We use cookies to ensure that we deliver the best user experience of our website. If you would like to, you can change your cookie settings at any time. Continue

Sophie Martin, PGDipEd Secondary English

Why did you choose to study at the University of Birmingham?

Teaching was something I always wanted to do however I did not feel ready for this until I was 24. The University of Birmingham was my first choice because of reputation and the courses on offer. I felt it was an achievement to be offered a place and continue to believe this as I complete my PGDipEd.

What first attracted you to do your degree at Birmingham?

The course content, English was always an interest of mine however having the opportunity to study History alongside was a bonus!

Were there any other factors that influenced your decision?

Location, I love Birmingham and it was very important as a mature student to be able to live at home. It is a lovely campus and the library facilities are fantastic.

What have you gained from your undergraduate study here?

First and foremost my degree led me to my ultimate aim: to become a teacher.
The enthusiasm of all tutors during lectures and seminars, the standard of education I received opened my mind to a whole range of things that previously I had not considered – this will in turn, do the same for the students that I will teach.

One for fun – tell us one thing you didn't know about the University of Birmingham before studying here?

Determination is a key ingredient! Making sacrifices to achieve – this may include Friday and Saturday nights!

What do you think of the on campus facilities at the University and School of Education?

The facilities are second-to-none, eating, drinking, supermarkets and banks are always available on campus and Waterstones is very useful!

The library facilities are excellent, reserving books, studying areas, opening times and obtaining journals is straightforward. However one tip is to be organised, I have tried to take books out close to assignment deadline only to find somebody else has them, not a wise move! The main library is a short walk from the School of Education which is useful.

How often do you use these facilities?

I think the School of Education library has become my second home!

What do you like/dislike about the Guild and its facilities?

The Guild is a nice relaxing place to have a drink and socialise however as I live at home I have only used this a handful of times.

What are the top 5 things about the city of Birmingham?

- The Bullring
- Only minutes from the countryside
- Safe and friendly
- Public transport is fantastic (I think Birmingham Uni is the only one with its own Railway Station?)
- Nightlife
- General: Central Library, Art Gallery, The Frankfurt Christmas Market, The Mailbox etc

What advice would you give to prospective students thinking of coming to the University of Birmingham?

Do it! I am now 30 and although I sacrificed my career it was the best decision I ever made. I gave up my career in the rail industry to do my degree and it has turned out to be the major stepping stone into a career I feel honoured to be a part of – teaching. I took great care into researching what course I wanted to study and this is a fundamental part.

Sum up your University experience in one sentence

If only my school teachers could see what I have achieved! I have hopes to complete my Masters in 2/3 years time and I never even envisaged this before my degree.

© University of Birmingham 2014