

Studying Civil Engineering - frequently asked questions

The application process

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How do I apply?

If you are applying to more than one degree programme and/or University in the UK you must apply through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). We cannot supply you with application forms. The next step is for you to contact UCAS to obtain an application form or to find out how you can apply electronically or on-line. Visit the [UCAS website \(http://wwwucas.ac.uk\)](http://wwwucas.ac.uk) for further details.

If you are interested in applying solely to Civil Engineering at the University of Birmingham then you may be able to apply to us using a 'Direct Entry' form. If you think this might apply to you then please contact us for further information.

Where can I find more information about a career as a civil engineer?

To learn more about the opportunities in civil engineering visit the [website of the Institution of Civil Engineers \(http://www.ice.org.uk/Education/Students---Young-Learners\)](http://www.ice.org.uk/Education/Students---Young-Learners) – specifically their pages of careers information for students aged 16+.

Here you will find some answers to questions you might have such as: What's it about? What exactly would you do as a civil engineer? Is the work well paid? How you can contribute to building a better world? How to take the first steps towards becoming a civil engineer?

Visiting the University

When can I visit the University?

When you apply through UCAS to Civil Engineering at Birmingham, we may invite you to the University for an 'Applicant Visit Day', during which you will attend talks on our degree programmes and experience life as a student of the School of Civil Engineering. There will also be an opportunity to see the campus and engineering facilities.

You can also book a [guided tour of the University campus \(undergraduate/visit/campus-tours.aspx\)](#) through the University Student Recruitment team.

Entry qualification

Are my A Levels suitable for a Civil Engineering degree?

We require 3 A-Levels for entry to all Civil Engineering degree programmes. You must be studying Maths at A-Level and we will accept any two additional A-Levels except General Studies or Critical Thinking. Our offer is in the range AAA - AAB at A Level. If you are not doing A Level Maths then you can start in our Engineering Foundation Year.

Do you require A-Level Maths?

We require all students entering the first year of a civil engineering degree programme to have A-Level maths, or the equivalent level of mathematics in other qualifications.

Do you require A-Level Physics?

We do not require Physics at A-level for entry to our civil engineering degree programmes (although it is always an advantage when studying engineering), however, if you are not studying Physics at A-Level we require you to have achieved a C Grade in GCSE Physics or Double Science.

Do you accept vocational A Levels?

We accept suitable vocational A-Levels, e.g. AVCE double award (Engineering). All applicants entering the first year of civil engineering must have a knowledge of mathematics equivalent to A-Level standard, therefore, you must have covered a substantial portion of the A-Level Maths syllabus within these vocational A-Levels or to be doing A Level Maths in addition to the vocational A Levels. You might be required to take a maths diagnostic test in order for us to establish whether you have sufficient maths knowledge for entry to the first year of a civil engineering degree. Alternatively, you could start in our Engineering Foundation Year, which is a multidisciplinary year for students who want to do engineering but do not have sufficient mathematics knowledge for direct entry to the first year.

Will you accept a BTEC National Diploma (in Civil Engineering) for entry to first year?

Yes. See the admissions tab for further information.

Will you accept a BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC) (in Civil Engineering) for entry to first year?

Yes. See the admissions tab for further information.

Will you accept a BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC) (in Civil Engineering) for direct entry to second year?

No.

Do you accept ACCESS courses?

We do accept applications from students taking suitable Access to ENGINEERING, although each application will be considered on an individual basis.

Also see the entry requirements for our Engineering Foundation Year.

Do you accept UK International Foundation courses?

We do accept applications from students taking suitable International Foundation Courses.

What is the difference between MEng and BEng Civil Engineering degrees?

BEng degrees are 3 years in length and MEng degrees are 4 years in length. At Birmingham, the first two years of the BEng and MEng degrees are identical so you only have to make the decision at the end of your second year. However, to be offered the chance to do a MEng degree you must have achieved a suitable level of academic attainment.

BEng is great if you decide upon a specialism for your Masters, e.g. Water Resources or Geotechnics. This gives you the choice for where you might like to take your further learning. Many students choose BEng also because they wish to work in an industry where Chartered Engineer status is less important for their career prospects.

MEng is usually chosen by students who wish to go on to graduate recruitment schemes, and provides an integrated Masters-level education for immediate recognition by the relevant Engineering institutions.

How do I become a chartered civil engineer and should I do the BEng or MEng?

To become a Chartered Engineer you will need to demonstrate that you have the appropriate competence and commitment of an engineering professional. There are 3 steps in this process:

- Getting the appropriate experience and training after completing your degree
- The Professional Review
- Academic qualifications

Further details can be found on the [Engineering Council UK website \(http://www.engc.org.uk/\)](http://www.engc.org.uk/).

Our BEng degrees give you the education needed for the alternative Incorporated Engineer professional status. For Chartered Engineer status, a minimum of Masters-level education (or 4 years' worth) is usually needed.

Scholarships and industrial sponsorship

Do you offer scholarships?

The School does offer [scholarships to both UK and overseas students. \(/schools/civil-engineering/undergraduate/scholarships/index.aspx\)](http://schools/civil-engineering/undergraduate/scholarships/index.aspx) Please follow the link to find further information.

Do you offer industrial sponsorship?

