Distance learning with the College of Arts and Law

What can I expect from research by distance learning?

A distance learning PhD or MA by Research allows you to undertake the majority of your research at an off campus location. You are therefore able to do the research required for your degree in a location of your choosing, making just one visit to the University per full year of study.

Why study by distance learning?

The main advantage of studying by distance learning is the flexibility. Potential financial and practical implications of moving closer to our Birmingham campus could mean distance learning is a more feasible option and could allow you to combine study with other commitments, including work and family. Similarly, your research may be related to your area of residence, making a move detrimental to your capacity to carry out the research.

Is the distance learning route for you?

The distance learning route is not for everyone. You will need a very clear idea of your project, as well as the capacity to motivate yourself. Undertaking research off campus can sometimes be quite isolating, so the ability to seek out connections proactively from within relevant research communities is important. This route is well-suited to those who have a research project associated with their work or particular interests and where resources are available locally to support your research, such as appropriate archives and data collections.

Can I study by distance learning in the UK?

Distance learning courses can be undertaken from anywhere in the world, including the UK. However, it is worth noting that supervisory sessions for distance learning students will take place via audiovisual communications, such as Skype or Facetime, rather than in person. While this 21st Century approach can be effective, for those applicants who would prefer to visit the campus for face-to-face meetings with their supervisor, the traditional part-time study option would be more appropriate.

What is the cost of doing an MA by Research or PhD by distance learning?

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for the distance learning PhD and MA by Research are the same as for our standard on-campus degrees (for the 2015/16 academic session, these will be: Home/EU students - £4,052 full-time, £2,026 part-time; International students - £13,195 full-time, £6,597.50 part-time*) but include:

- Economy flights to and from the UK for the required campus visits (one per full year of study)
- Accommodation at the University for the required campus visits
- Economy flights to and from the UK at the end of the study period for the three-day PhD viva examination
- Accommodation at the University for the three-day viva examination

* Music international fees are - £14,550 full-time, £7,275 part-time.

How will I be supported?

You will receive the same level of support and supervision as on-campus students. The only difference is that supervisory sessions will take place via audio and visual communication services such as Skype or Facetime, rather than in person.

When would I start?

We encourage you to begin your studies in the month of September so that you can attend an induction along with other candidates beginning their research at the same time as you. However, other arrangements may be possible with agreement from your supervisor.

How often will I need to be on campus?*

Although you may be able to undertake the majority of your study at an off campus location, you will be fully funded to make one visit to the University per full year of study (every year for full-time students and every other year for part-time students). This visit is compulsory, forming a crucial aspect of your studies, and it is two weeks long for distance learning PhD students and one week long for distance learning MA by Research students.

Your first visit will enable you to meet your supervisory team, undertake intensive research skills training and make a start on your studies. In subsequent years you will then be invited to attend the University 'in-person' meetings giving you the opportunity to interact with other doctoral students both socially and academically, to undertake important progress meetings and carry out necessary training. You will also generally be required to be present on campus for your viva voce.

** Please note: this does not apply to the* ***PhD in English Language and Applied Linguistics (/postgraduate/courses/research/english/applied-linguistics.aspx)*** . **(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/research/english/applied-linguistics.aspx#CourseOverviewTab)**

Am I eligible?

Before we can offer you a place it is important that you have agreement from your potential supervisor and that they are satisfied that you will be able to undertake the MA by Research or PhD on an off campus basis. This may mean that slightly different entry requirements apply, such as English language and more extensive research skills training. Agreements will also need to be reached regarding some of the more practical aspects of undertaking research in this way (for example attendance requirements, suitability of the chosen residency etc). It is important that arrangements are discussed early so that all parties involved know what to expect and to ensure you are able to successfully complete your studies.

Distance learning student mentors

Due to the unique concerns of distance learning students, we have appointed three student mentors, all distance learning Doctoral-Level Research students, who are available to answer any questions you may have, and to share their experience of studying via distance learning with the University of Birmingham. **Find out more about Annette, Ghazala and Joshua (including contact details) on our Graduate School website (/schools/calgs/distancelearning/distance-learning-mentors.aspx)** .

© University of Birmingham 2015