

Natalie Ferrari



Hi everyone, I'm Natalie and I was a student here a few years ago, right through from Year 7 to the end of Sixth Form. I'm here to share with you some of the experiences I've had over the years, from my time at Sixth Form to what I currently do for work.



Seeing as some of you will be preparing your speeches for the Head Girl and Head Boy position, I thought it would be a good idea to cover what I did when I applied. This picture is actually a slide from my Head Girl speech all those years ago, I found it on my old laptop. It was really interesting to read the ideas that I had. I think it's really beneficial to communicate clear proposals and balance

what you propose so that they benefit everyone. Some of my ideas were to decorate the then new sixth form building with group photos and students' work to make the study rooms more personalised and so they would "exhibit the personality of the year groups"; this was especially relevant then as the sixth form building felt very bare and office-like in comparison to the old building.

I spoke to some students from Middle School (Years 8 & 9) who had no idea who the current Head Girl and Boy were, which made me think it would be a good idea to do a short talk at assemblies to introduce the committee and therefore increase the awareness of the student council, which should represent all students. More practically, I proposed the introduction of Senior Prefects for Year 12 as another opportunity for the CV, and a Sixth Form only computer room. I think it was important to highlight that I was hardworking and trustworthy and of course a lot of my year group and teachers knew that, as they could see it at school.

I still have this on my CV – it's brilliant to talk about in your University application and in your CV, and for job interviews straight after graduation. Have it under the skills and achievements section. It shows that you go the extra mile and that you'll put extra effort in around what you need to do. They can see that you were conscientious and stood out from the crowd at school. It demonstrates a leadership position and team role. You were able to put together a persuasive proposal and impress students and teachers enough to secure the most votes and, of course, you've shown that you will put in the extra work.



I started doing an English degree, I chose to do this because I found English at school pretty effortless; I loved it and I knew I was good at it. I wanted to make sure I would succeed in the degree. I chose the course because it contained a mix of literature and language modules. I actually changed my course at the end of my first year to English and ancient history combined honours. If you're looking into studying a mixture of subjects then do have a look at the combined honours courses, as many universities are very flexible with this and will let you combine very different degrees, even things like bio med and English! It was easy to change, as I'd done a subsidiary module

in ancient history in my first year, the subsidiary modules are modules outside of your degree course to give you a more varied grounding. I did very well in the module and so the senior lecturer was supportive of my application to change. It was actually him who suggested it. I absolutely loved it and I found it so interesting, and it just shows how things can change; nothing is set in stone, even after you've secured your degree course.

I achieved a first class in my undergraduate and a distinction in my masters. I did work hard, but it didn't feel like a slog most of the time because I was genuinely interested in what I was writing about. I ensured I met with the tutors regularly so I was clear about what was expected of me. Once you find out what sort of working pattern suits you, it will really help to create a schedule to stick to, whatever that might look like for you.

Liverpool is a brilliant and lively city, full of very friendly people, and I had a fantastic time there. The campus was embedded in the city centre, which ensured you never felt like you were part of a student community cut off from the real world. My advice for choosing a university would be to think about what's important for you, not what your friends are doing – do you want to be close to family or a boyfriend/girlfriend, do you want to see what living in another part of the country is like? It is all part of the experience.

I was deputy editor of the student magazine at university, I started as an assistant and worked my way up to the deputy. This involved writing articles, editing articles, and helping to run the committee by deciding how our budget was to be spent and organising committee elections.

The main part of my university experience was my time at the dancesport club. This was a new skill I'd not tried before, and I loved it. When you're at university, if you're not part of a students' union committee, do join a sports club! They're really fun and it's such a great thing to do to take your mind off university work and meet new people, making lifelong friends. Being elected president was definitely a highlight of my university experience, I never thought that would happen to me before I went to university. And it's another brilliant thing to add to your CV, showing that you have had a position of high responsibility.



Start and Grow Enterprise (SaGE) at the University of Gloucestershire

Start and Grow Enterprise (SaGE) is a University of Gloucestershire project, part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

This scheme is aimed at Gloucestershire based entrepreneurs at any stage of their business journey – from pre-start ambitious individuals with a **business idea** to current SME business owners (trading for less than 3 years). A range of events, workshops, networks and expert support resources and a powerful community will be provided by SaGE, helping to turn ideas into reality and grow **successful businesses**.

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SaGE START AND GROW ENTERPRISE



I work on a project at the University of Gloucestershire which supports start-up businesses and those who are thinking of starting their own business and working for themselves, based in Gloucestershire. As you can tell, the job I now have isn't directly related to my degree. My job during my MA also wasn't related to my degree – this was in socio-demographic analysis of applicants to the University of Liverpool, to evaluate their widening participation strategies.

You can see the connections – my developed writing/communication skills assist me in my marketing role, my ability to follow complex specifications assisted me in my WP role, my ability to work to tight deadlines assists me in my current role where we need to return reports each month, analysing and evaluating complex information.

I do feel like work experience is definitely extremely important for your career prospects, whether that's volunteering, a part time job or a work placement during university. It is important to employers to see that you have had experience working.

Regarding my current role, the University is happy to support individuals like you who might be thinking of working for themselves. All of the support courses and network events are free to attend, and we offer business advice in a friendly environment. It is a brilliant opportunity for you to learn what you need to know to set up a successful enterprise, and it starts right from the basics. Our activities take place at the university, at Oxstalls in Gloucester. If you're interested to learn more about SaGE, or want to attend one of our short courses after you've completed your A Levels, Mrs Thomas will be sharing my email address so please do give me an email.