The School of Civil Engineering has an [Industrial Sponsorship scheme called RESPECT \(/schools/civil-engineering/undergraduate/industry-sponsorship.aspx\)](http://schools/civil-engineering/undergraduate/industry-sponsorship.aspx). We have 15 active industrial members who sponsor up to 50 students at any one time.

Gap years

I want to take a gap year before starting university; do I still apply to universities now?

Yes, you apply through the UCAS system now but tick the box for 'deferred entry'.

We are very supportive of people taking gap years and will be happy to receive your deferred application.

Can you give me some information on spending a Year in Industry during my gap year?

There are many Civil Engineering companies that have gap year schemes, most of which can be accessed through the 'Year in Industry' organisation, which will help you to organise a placement during your Gap Year. Visit the [Year in Industry website \(http://www.yini.org.uk/\)](http://www.yini.org.uk/) for further information.

International study

Can I study abroad during my Civil Engineering degree?

Yes you can if you choose our MEng Degree 'Civil Engineering (International Study)' – UCAS code H203. As part of this degree you will spend your third year abroad studying Civil Engineering at another English speaking university, in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, The United States, Canada.

If you are fluent in a language other than English, there is also the option to spend your third year studying Civil Engineering at a non-English speaking university. Below is a selection of the universities with which we have exchanged engineering students:

- Melbourne, Brisbane and New South Wales (Australia),
- Waterloo and Toronto (Canada),
- North-Western University, Massachusetts and Illinois Urbana Champaign (USA),
- INSA Lyon, Toulouse and Nancy (France),
- Pontifica Comillas Madrid (Spain),
- Hanover (Germany),
- Lyngby (Denmark – where many lectures are in English).

The University of Birmingham is also a member of the ['Universitas 21' network \(http://www.universitas21.com/\)](http://www.universitas21.com/) of prestigious universities and our students can in principle select any of the overseas universities within this group. These include:

- McGill and British Columbia (Canada),
- Hong Kong,
- Melbourne and Queensland (Australia),
- Auckland (New Zealand).

To qualify for the 'study abroad' option you must achieve an average mark of 60% or more in your first year of study. You can find detailed information on the [Outgoing students \(/undergraduate/studyabroad/outgoingstudents/index.aspx\)](http://schools/civil-engineering/undergraduate/studyabroad/outgoingstudents/index.aspx) page.

Studying a language

Can I do Civil Engineering with a language?

Yes. We do not have a dedicated degree title for languages, but you can study a language as part of our main Civil Engineering Degree Programme (H200). If you choose the language option this will form one-sixth of your credits per year of study.

H203 MEng Civil Engineering (International Study) – you can study a language during the 1st, 2nd and 4th years (i.e. at Birmingham) but whether you will be able to continue the language study during your exchange year will depend on the university chosen and the particular language being studied.

You will not be able to study a language if you choose H2NC Civil Engineering with Business Management.

The languages you can choose to study with your degree are:

- French (at Intermediate and Advanced level)
- German (at Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced level)
- Spanish (at Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced level)
- Japanese (at Beginners level only)

To register for a language at beginners level, we require some evidence of a language learning history, e.g. grade C at GCSE in another European language or equivalent.

To enrol for an Intermediate course, we expect you to have roughly 150 hours of previous tuition in that specific language, e.g. grade C at GCSE.

Advanced courses normally require a good grade at A level or equivalent (approximately 300 hours of previous tuition).

If you have an AS level qualification you will be either placed in an Intermediate or an advanced group, depending on the outcome of a diagnostic test in week 1.

For further information on language options visit the [Modules outside the Main Discipline \(MOMD\) \(/facilities/cml/iwlp/momd/index.aspx\)](/facilities/cml/iwlp/momd/index.aspx) page.

If I do a language option does this reduce the amount of 'engineering' I will do in my degree?

If you choose to do Civil Engineering with a language this does not reduce the amount of engineering you will do in your degree.

The language option will constitute one-sixth of each year of study, i.e. 20 credits out of a total of 120 credits studied per year. We make sure that you cover all the engineering fundamentals, the only difference is that when you come to choose your optional subjects, you are committed to choosing the language - you do still get to do optional engineering subjects, just 20 credits fewer per year than students who are not taking the language options.

If you choose to do a language and find that it is not for you, you can transfer out of the language option after Christmas of your first year.

Foundation year

General foundation year enquiries

The engineering foundation year is a multidisciplinary year for students who want to do engineering but do not have the appropriate subjects to gain direct entry to an engineering course. Most often, the candidates do not have A-level maths.

The entry requirements are: 3 B's at A-Level. You must also have: GCSE Physics and Chemistry or Science Double Award at Grade B and GCSE Mathematics at Grade B.

National Diploma or Certificate (Civil Engineering).

National Diploma – achieve a grade of 'Distinction Merit Merit Merit' overall with at least merits in Mathematics and Structural Mechanics.

National Certificate – achieve a grade of 'Distinction Distinction' overall with at least merits in Mathematics and Structural Mechanics.

Access Courses - successful completion of a suitable (e.g. science or engineering) Access to Higher Education Certificate.

What marks will I need to proceed from foundation year to first year Civil Engineering?

To enter Civil Engineering (first year) after having done the foundation year you will need to have passed all subjects (pass mark is 40%) and to have achieved 50% in the Maths and Mechanics modules.

