

Supporting Adults Into Learning

SAIL offers a range of FREE supports and courses for adults who wish to go to college as a Mature Student.



How do I write a Mature student's personal statement for my CAO application?

A personal statement of around 200 words should be sufficient. The following is a breakdown of the information being asked in order to assess your application:

1. What is the relevance of your life/educational experience to your application? What are your goals and objectives? What is your motivation? Why are you interested in a particular course? It is worth mentioning that you are aware of the commitment involved in undertaking a degree course and the costs involved.
2. Final Secondary Level qualification.
3. Post-secondary level qualifications (ie: any certificates held).
4. Current studies (ie: subjects, title of qualification, institution, dates, etc).
5. Non-certificate courses, title, institution, etc.
6. Employment, details of employer, position held, dates, etc.
7. Voluntary work, duties, dates, etc.
8. Hobbies and interests, try to relate them to proposed study.
9. You may be requested on your college mature student application form to give contact details of referees who are willing to provide information in support of your application.

Please find attached an example of two responses to the CAO personal statement question below. We hope that this will assist you with completing your application (Approx. 200 words):
(Please note that the below are examples and that your Personal Statement should be individual to your case)

Q. Relevance of your life / educational experience to your application and your educational goals & objectives:

Sample 1:

I left school at an early age. I worked in a number of odd jobs since then. I began training as a ____ but soon discovered that this was not the right path for me to take. However, I always regretted the fact that I did not complete my education. Until recently, I also thought that I had missed my opportunity to advance myself in life. It is only in recent times that I felt I had the confidence to pursue an Educational Programme. Following the completion of an Introductory Programme with Co Meath VEC, I applied to Dunboyne CFE for a PLC course in Social Studies. I enjoy this course very much and it has served to whet my appetite for more study. I am considered reliable, good with people, trustworthy and hard-working. I feel I relate well to people, particularly with those who are most in need. I feel I can empathise with the needy. I have a lot to contribute to any programme and would appreciate the opportunity to work with people in a professional capacity.

Sample 2:

I completed my Leaving Cert in 1979. As my employment resume has outlined, all of my previous working experiences to date have involved working with people, particularly with those who are most in need. Over the years, I have tried to develop my skills in order to assist a little more those with whom I work. While the majority of my work centred around practical tasks, I found that a significant part of the working day involved talking, listening and empowering people to make decisions based on their own needs. Now I feel the time has come for me to advance my skills further in order that I may work with people in a professional capacity. I am considered by all who know me as caring, generous, patient, hard-working, reliable and committed. I feel I have a lot to give to any programme and to any person entrusted to my care. I would dearly appreciate the opportunity to pursue this lifelong dream.

Checklist for CAO Application Process:

1. If you do not have a Laser Card or Credit Card, have you pre-paid the fee in the bank (Online Discounted Rate is €35 before 5.15pm on the 20th January 2010. Enclosed in your CAO pack you will find the payment form. Normal applications (online or paper) is €45.
2. Have you all your supporting documentation with you i.e. Leaving Certificate Results or any other Certificate received.
3. Have you your course codes listed (*NB – Please find out whether fees are payable for the course. The “Free Fees Scheme” may not apply to all courses, or applications, or HEIs. Please note that Private College are not covered under the Grant or BTEA schemes)
4. Have you your personal statement prepared.



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All information is correct at the time of print and is subject to change without prior notice. The information attached is only intended to be a guide.