Student profile: Frances Gwilliam

(/postgraduate/courses/taught/law/criminal-law.aspx) Programme: **LLM Criminal Law & Criminal Justice** (/postgraduate/courses/taught/law/criminal-law.aspx) Nationality: British

The LLM programme is fascinating, challenging and hard work! I completed an undergraduate law degree at Cambridge. I really enjoyed the justice aspects of that degree and wanted to continue my studies, so I chose Birmingham Law School because it offers a specialist LLM in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice.

From the first day it was clear I was going to be spending a lot of time in the library! I chose four modules from a broad range and I have a fortnightly seminar in each one. For every seminar, reading is set, often with questions that will be discussed in class. The seminars have been intellectually stimulating and a great opportunity to try out ideas, to debate issues that have arisen from the reading and to be taught by some highly respected academics.

The highlight of the first term was undoubtedly a visit to the Criminal Cases Review Commission in Birmingham for a guest lecture. Every student has to write a dissertation as part of their LLM and at the moment I am researching mine. It is exciting to be able to look at one aspect of the course that has particularly grabbed my attention, although it is also a bit daunting. An LLM degree is not like an undergraduate degree: the onus is very much on you to develop ideas, do the reading and then ask questions. However, the academic staff are always keen to help and I have found my teachers and the support staff only too willing to answer queries and assist with my study.

Should you study an LLM at Birmingham? Definitely! I will not lie, it is hard work, but I have met some great people, had a lot of fun and have loved having the chance to study in a great city, challenging myself intellectually and focussing on an area of law that I am passionate about."

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