

## MA Translation Studies

Our Translation Studies MA is designed for people who would like to start a career as professional translators, for translators who would like to further develop their skills, or for anyone who is interested in translation and cross-cultural communication as an area of research. Translation practice is at the heart of the programme and you will undertake extensive practical and specialised translation in Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese or Russian\*. The programme offers training in state-of-the-art translation technology and the opportunity to study another foreign language at beginners, intermediate or advanced level. There is a wide range of optional modules focusing on theory and methodology, meaning that this MA also provides excellent preparation for further study at PhD level.

Our MA in Translation Studies has been awarded membership of the **European Master's in Translation (EMT)** ([http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/index_en.htm)); a network of university programmes offering high-quality level training for translators. In order to be admitted, universities have to prove that their translator training programme covers **six key competences** ([http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/network/documents/emt\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/network/documents/emt_factsheet_en.pdf)) needed for translation jobs in international institutions and in the field of multilingual communication, all of which this programme provides.

We also offer a distance learning programme over 2.5 years – for more information, see **Translation Studies MA by distance learning** (<http://postgraduate/courses/distance/english/translation-studies.aspx>).

\*Please note: because practical translation modules are a compulsory part of the programme, you must clearly specify your desired language pair(s) and directionality in your application, at the top of your 'personal statement' (see also 'Entry requirements' under the 'Course details' tab).

**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:** Taught

**Study Options:** Full time, part time

**Duration:** 12 months full-time; 24 months part-time

**Start date:** September

### Contact

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**Department of Modern Languages: French Studies** ([/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx](http://schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx))

**Department of Modern Languages: German Studies** ([/schools/lcahm/departments/german/index.aspx](http://schools/lcahm/departments/german/index.aspx))

**Department of Modern Languages: Hispanic Studies** ([/schools/lcahm/departments/hispanic/index.aspx](http://schools/lcahm/departments/hispanic/index.aspx))

**Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics** ([/schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/index.aspx](http://schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/index.aspx))

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

**Department of Modern Languages: Italian Studies** ([/schools/lcahm/departments/italian/index.aspx](http://schools/lcahm/departments/italian/index.aspx))

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### Details



The Translation Studies MA is an interdisciplinary degree offered between the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of English. Accredited by the **EMT Network** ([http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/index_en.htm)), this programme is designed to:

- Encourage reflective practice in translation
- Familiarise you with state-of-the-art technological tools currently used in the translation industry and with the professional environment in which translators operate
- Provide you with the opportunity to carry out extensive practical translation work with the guidance of experienced tutors so as to develop skills in line with current professional practice

- Enable you to develop a sophisticated understanding of the most up-to-date concepts and theories of the discipline of translation studies
- Develop a critical understanding of the social constraints on and consequences of translation, and the differing contexts of translation throughout the world
- Encourage an understanding of how English and other languages work and how they may usefully be analysed, in particular with reference to its grammar, lexis and discourse, and how such an analysis may benefit you as a translator
- Provide a practical understanding of established techniques of research and enquiry used to created and interpret knowledge in the discipline, so as to enable you

to undertake further research, either as part of your future professional career or by enrolling for a research degree.

The programme is available to students who are proficient in English and one of the following languages: Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese or Russian. (For further details, please see 'entry requirements' below).

The core programme content offers ample opportunity for translation practice. You will study four core modules [full descriptions available below]:

- Introduction to Translation
- Practical Translation (language combinations as above)
- Specialised Translation (language combinations as above)
- Research Methods

You will also complete a Translation Studies dissertation or an Extended Translation Project (15,000 words).

You will also choose three modules from a range of options [see 'Modules', below].

In addition, there are two non-assessed components in the programme:

- All students will take a short course – Introduction to the Bank of English – which introduces you to the 400 million-word Cobuild Bank of English corpus, an invaluable collection of authentic language data against which theory, intuition and pedagogic materials can be measured
- You may also take a course in Academic Writing. Those whose first language is not English are particularly encouraged to follow this course.

