

Philip Keen



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Currently: Phd student in the School of Mathematics, University of Birmingham

"Sometimes studying maths is hard slog. But stick with it. With some effort hard subjects eventually begin to make sense. "

How have you got where you are today, from your student days?

I applied for EPSRC-funded Phd position, and was successful in my application.

What were the best things about the education that you received at Birmingham?

I am grateful that I was taught by many lecturers who were able to communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to the class.

How did your time at Birmingham influence your career path? Did it do so directly or indirectly?

When I first started my undergraduate maths course, my plan was to get a normal maths degree to help me in the careers market. I was actually hoping to work towards a career in IT. Whilst studying at Birmingham I found that I really enjoyed mathematics and wanted to study it at a deeper level. Hence I applied for a PhD position.

Other than your qualification in your subject area, what other skills do you think your time at Birmingham developed?

The maths course improved my skills in critical thinking and communication.

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

I wanted my degree programme to challenge me. This it did.

What advice you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Sometimes studying maths is hard slog. But stick with it. With some effort hard subjects eventually begin to make sense.

What are your memories of student social life?

Maths students tend to be a friendly bunch. It is generally easy to find a circle of friends with whom you can relax and swap ideas. There are many places to eat and drink along the Bristol Road, which makes it easy to go for a night out. Birmingham itself offers many forms of entertainment: theatres, bars, restaurants and concert halls, for instance.

What were your expectations of the City of Birmingham and how did your expectations of the City match your experience?

Having lived locally before enrolling at the University, I had a good idea of what to expect. Birmingham is a good place, though. It has pace and variety. I found it fairly easy to find casual work as well, which helped pay the bills!

Is there anything else you wish to add about your experience at the University of Birmingham and the city in general?

I really appreciate being a University of Birmingham student. My studies are both interesting and challenging. The University itself is a friendly place, with a lovely campus. The city offers many things to see and do. It is not often that I'm bored. There is also the advantage that Birmingham is a major transport hub. In general it is easy to get to where you want to go from Birmingham.