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Learning at Birmingham

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The University of Birmingham produces independent learners who are capable of formulating their own ideas and engaging critically with their subject.

We encourage our students to challenge and enquire. A key benefit of this approach is that you gain the skills that employers are looking for, such as teamworking, problem solving and time management.

As a Birmingham Foundation Academy student you will be guided and supported to make the transition to becoming an independent and self-motivated learner. You will experience a variety of teaching methods, depending on the academic pathway you follow.

Open all sections

Teaching methods

Lectures

You will listen to and engage with academics who will introduce you to key facts and ideas in your subject. There may be mini-activities and pair work to complete during the session, and follow-up work afterwards. You may wish to take written notes but most lectures are now recorded, so you can access the information afterwards using our virtual learning environment (VLE).

Seminars

You will be encouraged to present and discuss your ideas in small groups and to debate with other students.

Tutorials

Your tutor will provide continuing academic support and guidance on a one-to-one basis.

Workshops

You will engage in problem-solving sessions facilitated by a member of academic staff; these sessions usually involve students working in groups.

Laboratory-based work

You will have a chance to get practical experience and apply the knowledge you have learnt in your lectures to a laboratory setting. Through these sessions you will learn to analyse real-life problems, which will equip you with the practical and analytical skills that are valued by employers. This mainly applies to modules in Engineering and Physical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences and Medical Sciences pathways.

Peer group learning

You may be asked by your tutor to direct a lesson or prepare a presentation with your fellow classmates. By interacting with the lesson material, you will remember the content more effectively.

Learning support

When you enrol at the Foundation Academy, you will be allocated a tutor in the college most appropriate for your pathway, who will provide help and advice with any study related issues, and will help you to monitor and reflect on your progress.

Assessment

Assessment at the Foundation Academy is by a combination of exams, laboratory work, coursework exercises, project work and written assignments, depending on the subject.

Assessment of your English language progress will be made by the University's English for International Students Unit. If you have made satisfactory progress at the end of your first year at the Foundation Academy, and are progressing to an undergraduate degree programme at the University of Birmingham, you will not normally be required to take another English language test.

Progression

Upon successful completion of the appropriate pathway, you will be guaranteed progression to an extensive range of our undergraduate programmes in Arts and Law, Engineering and Physical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Medical Sciences or Social Sciences. Academic and English language progression requirements apply for each programme. For a small number of programmes you will need to pass an interview, workshop or audition stage.

Learning environment

With the latest classroom technology, Birmingham offers an excellent learning experience. Most of our teaching rooms are equipped with touch-screen digital whiteboards and all have WiFi.

Our Main Library is one of the UK's largest academic libraries, with access to over 2.7 million books and periodicals. A further eight libraries and resource centres offer specialist materials for every subject studied at Birmingham. To allow you flexible access, the Main Library opens late, up to midnight during term time. The Library also houses a range of flexible learning and meeting spaces, from rooms for group work to quiet corners for individual study.

Wherever you are on campus, you will be able to log on to the student portal. This is your personalised gateway to the digital campus, connecting you to email, news, online communities and the e-library, which alone provides access to over 16,000 periodicals, databases, websites and other resources.

International opportunities

Your education at Birmingham will prepare you for a career that has no geographical boundaries. With almost 5,000 international students from more than 150 countries, we have one of the largest global student communities in the UK. You will live and study alongside students of all nationalities, enabling you to see the world from a different viewpoint. 27% of our academic staff are non-UK nationals, demonstrating that Birmingham attracts the brightest talent to its academic community from around the globe.

We have longstanding links with universities throughout the world, including membership of Universitas 21, the prestigious consortium of global research-led universities in 16 countries. Once you progress to your undergraduate degree, this network of global partnerships will offer you exciting international opportunities, such as work experience placements and annual summer schools that attract the best students from across the world to engage in an exchange of culture, experience and intellect.

Careers and employability

Our Careers Network offers a range of services that will help you identify and work towards your career goals from the day you arrive at Birmingham. This includes a dedicated careers advice and guidance service delivered by experienced and professionally qualified employability consultants and advisors. Each year our dedicated Employer Liaison Team organises over 120 employer presentations, graduate recruitment fairs and events. We can also develop work experience opportunities for you, greatly enhancing your employability. Additionally, when you enrol here you will have access to >>Progress>>, an online environment to help you manage your study and development of your skills.

Worklink

We provide our students with a recruitment service to connect you to jobs on campus. By quickly registering online, you can find part-time jobs working at the University, from shop assistants to student ambassadors.

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