## Why study this course

The programme features a balance of theory and practice which provides an ideal foundation both for careers in the translation industry or for further study in translation:

"I got acquainted with the subject of translation during my undergraduate degree. When I graduated, I decided to pursue a Masters in translation. I was looking for a university that would offer a balance between theory and practice. This was one of the factors that contributed in choosing University of Birmingham. The practical translation modules offered in the MA Translation Studies helped me improve my skills. I had the chance to get hands-on experience, while I got a better understanding of the subject of translation by discussing theoretical issues independently, but also directly related to the translations I produced."

### Myrto-Chara Bartatila

*Student, MA Translation Studies 2013-14*

In addition, on successful completion of the programme, you will have knowledge and understanding of:

- The translation profession, and what is expected from professional translators in the job market
- Translation quality assessment, and the process of revision and editing that is part of the professional translator's work
- How computer-aided translation tools work
- Current theoretical issues and concepts in translation
- The impact of socio-cultural contexts on language and on translation practice
- Issues raised by translation between English and other languages
- Working as a team in order to deliver work of a professional standard and developing strategies for documentary and terminological research
- Current issues, methods and practices in carrying out research in translation.

## Modules

You will study four core modules:

### Introduction to Translation

This module introduces the most significant theoretical and practical aspects of translation, focusing on translation as a profession and in relation to social and cultural contexts. It is designed to challenge your ideas of what a translation is or should be and to think creatively and responsibly about your professional practice as translators.

### Practical Translation

This module aims to provide you with solid training in translating in your chosen language pair. You will learn how to undertake detailed, critical analysis of texts in the source language and to identify appropriate translation strategies and procedures. You will work on a range of general text-types (such as current affairs), practising techniques such as rephrasing, restructuring and post-editing. You will also learn how to use and integrate a range of software and translator resources into your assignments in a manner which reflects professional practice (e.g. text processing, spell and grammar check, mono- and bilingual dictionaries, internet resources such as terminology banks and parallel texts). You will have the opportunity to practise translation in both directions.

### Specialised Translation

This module will focus on the translation of semi-specialised texts from areas such as technology, business, literature, science, social science, advertising, tourism and law. You will practise techniques such as glossary-building, drafting, summarising, revising, editing and proofreading. The module will also provide guidance on information sources and research relevant to semi-specialised translation in your chosen language pair. You will have the opportunity to practise translation in both directions.

### Research Methods

This module trains you in the methods and approaches to research in Applied Linguistics in general, with sessions focusing specifically on Translation Research.

You will also choose three optional modules from a range which includes:

### Translation Technology

This module is designed to provide you with hands-on experience of a range of technologies applied to the study and practice of translation. Topics include: using the Internet to search for terminology and comparable and parallel texts; using translation forums and other specialised translation resources / websites; using translation memories; localisation tools; machine translation; multilingual corpus analysis as a translation aid / resource in translation research; and keystroke logging as a translation research tool.

### Translation in a Professional Context

The aim of this module is to simulate a realistic professional environment for you to engage in an actual translation project by working in groups and setting up your own translation company. You will be asked to meet regularly to create the company, along with a website, email address, etc. You will then contact a client, negotiate with them, secure a translation commission and deliver a translation. Note that the quality of the translation you will produce will not be assessed, but you will need to reflect

on the translation process in your assessment.

You will attend seminars about different aspects of the translation profession in addition to practical workshops where you will get hands-on experience. Topics covered will include: overview of languages and services industry; professional organisations; working as a freelance/in-house translator; setting up a translation company; client relations; conceptual and terminological research; translation (and localisation) of a wide range of texts, such as websites, advertisements, corporate annual reports and official and institutional documents; and quality control.

