

University of St Andrews

The Psychology of Dementia Care - distance learning (PG Cert)

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/psychology/dementia-care-pgcert/>

Personal statement

Developing on from my current work position, this is written in support of my application to the PG (Cert) in the Psychology of Dementia Care, via distance learning at St Andrews.

My first degree was in food science (passed at 2:1 level), and I also have substantive relative work experience in dementia care, having two years in a care home for dementia care as the (now) senior care assistant. With this knowledge behind me, I have built up an ability to work closely alongside colleagues that has taken us through some difficult times. At the forefront I see myself as someone who respects others, caring for the people that are there now, and helping them find a quality of life for their remaining time, however long that is. I work on the principle of “there but for the grace of God go I,” and I always show patience to those dementia sufferers whom I care for. Part of my role in the Care Home is to link with families, enabling families to prepare for meeting their loved ones, and it is this that has drawn me toward the psychology of dementia care.

I am ambitious, and as I now have a young family, I seek to progress in my workplace. The course you offer will allow me to access roles in management within the dementia care service, and I want to be able to apply for strategic leadership roles in health care. As a prospective manager, I have the social skills, organisational nous and experience to do the role well. However, although my first degree is within a cognate discipline (thus meeting your entry requirements), it is not specific to dementia care. Therefore, your course is the correct progression for me in my career trajectory.

I am attracted to the distance learning course because of work and family commitments, which make it very difficult for me to attend university on a daily basis. The flexibility of the distance learning means I can plan learning around my job, and the job will support my learning. I have a three-year-old who is now attending nursery, and after he goes to bed, I have time to sit and study. I am used to planning my life carefully to allow myself a work-life balance and study has always been a pleasure for me, especially if in an area of interest. Part of making a success of distance learning will be the ability to focus privately on the work material, without the natural impetus of class peers. As someone older now, I don't need the

social aspects of learning that I would have looked for as a teenager; distance learning holds no impediment for me.

Dementia care is not free from stress, it has its pleasures and rewards, but can also be draining and saddening. In order to unwind I practice swimming, and from my school days, I go every weekend and swim for an hour to both clear my mind and exercise. One of the first things I did when he was a few months old was take my son to the baths and get him used to swimming as I feel it is such an important skill to have. Furthermore, I practice yoga every day, as yoga helps me find peace at the end of the day. I have no worries about taking on the additional study as I believe in myself.

I chose your university due to its reputation. St Andrews is one of the finest universities in the UK and it will be an honour to join you. I carefully looked over other comparable courses, but yours had the clear links to professional practice and is directed toward people such as myself, working currently in the sector. I was impressed with the units on connecting family into dementia care and, also, the person-centered leadership approaches that I am very interested in.

I look forward to meeting you and studying with you. I believe I have all the attributes that you are looking for and know I have the determination to make a success of my time with you.