.

Word count: 471 words

* Why do you want to undertake the programme or research?
* What are your academic interests?
* Why do you wish to study at UCL?
* What educational experience do you have?
* Do you have any relevant work experience?
* Have you completed any extracurricular or voluntary activities relevant to the programme?
* What are your career aspirations?

Hi Calysta!

Overall, your essay has answered most of the important questions that UCL wants you to include. I admire you for your passion in the genetic field, and indeed it is an area that has always received spotlights from experts. Thus, to make your essay stand out even more, it will be a good idea to include some details about genetic abnormalities in Indonesia/the condition in the remote areas. Also, do explain further about your career aspirations and why biochemistry at UCL will help you in genetic research later.