### Contemporary Translation Theory

This module considers the problems faced by translators from a theoretical point of view. It examines current theoretical thinking in the field of Translation Studies, including cultural theories, sociological theories, political approaches, among others. The module emphasises the role and position of translation (and translators) in processes of identity construction, language/cultural planning, and in the spread of political and religious ideologies.

Topics covered will include: translation as difference; polysystem theory and lesser-translated languages; intersemiotic translation; translation and gender; translation and relevance theory; translation and globalisation; and news translation.

### Translation and Literary Markets

This module will encourage you to investigate and reflect upon the function of the translated text as a cultural product in modern and contemporary book markets. It will encompass theoretical approaches such as systems theory, sociology of translation and reception studies, and will trace the development of modern notions of 'world literature' from the eighteenth century onwards. You will apply this framework to a range of topics such as: the presence of translated literature in global translation markets and in the British and European publishing sectors; the history and current functioning of international world literature series' such as Penguin Classics and Oxford World's Classics; and practices of reviewing translations in the mainstream cultural press.

### Corpus Linguistics for Translators

The module is designed to offer you a comprehensive conceptual understanding of corpus linguistics as a research methodology as well as practical understanding of the use of corpora and corpus-analysis tools both as research methods and as translation aids. Hands on sessions will familiarise students with state-of-the-art technology to compile translational corpora and to use such corpora in order to analyze language and find answers to translation problems and to develop resources.

### Beginners/Intermediate/Advanced Language

Languages available include: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Polish and Spanish. **Please note – if you are interested in this option, please contact the programme convenors as early as possible as you will need to register for these modules before the start of the academic year.**

### Practical Translation

This can be taken in an additional language to that chosen for your core module; module description as above.

### Specialised Translation

This can be taken in an additional language to that chosen for your core module; module description as above.

### Intercultural Communication

In today's 'global world', it is necessary to communicate successfully across cultural boundaries of languages, styles and values. The aim of this module is to provide an overview of the major issues in the area of Intercultural Communication, with particular reference to developments in the last 25 years. In attempting to address such questions, we will hope to draw upon the variety of students' cultural backgrounds as a basis for discussion and contrastive analysis. There will be some scope for negotiating content in response to students' interests, but some of the topics we might explore include: culture: definitions and dimensions; stereotyping the other (and the self?); culture and communication; identity and 'cultures within cultures'; intercultural mediation; and language(s), discourse(s) and globalisation(s).

### Describing Language

This module provides a grounding in the analysis of the lexis and grammar of English. You will be introduced to essential concepts and terminology in the field, and gain practice in analysing naturally-occurring language using the models (NB Systemic-Functional Grammar) discussed. There is some emphasis on the application of such analysis to the study of language in social context.

### Discourse, Culture and Communication

This module explores the interaction between discourse and 'culture'. Various definitions of 'culture' are outlined in relation to other theoretical concepts (e.g. ideology), and you will be introduced to models of analysis for spoken and written discourse. These models are applied to sample texts, with a view to examining issues and problems of communication within and across cultural boundaries. You will be encouraged to explore the relevance of approaches to discourse and 'culture' to professional contexts.

*Please note that availability of optional modules may vary from year to year.*

## Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home/EU: £6,840 full-time; £3,420 part-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

For part-time students, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments.

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

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

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

## Entry requirements

The language **into which** you intend to translate should be the language in which you have mother tongue competence, or alternatively your language of habitual use. In the latter case, you may be asked to provide evidence of proficiency.

It will normally be necessary to have training to degree level in the language(s) **from which** you intend to translate. If you do not hold a degree in your 'second' language, you may be asked to provide other evidence of proficiency.

Please clearly state in your application (at the top of your 'Personal Statement'): [a] which language pair(s) you expect to use for practical translation modules, **and** [b] the direction in which you intend to work. For example: "English to French", "Spanish to English", "English to Chinese", etc.

