# Personal Statement

I was born in Edinburgh, and lived there until I was 19. I completed a degree in music at the University of York, having worked very hard at my performance and improvisation. Then I moved to Brantham, outside Ipswich, to be supported by my parents following a nervous breakdown in 2012. Since then I have started a Software Development Apprenticeship with BT. My priorities have changed over the years as I have gained experience of who I am through events that have happened to me. I have wanted to find out how computers operated for as long as I can remember. I was diverted into music when I decided to go to university. I kept exploring computers throughout my time at university, while striving to become a professional musician. Now I work full time as a software developer, and playing the saxophone is a very rewarding hobby.

I enjoy my work, and I am working with a team where on-the-job learning is a high priority. I think these two factors are key to the satisfaction I currently get from my job. Having a fulltime job alongside a university course has improved my work life balance. One of my weaknesses is poor time management: when I was studying in York I would work haphazardly and waste my time. Having one day a week course at UCS, alongside a full time job, has focussed me. As a result of these experiences I believe I am someone who feels stronger when working within a reasonably strict timetable.

My short term plan is to complete my apprenticeship at BT. I am happy working in teams that build lots of small useful programs, such as an inventory system or a network monitoring system. My current long-term goal is to contribute to solving a computing problem whose solution will positively affect people’s lives. I feel I have begun working on this goal, since BT provides the internet to the UK, and I feel that the internet is a worthwhile human achievement. Ideally I’d like to complete a Phd for the company, and find an area of software research that I can contribute to.

I am very interested in programmer education and again BT needs people who can teach others to code. I taught myself how to write software, and I have experienced the academic route to the same end through my course at UCS. I believe teaching a programming language is only half the story: after that is done new coders should be taught how to organise themselves, how to organise their programs, and how to work as part of a larger team. Software developers are in extremely high demand within BT, as ways are sought to cut operating costs and become more responsive to emergencies and consumer demand. Since computing courses in schools still lag behind the industry there are opportunities within BT to teach new apprentices how to program.