

MA Translation Studies (Distance Learning)

This programme is for practising translators and those interested in a career in translation. Proficiency in a language other than English is required, but there are no other restrictions as to language combinations. The central philosophy behind the programme is that you, as a translator, teacher or academic, should be able to apply the linguistic concepts and theories of translation that you encounter during your course of study, to your own situation as a professional of the area. Whether your interest is in the translation of specialised documentation (commercial and technical translation), creative writing (literary translation) or the translation of hybrid text genres such as websites or advertisements, the programme will provide you with a solid foundation to develop your career.

We also offer a full-time programme over one year – for more information, see [Translation Studies MA](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/arts-law-inter/translation-studies.aspx) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/taught/arts-law-inter/translation-studies.aspx>).

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Continuing professional development, distance learning

Study Options: Part time

Duration: 30 months

Start date: February, April, July or October

Contact

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[College of Arts and Law Graduate School \(/schools/caigs/index.aspx\)](/schools/caigs/index.aspx)

[School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies \(/schools/edacs/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/index.aspx)

[Department of Modern Languages \(/schools/lcahm/departments/languages/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/languages/index.aspx)

[Department of English Literature \(/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx)

Details

The programme includes six taught modules and a 15,000-word dissertation or translation project.

You will take six core modules:

- Introduction to Translation Studies and Introduction to Translation Technology
- Contemporary Translation Theories and Translation and Discourse
- Functional Grammar
- Research Methods in Translation and Corpus Linguistics
- Translation and Language Pedagogy or Multimodal Communication
- Professional Contexts of Translation

Please note: The deadline for applications is one calendar month ahead of your desired entry date, to allow adequate time for your application to be processed; see 'how to apply' below.

Why study this course

The main advantage of studying by distance learning is the flexibility. Our distance learning programmes have multiple start dates throughout the year so it gives you the option of choosing when to commence your studies with us – in this case February, April, July or October. You can study at home, in your own time and at your own pace, so you can combine achieving a qualification with work or family commitments.

Career changing

A qualification from the University of Birmingham can be the springboard to promotion with your current employer, the platform from which to launch a new career or simply a way to become more effective in your current role.

Studying by distance learning has the benefit of allowing you to develop your career without having to leave employment. It also means that you can apply new knowledge and insights to your working life while you are still studying; many students choose to tackle work-related topics in their dissertations.

And of course, studying at the University of Birmingham is a rewarding and enriching experience that brings about significant personal development.

Support

Although self-study is central to doing a programme distance learning support is always available from tutors at the University. Our programmes are designed to keep you in touch with fellow students and tutors. The 'virtual learning environment' provides a focal point and helps provide a structure for your learning.

Materials

Our study materials are produced by academic staff in the specialist areas and are available online through the University's 'virtual learning environment'. They contain aims and objectives, reading lists, summaries of readings, activities and commentaries, discussion and reflection tasks, indexes and details of assignments required. On joining you are provided with a course handbook that introduces you to the team, provides details of their roles and expertise and gives all the contact information you will need including email addresses so that if you have any difficulties or questions you will know who to contact for help and guidance.

Personal tutors

In addition to the full-time Birmingham based tutors you will be assigned a personal tutor. Personal tutors are available to answer questions regarding the content of your programme, and also to give advice and provide clarification if you don't understand something, for example what an assignment question demands.

Modules

You will study five core modules:

Introduction to Translation Studies and Introduction to Translation Technology

- **Introduction to Translation Studies.** This introduces key concepts in the theory and practice of translation. It concentrates on general issues that arise when a text is rendered into another language. The process and product of translation are considered in relation to social and cultural contexts. The theoretical background is exemplified by a variety of translated texts from different languages.
- **Introduction to Translation Technology.** This will familiarise you with the technology available to enhance the day-to-day work of translators. You will learn both theoretical and practical aspects of translation memories and machine translation, as well as discovering the possibilities for online terminological and text resources exploitation. This, combined with a clear view of the role of translation in the localisation industry, will equip you with the tools to work in the world of language services.

Contemporary Translation Theories and Translation and Discourse

- **Contemporary Translation Theories.** This course looks at current issues in translation theory. The study of translation as a social practice takes into consideration the role of the translator in the transmission of identities, in shaping images of communities and in the spread of political and religious ideologies. Activities in this unit are designed to encourage participants to explore the possibilities open to the translator as mediator and to encourage comparative studies in areas like: identity construction; post-colonialism, gender and sexuality; language policy among others.
- **Translation and Discourse.** This course will consider the problems which face a translator at the level of discourse when s/he attempts to render a text into another discursive community. We will look at features of the linguistic structure of English above the sentence to see what constraints the language presents to a translator. We will examine a range of literary and non-literary text types to see what kinds of options are forced on the translator by differences between two linguistic systems.

Understanding Text (Functional Grammar)

The module introduces the key elements of the influential linguistic theory known as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), an approach developed since the 1960s by the British-born, Australian linguist, Michael Halliday and his colleagues. Under this approach, language is analysed as a form of social interaction, and the grammatical description of the language is formulated so as to account for its communicative functionality within particular social and cultural contexts. This will focus on how systemic linguistics can be applied to a variety of text analysis tasks relevant to different fields such as language and literacy teaching, translation studies, English for special purposes, the language of classroom interaction, media and cultural studies, and critical discourse analysis.

