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Transcript of Law Research programmes

Staff and students at Birmingham Law School discuss our postgraduate research programmes.

Title: **Doctoral programmes in Law (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjlW0hcELMk)**

MD – Doctoral Research Student
When I was training to become a barrister I very quickly realised that it's a very competitive field in which to work. I looked at everyone else around me and the vast majority of them had at the very least an LLM, there were a few that MJur's, MPhil's, so I thought my academic education is not yet complete, I wanted to do something extra to raise myself above the crowd.

Why Birmingham?

Dr Stephen Smith, Director of the Doctoral Research programme
We have a broad range of researchers in any number of important legal areas and that is the fundamental relationship one needs in doing a research degree is to have a good supervisor, have somebody who knows their material, knows their expertise and can impart that to a student.

MD
I wanted to study in a place where I knew I would that I'd get the academic supervision that I needed to do the best PhD that I could do. I already knew certain of the academic staff and I knew that they were of a very high calibre, they were very passionate about their particular field and also the fact that they are very helpful.

Rachel Slater – Doctoral Research Student and Teaching Assistant
The Law School has a range of different facilities that you can use so everything from a specialist library to the e-library that you can access which means that you can always get hold of the latest information and if you do something like refugee law there is always a new case, always something else you need to be looking up and then you really get expert supervision here and that was one of the reasons I decided I wanted to stay was that you know you have an expert and you have someone who can guide your project and help you make use of all these resources here.

Research Community

Dr Stephen Smith
We offer a wide range of opportunities for students here at Birmingham. The first big thing is obviously that the community itself is designed to allow interaction and engagement with other students, so we have for example a postgraduate research seminar series which all students are encouraged to present papers and they receive feedback from other students, members of staff who participate and we also have arranged this year for students to be given feedback about their presentation style in addition to the content, we think that is particularly important for them going forward.

Postgraduate Teaching Assistants

Dr Stephen Smith
PTAships provide a very important resource for students. First off they will provide the student with teaching experience and this will be in a core compulsory module that's incredibly beneficial for their future career as an academic. Most students do not necessarily get the opportunity to teach but teaching is an important part of what an academic does and therefore providing real training and real experience for that prior to starting an academic career will be incredibly beneficial for any student doing so.

Rachel Slater
Your main role as a PTA is teaching small group supervisions, so that's 75 hours of teaching on one of the core modules that's either year one or year two and to go along with that you get a teaching mentor and they are the person you can really go to with any questions about teaching that you have, they will come and observe you and give you tips and feedback and then you also have the module convenor whose job it is to set all the work so if you have any questions about that sort of thing it means you are really well supported, although it might be for many people, as it was for me, your first experience of teaching, you really feel that you're not there doing it all on your own.

The main benefit, particularly for someone like me who is researching something that is not one of the core modules, so I research international law but I teach property law and that means that I will always be able to offer one of the core modules. If you want to go into academia as I do then it means you are able to offer this, you are able to put it on your CV and you have got extensive teaching experience.

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