

AI and your application

We review hundreds of applications and shortlist candidates based on their unique perspective, motivations, and potential.

While AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT or Copilot) can be useful for research, all written content in your application should reflect your own authentic voice. Responses that rely heavily on AI-generated text sound generic and will not score highly enough to progress to the next stage of the recruitment process. Authenticity and originality are key to standing out.

Below are two examples of responses to the question '*What does working in higher education mean to you personally, and what impact do you hope to make during your time on the graduate scheme?*': one generated entirely through AI, and one where AI has been used as a tool to support a personal response.

We hope these answers illustrate the difference between the two approaches and highlight the value of crafting a response that is unique to you.

Answer 1: AI

Working in higher education is personally meaningful to me because it represents a space where learning, growth, and opportunity intersect. It's a sector that not only supports academic achievement but also plays a vital role in shaping individuals, communities, and society. For me, being part of higher education means contributing to an environment that empowers people to reach their full potential and encourages lifelong curiosity.

I see higher education as a transformative experience. It opens doors, challenges perspectives, and fosters critical thinking. My own educational journey has been shaped by inspiring mentors and enriching experiences, and I'm passionate about helping others access similar opportunities. Working in this field allows me to give back to a system that has had a profound impact on my life.

During my time on the graduate scheme, I hope to make a meaningful contribution by supporting projects that improve student experience, enhance operational efficiency, and promote inclusive practices. I'm particularly interested in areas such as student engagement, digital innovation, and policy development. I believe these areas offer exciting opportunities to create positive change and support institutional goals.

I aim to bring a collaborative and proactive approach to every task, and to build strong relationships across teams. I believe that listening, learning, and communicating effectively are key to making a lasting impact. I also see the scheme as a chance to grow professionally—developing new skills, gaining insight into the sector, and exploring different roles within higher education.

Ultimately, I want my time on the graduate scheme to be defined by growth, contribution, and impact. Whether through a successful project or by being a supportive team member, I hope to leave a positive legacy. Working in higher education is not just a job to me—it's a chance to make a difference, and I'm excited to be part of it.

Answer 2: AI used as a tool to support a personal response

Working in higher education is an environment I am personally passionate about. The sector represents innovation in research and education, shaping the future of the next generation, and empowering individuals through access to knowledge. The sector is currently going through a challenging time with rising international student numbers, increasing student fees, and fast-paced digital transformation, and these changes mean it is a really interesting time to contribute to the University and play a positive role.

My personal experiences at the University of York have shown me the many moving parts which keep a university running smoothly. Whether that is academics supporting students with dissertations, student services providing mental health support, or maintaining halls of residences. During my time studying, I benefited greatly from using these services and saw firsthand how critical these are to the student experience. The graduate scheme provides an exciting opportunity to contribute to one of these areas and gain a deeper understanding of what happens behind the scenes and is a chance to support the University in a meaningful way.

The rotating placements of the Scheme will allow me to explore different areas of the University, and explore what areas will align closely with my interests and strengths. I would particularly enjoy the challenge of adapting quickly to each area. I have demonstrated initiative in my previous work experience at a local café by suggesting ways to improve how we gain customer feedback – this skill demonstrates my curiosity in new environments and being able to give a new perspective.

During my time on the scheme, I hope to make a positive impact on all projects I support, and I believe that creating relationships and building networks is key to this. As a course representative at university, I built strong relationships both with my fellow students and departmental staff. I have built skills in writing, presentation and communication, but I hope to elevate these further in a real-world setting. Overall, this role is an opportunity to make an impact in a leading Russell Group university, while contributing to grow personally and professionally.