

Student Profile

Name: Safieh Javadinejad

Course: PhD student in Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Nationality: Iranian



"The course is fantastic. There is no chance back home of sharing my opinions with international students but here I can do that. As I form my opinions from my Iranian background, it is very self-reflective. I feel challenged which is also important. I like the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences. The administrative staff are helpful and keep us well informed about seminars, conferences and courses for PhD researchers. The academic staff like to keep the students close knit. They are willing to chat about the subject out of formal meetings and I generally receive responses to my emails within an hour. There is a social group which I run and it is promoted by the tutors. It makes it feel more like a family than just going to classes every day.

I chose to do my PhD research in the UK as there is also a lot of prestige attached to a UK degree. I want to pursue a career in international education and Birmingham appealed to me as the programme content was perfect for my career path. I also spent my master programme at the Newcastle University which has a collaboration with Birmingham University and my supervisor encouraged me in deciding to study my PhD project at Birmingham.

The Guild building is great and the staff are very helpful. Any issues I have had have always been resolved quickly. The Main Library is fantastic. In Iran, you generally have to buy your text books so it is amazing to have them all in one place to loan. You can also access online journals within 24 hours which is really useful. The second floor of the library (2D zone) is filled with books and computer facilities specific for my course.

I have used some of the new soundproofed booths in the Students' Union which are great for group work. My friends and I are also holding a social festival in there in February and the Union offers a good venue.

I live in the Aitken in the Vale. It is great for postgraduate students as it is quiet with a good computer cluster and study lounge. We have also a games lounge with an Xbox. It is nice and clean and close to the school. The reception staff and senior residents are all helpful and friendly.

Birmingham is a great city, similar to my home town of Esfahan in Iran. Everyone is pretty friendly and it has a lot to offer in terms of art and culture. There is good nightlife with pubs and clubs. The countryside is also beautiful. It is a very close knit community here - a nice and the second biggest city in UK which is near Oxford and London. In my spare time I go running on the town moor and like to cook group dinners for my flatmates.

After I finish the PhD, I plan to stay in Birmingham and work in the University.

I would advise Iranian students thinking of coming to Birmingham to be open minded and don't expect things to be the same as back home. They should embrace the culture instead of constantly comparing it and take advantage of every opportunity they get given."

