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young post

The submission date of your Student Learning Profile (SLP) might seem like it's forever away (April 2017 is forever away, right?), but don't be lulled into a false sense of security - it might take longer than you think to narrow down your achievements and experiences into something that helps sell you as a desirable student.

Young Post has asked 2015 DSE top scorer Melody Tam Lok-man and Hok Yau Club Student Guidance Centre director Ng Po-shing to offer useful advice on making your SLP stand out from the rest.

1 Know the importance of your SLP

The SLP is a useful reference for universities, and this is never more important than when it comes to interviews, Ng says. It enables interviewers to know more about your quirks and competencies, which was the case when Tam had her university interviews.

"The interview questions were largely based on my SLP. When a professor asked me about my experience at a summer camp, I told them how inspirational it was and how it motivated me to choose their programme," Tam says.

Ng adds if there are two students who obtain the same DSE scores, their SLPs are a vital part of their admission process, as they provide valuable insight into their minds.

2 Give concrete examples

Highlight your personal responsibilities and achievements with concrete examples that are relevant to the programmes you have chosen

for the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (Jupas).

Don't just make it a hard sell about your leadership roles. You might have been head prefect, but this doesn't help your SLP stand out - others may have had similar roles. A lot of applicants only include a standard list of their strengths, talents and extracurricular activities on their SLP, and they aren't original enough to make any sort of lasting impression.

Ng says this is the time to share your personal experiences in your SLP's Self-Account to bulk up your achievements.

Emphasise how unique your experiences are. "To cite doing volunteer work at a child care centre as an example, it certainly shows you're very caring, patient and approachable," Ng says. "But other than your characteristics and strengths, was there a particular child that you offered help? What did the child learn from you? How did this experience motivate you to study social work or education?"

3 Don't be too ambitious in your claims

"Some students include 'reading hundreds of books'. What if an interviewer asks you what knowledge have you gained from reading them? How about writing [about] your favourite book and what you've gained from it? Quality is more important than quantity," Tam says.

4 Keep your SLP Self-Account brief but engaging

The Self-Account is like a cover letter - you use it to highlight your competencies and

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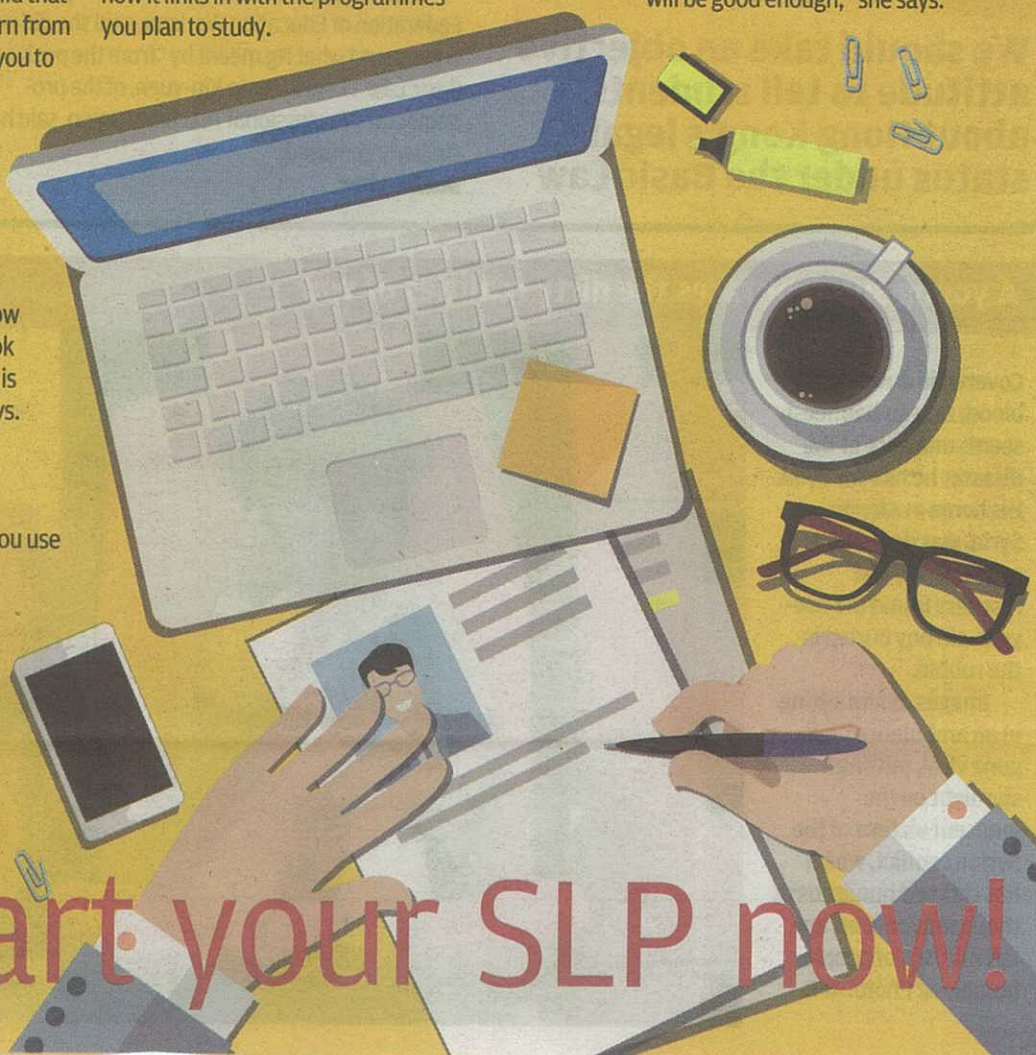
experiences, Ng says. But you have to bear in mind that it's neither a letter nor an autobiography; you shouldn't write a thousand words about everything of interest that has happened to you - 400 words on one page should be enough. One good way to approach the Self-Account is to highlight no more than three valuable experiences. Each paragraph should focus on one experience and what you took away from it. Describe how you developed your skills from it, and how it links in with the programmes you plan to study.

Ng insists a clear and concise Self-Account can make a huge difference to your SLP. A confusing or rambling Self-Account may hinder your chances during an interview.

5 Accuracy matters:

Some applicants won't bother to check simple things like spelling and grammar. A portfolio with many spelling mistakes or contradictions doesn't reflect well on the student.

Tam stresses the importance of proofreading your SLP and asking for feedback. "Without a doubt everyone should proofread their portfolio at least twice. I won't say you should use complex sentences or difficult words because your SLP shouldn't challenge your professors. Make it easy and pleasant to read; simple but accurate English will be good enough," she says.



Is your Student Learning Profile up to scratch? Melody Tam and Ng Po-shing tell **Ben Pang** the top five things you can do to make your SLP stand out from the crowd

Don't delay, start your SLP now!