Research Methods in Translation and Corpus Linguistics

- **Research Methods.** This compulsory half module examines current research methods in translation studies. The main aim of this module is to show you the different types of research projects that can be undertaken within the field of Translation Studies. We will look at ways of examining and comparing source and target texts, and we will show how both qualitative and quantitative comparisons can provide important insights into the question of quality control in translation. We will spend time looking at the use of introspection and protocols by practising translators. In addition, we will look at some of the technical tools available to, and used by, translators.
- **Corpus Linguistics.** The University of Birmingham has a world-wide reputation for work in corpus linguistics – a broad methodology for analyzing large collections of texts. The primary aim of this module is to give you the skills to carry out your own corpus-based studies. As such, this module has a very practical hands-on focus. To introduce you to the core methods in corpus linguistics we use BNCweb, an easy to use online interface to the British National Corpus. Each unit is accompanied by online videos demonstrating how to carry out the analyses, practical hands-on tasks with detailed commentaries, and extension activities for you to gain further practice. The module also introduces you to techniques and tools for constructing and analyzing your own 'DIY' corpus, and discusses how corpora can be used in language teaching.

Options: Translation and Language Pedagogy or Multimodal Communication

- **Translation and Language Pedagogy.** This course first introduces you to the approaches and methods adopted in language teaching as part of the curricular design of translator training programmes. It then examines the approaches and methods used in translation teaching as part of the curricular design of modern language degrees. The main objective of the course is to make you appreciate the importance of language-enhancement activities in the development of translator competences as well as the relevance of translating for achieving language proficiency. We will therefore consider language and translation pedagogy as being closely related in the formation of multilingual language professionals.
- **Multimodal Communication.** The aim of this module is to provide an overview of the major issues in the area of Multimodal Communication. Particular reference will be made to current social semiotic theories that take into consideration a diversity of communicative modes – language, image, music, sound and gesture – and to how these theories relate to the concerns of teachers and researchers in Applied Linguistics. Gesture and body language, for example, are discussed in relation to spoken discourse, and photography, visual design, colour, typography and layout are considered in relation to written discourse.

Professional Contexts of Translation

This module explores the varied function of roles which translation performs in society. The aim is to gain an understanding of how translation/interpretation and translators/interpreters work in the 'real world'. The module considers translation in various professional contexts, including legal translation, medical translation, translation in the media (subtitling in TV and film industry). The module provides an insight into the role and status of translators in each of these contexts.

Fees and funding

Fees for entry in February or April 2015 are as follows:

- £940 per module
- £2,820 for the dissertation

Fees for entry in July or October 2015 are as follows:

- £970 per module
- £2,910 for the dissertation

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about **fees for international students** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx>)

Learn more about [fees and funding \(/postgraduate/pgt-fees/fees.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/fees.aspx)

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx).

Entry requirements

We usually ask for a good Honours degree, or overseas equivalent. However, when considering your application, we always look at your qualifications and work experience as well as your academic credentials. For this reason, it is important to provide details of any current and/or previous employment in your application; it is always helpful to include a current CV but we would ask you to complete the relevant sections of the application form as well.

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)

How to apply

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL003.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL003.htm)

Related news and events

[Three strategies for success \(/research/activity/bct/events/2013/baldus-translation-profession.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bct/events/2013/baldus-translation-profession.aspx)

[What's the future for publishing literary translations? \(/research/activity/bct/events/2013/boutle-translation-profession.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bct/events/2013/boutle-translation-profession.aspx)

[Succeeding as a freelance translator \(/research/activity/bct/events/2013/charlston-translation-profession.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bct/events/2013/charlston-translation-profession.aspx)

[An introduction to the Institute of Translation & Interpreting \(/research/activity/bct/events/2014/ewens-translation-profession.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bct/events/2014/ewens-translation-profession.aspx)

[Translating the old and the new: how long does a translation last? \(/research/activity/bct/events/2014/parks-translation-profession.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bct/events/2014/parks-translation-profession.aspx)

Learning and teaching

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

- [video transcript \(/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/calgs/distance-learning.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/calgs/distance-learning.aspx)

Although much of the course is delivered through our 'virtual learning environment,' support is always available. You will have a personal tutor and dissertation supervisor to guide you and answer any questions, and you have access to a wide range of online resources too.

You also have the opportunity to meet other students and academic staff through online chats and discussion forums.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the [Academic Writing Advisory Service \(AWAS\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx>) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the [English for International Students Unit \(EISU\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx>).

Related research

- [Birmingham Centre for Translation \(/research/activity/bct/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/index.aspx)

Related staff

[Dr Nicholas Groom \(/staff/profiles/elal/groom-nicholas.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/elal/groom-nicholas.aspx)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

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Over the last five years, over 95% of English postgraduates have been in work and/or further study six months after graduation.

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