

MATURE MENTOR RESOURCE

CAO: CRAFTING AN EXCELLENT PERSONAL STATEMENT

PREPPING FOR THE CAO

Applying for the CAO can be an intimidating and overwhelming process. As mentors, you are not expected to be experts on the CAO, but instead, you are being encouraged to pair the resources provided with your own experiences to help your mentees feel more confident and comfortable in their ability to navigate through their CAO applications.

GOALS FOR THIS SESSION:

1

Help inform mentees about the CAO so they can feel more comfortable and **confident** about the process.

2

Have mentees draft their Personal Statement for the CAO

MATERIALS NEEDED: MENTOR TOOLKITS | MENTEE TOOLKITS

BEFORE YOUR SESSION

- Review this lesson plan and the resources with your fellow mentor so you will feel confident working with the materials together.
- Recall your own experience writing a Personal Statement for your CAO application, and write in the space provided/ prepare to discuss it.



50-55 mins

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE PERSONAL STATEMENT

Part 1: PERSONAL STATEMENTS 101

approx. 10-15 mins

- 1 Re-introduce yourselves and give your mentees an overview of the goals for the session.
- 2 Explain to your mentees that if they are a mature student, a key part of submitting a successful CAO application is crafting an effective Personal Statement. Your personal statement is often your only opportunity to succinctly sell yourself to your College selections who you are and why you have what it takes to succeed.
- 3 Write in the space below how you felt when you were writing your personal statements, and what got you through it? Discuss with the group.

Writing my personal statement made me feel:

What got me through it was:

Part 2: THE PERSONAL STATEMENT DEMYSTIFIED

approx. 45 mins

Next, familiarise your mentees with what they should include in their personal statements: (See "How to Write an Effective Personal Statement" handout).

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE PERSONAL STATEMENT



A key part of submitting a successful CAO or college application is crafting an effective Personal Statement. Your personal statement is sometimes your only opportunity to succinctly sell yourself to a College. You will have to write a Personal Statement as a mature applicant for the CAO, as well as for each college you apply for. Set yourself apart! Tell them who you are and why you have what it takes to succeed in their College/programme. Be as specific and concise as possible.

On a separate sheet of paper, use the following guidelines to craft your personal statement. If you don't know where to start, try using bullet points first, then formulate them into sentences afterwards.

1

Why do you want to go to college?

- What courses would you like to study?
- What are your related interests?

2

Why have you chosen these courses? Break it down:

- Do you have a specific career goal in mind?
- What are your ambitions for the future?
- Do you have skills that would make you a good candidate for this course?

3

Relate your life experience. What are your transferable skills?

- Think about all the skills you've developed from other jobs, studies, extracurricular activities, hobbies, or volunteer work. How do you intend to use these skills to your advantage if you are accepted?

FEEDBACK



- Explain that it is ideal for the forms to be completed as soon as possible while the session is still fresh in everyone's minds.
- Fill in the mentor feedback forms and bring back to your college's access office.
- Log your session on <https://www.collegeaware.ie/submit-your-event/>

Our next visit will be:

The next topic we will cover is:
