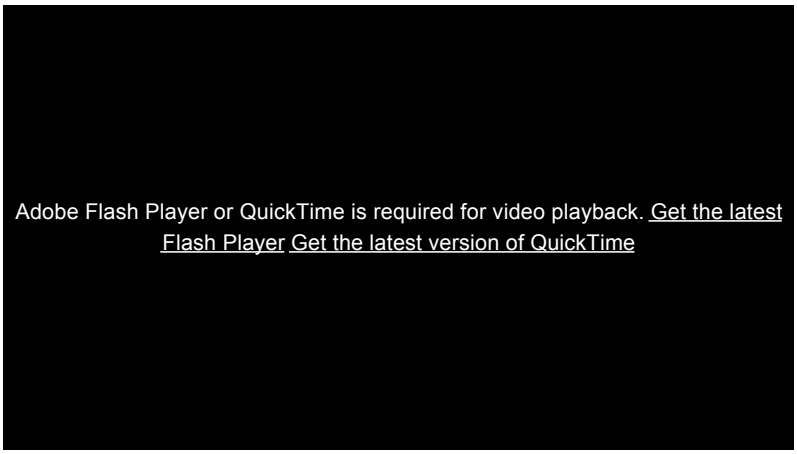
University of Birmingham

Research by distance learning



The University of Birmingham's College of Arts and Law now offers MA by Research and PhD courses by distance learning across all its **subject areas (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/research/artslawlisting.aspx)** .

Completing a research degree by distance learning allows you to access the world-renowned academic resources of the University of Birmingham's College of Arts and Law, wherever you are in the world.

You may wish to work towards a formal qualification to help develop your career, without having to leave employment; studying towards a research degree by distance learning enables you to apply new insights to your working life while you are still studying, and many students choose to tackle work-related topics in their theses. Your family commitments may also dictate that studying from home is preferable to the emotional and financial upheaval of relocating or commuting to a university campus.

Or perhaps your subject is only be accessible in a certain region, far from traditional academic institutions; the expert guidance and academic support that supervisors can provide is invaluable when completing an advanced research degrees.

In all cases, the University of Birmingham's College of Arts and Law distance learning research programmes provide you with the flexibility to tailor your studies to your personal and academic needs, under the guidance of our distinguished academics. Our course fees also include flights and accommodation for an annual visit to our Birmingham campus which, alongside regular supervisory sessions over Skype, represents a flexible alternative to the traditional method of undertaking a research degree.

Distance learning mentors

If you wish to gain an insight into the demands of life as a distance learning student or ask any other questions you might have, our distance learning mentors are available to help. Annette, Ghazala and Joshua are all distance learning PhD students, and very happy to share their experiences with you.

- **Contact our distance learning mentors (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/calgs/distancelearning/distance-learning-mentors.aspx)**

Frequently asked questions

Open all sections

Is distance learning for me?

Although you will be well-supported throughout your course, the distance learning route for research degrees has unique challenges and specific requirements. You have to have a very clear idea of your project, be able to motivate yourself and dedicate regular time to your studies. Studying towards a research degree off campus will involve a significant amount of independent study, so the ability to proactively seek out connections 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, but you will also have ample opportunities to interact with your tutors and peers via online discussion forums, social media and email, as well as attending the compulsory annual visit.

How will I be supported?

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

Do I need to come to Birmingham at all?

Although you may be able to undertake the majority of your study at an off campus location, you will be required to visit the University three times during your period of study, for either one week or two weeks, depending on the level of course you are undertaking. Flights and accommodation for these visits are paid from the standard course fees.

Your initial visit will enable you to meet your supervisory team, undertake intensive research skills training and make a start on your research. If studying towards a PhD, you will then be invited to attend the University for 'in-person' meetings which give you the opportunity to interact with other doctoral students both socially and academically, undertake important progress meetings and carry out further training, and conduct intensive work on your research. You will also generally be required to be present on campus for your viva voce, which is also funded from course fees.

Can I study by distance learning in the UK?

Yes - our 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 we have found that these 21st Century methods have proved popular, for those applicants who would prefer to visit the campus for face-to-face meetings with their supervisor, the traditional part-time study option may be more appropriate.

How do I apply?

Visit the relevant coursefinder page (see link below) and click the 'apply now' button on the right hand side of the page.

As part of the application process, we will ask you to provide evidence to demonstrate that you have the time, commitment, facilities and experience to study for a PhD by distance learning. Please be prepared to provide evidence, and details, of the following:

- Examples of your postgraduate research experience and ability to work independently e.g. papers/presentations at professional and academic conferences or publications in professional journals or previous completion of an independent research project, etc.
- Full reasons (academic and personal) for registering for the distance learning mode of study rather than by standard full or part-time on-campus options. In particular, how you will be able to carry out your project in your chosen location.
- Access to local library facilities (where needed)
- Access to IT facilities
- Access to communications, including e-mail, and audiovisual communication media e.g. Skype and Facetime
- Access to facilities to support any study-related disability (where appropriate)

- Please visit the **course finder (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/research/artslawlisting.aspx)** for a full list of subject areas available to study via distance mode.
- *N.B Our Applied Linguistics PhD via distance mode operates in a slightly different way. Please visit the* ***course finder page (/postgraduate/courses/research/english/applied-linguistics.aspx)*** *directly for information on this course.*

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