Language pairings we can accommodate are:

- English to Mandarin **but not** Mandarin to English
- French to English **and** English to French
- Italian to English **and** English to Italian
- Russian to English **and** English to Russian
- Spanish to English **and** English to Spanish
- Portuguese to English **and** English to Portuguese
- German to English **and** English to German
- English to Arabic **and** Arabic to English
- English to Greek **and** Greek to English
- English to Catalan **and** Catalan to English

## International students

### Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(/International/students/country/index.aspx\)](/International/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

## 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 \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL002.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL002.htm)

## Related news and events

[BCT at IATIS 2015 \(/research/activity/bct/news/2014/iatis-2015.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/news/2014/iatis-2015.aspx)

[Birmingham Centre for Translation strengthens university's engagement with Brazil \(/research/activity/bct/news/2014/translation-studies-brazil.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/news/2014/translation-studies-brazil.aspx)

[MA Translation Studies member of the EMT network \(/research/activity/bct/news/2014/emt-network.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/news/2014/emt-network.aspx)

[Books without borders \(/research/activity/bct/news/2014/books-without-borders-podcast.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/news/2014/books-without-borders-podcast.aspx)

[Succeeding as a freelance translator \(/research/activity/bct/news/2014/charlston-podcast.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/news/2014/charlston-podcast.aspx)

## Learning and teaching

All of our students are offered the opportunity to work in small groups with tutors and to receive training in the use of state-of-the art translation technology.

As a Translation Studies student, you will become part of the [Birmingham Centre for Translation \(BCT\) \(/research/activity/bct/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/index.aspx), which brings together staff and students from across the College of Arts and Law with research and teaching interests in Translation Studies.

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 Hilary Brown \(/staff/profiles/german/brown-hilary.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/german/brown-hilary.aspx)

[Dr Patricia Odber de Baubeta \(/staff/profiles/hispanic/odber-patricia.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/hispanic/odber-patricia.aspx)

[Dr Emma Tyler \(/staff/profiles/french/tyler-emma.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/french/tyler-emma.aspx)

[Dr Angela Kershaw \(/staff/profiles/french/kershaw-angela.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/french/kershaw-angela.aspx)

[Dr Elisenda Marcer Cortés \(/staff/profiles/hispanic/marcer-elisenda.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/hispanic/marcer-elisenda.aspx)

[Dr Natalia Rulyova \(/staff/profiles/russian/rulyova-natalia.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/russian/rulyova-natalia.aspx)

[Robert Holland \(/staff/profiles/elal/holland-robert.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/elal/holland-robert.aspx)

[Xiaolong Tang \(/staff/profiles/cml/tang-xiaolong.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/cml/tang-xiaolong.aspx)

[Clelia Boscolo \(/staff/profiles/italian/boscolo-clelia.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/italian/boscolo-clelia.aspx)

[Dr Anissa Daoudi \(/staff/profiles/cml/daoudi-anissa.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/cml/daoudi-anissa.aspx)

## Employability

Graduates of the MA in Translation Studies go on to a variety of **interesting careers** (</research/activity/bct/postgraduate/life.aspx>), from working as translators and project managers for major language service providers, to running their own translation companies, or staying on in Birmingham to do doctoral research.

This programme will enable you to develop a wide range of skills and attributes which will be vital in your future career. In particular, it will give you the ability to:

- Analyse and translate samples of English and other languages, using appropriate methods
- Retrieve information, terminology and specialised-knowledge from a range of sources, and use them in their translation practice
- Communicate effectively in written academic English and use appropriate IT skills, including a range of computer-aided translation tools
- Interact effectively in a group
- Plan work effectively, with appropriate time-management skills
- Carry out research in a selected area, both individually and in teams, and report that research appropriately.

“ It was very inspiring to attend talks given by successful translators in academia, publishing and European institutions. ”

**Christa Parrish**  
Owner of Christa Translations



[\(/research/activity/bct/postgraduate/life.aspx\)](/research/activity/bct/postgraduate/life.aspx)

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.

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