

**PROFILE**

# Personal statements

This activity will help you to identify how your skills match what creative employers and universities are looking for in applications and personal statements.

Norwich University of the Arts has strong relationships with creative industries. We know these are the top 10 soft skills\* they are looking for:

-  Resilience
-  Meeting deadlines and delivering a brief
-  Flexibility and adaptability
-  Showing attention to detail
-  Communicating with colleagues and partners
-  Responding to feedback
-  Demonstrating a positive attitude
-  Working in a team
-  Handling customers and clients
-  Interpreting a brief

\*Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others.

## Task 1 (all about you)

Working with pen and paper or on your computer:

- Write these 10 soft skills on individual notes. On an 11<sup>th</sup> note, select/draw an image of yourself (or just write your name.)
- Place the image of you or your name in the middle of your workspace.
- Place all the soft skills that you are good at close to your picture or name. Now place all of the skills you do not have or find more difficult further away.
- Write 1-3 bullet points giving examples of how your

experiences match the skills you feel positive about (these can be experiences within school/college or in outside clubs/hobbies/jobs:

e.g. Responding well to feedback – when you designed a logo for a project, your team did not think it worked. You then took on board their ideas and asked questions, before redesigning it to fit the brief and client more effectively.

**TOP TIP:**

**Ask a parent, teacher or classmate (who knows you well) for their perspective on your thoughts. They may have useful advice, recommendations or point out skills you cannot see.**

**It might be useful to photograph or screen shot this for your records.**



Ellie Ross-Wilkinson, BA Illustration



## Task 2 (what are they after?)

- Now you have an idea of how this technique can be a useful tool, write down on a separate piece of paper the name of the course(s) you are thinking of applying to.
- Place the course name in the middle of your workspace.
- What are the top three soft skills for this course? What soft skills do you have that complement this course? Can you add some additional bullet points?
- Can you identify gaps in your experience that you need to improve on between now and applying? How can you work on these?

Amy Foster, BA Fashion Communication and Promotion



## Task 3 (do and don't)

When you have decided on the three key soft skills for your course it is important to put them into a structure. Turn your bullet points into short sentences and paragraphs. Don't worry, they don't need to be perfect just yet!

### Do

Add detail and character by using some of the following suggestions:

#### Mention a specific piece of work or project

What have you learned from this project? e.g. "taking part in a game jam gave me an idea of what it's like to work in an indie studio. I learned new digital 3D skills using Maya and was responsible for the asset design for a game about climate change. This looked at how the player can take more social responsibility and it has changed the way I think and act around sustainability."

#### You could include quotes

This could be from someone who has inspired you into the pathway you have chosen: e.g. David Hockney describes a good drawing being a "mixture of the head, hands and heart." This is an idea I want to bring into my Fine Art practice.

#### What are the cutting edge trends in your subject area?

What are the trends, key practitioners' new ideas, ways of making or thinking in your field? What do you think about them?

#### Mention things you are doing outside the classroom

Often, the things you do outside the classroom tell us more about your skills and outlook. For example, "at the weekends I work for Topshop as a personal stylist for customers that want assistance with their fashion choices. I am keen to get to know the customer, their personality and lifestyle before making recommendations." This shows you are likely to have good interpersonal skills, trustworthy, empathetic, strategic, a strong improviser, a good listener and problem solver, as well as have an idea for the latest trends.

### Don't

These are some things that could weaken your personal statement, so try to avoid the following:

#### Emotional statements

Although it is good to open and close with something punchy and thoughtful, beware of making bold, emotive statements without evidence. For example, saying you have "always been designing characters since you were five" or it is your "destiny to be a world leading Textile Designer".

#### Long quotes

We are interested in you, rather than what a lot of other creative people have said at this stage. These can be included in a personal statement but should not be the main event.

#### Listing generic skills

Tell us a story to explain how your skills have developed and make it interesting. Show how your character shines through these skills and talk about how they have been applied.

#### Waffling

If there is a lot to read, it can lead to a loss of focus (you may have noticed this when reading this worksheet, so well done for getting to the end!) Break down your text into clear paragraphs to make it easier to read.

Finally, ensure your character and relevant experiences are expressed but do not feel that you must hit the word limit. Don't go beyond the word limit! But often those that are well written and shorter can be quite refreshing for those reading them!

**If you have any further questions or would like us to review your draft copy, please contact us at [student.recruitment@nua.ac.uk](mailto:student.recruitment@nua.ac.uk).**



Phoebe Constable, BA Fashion