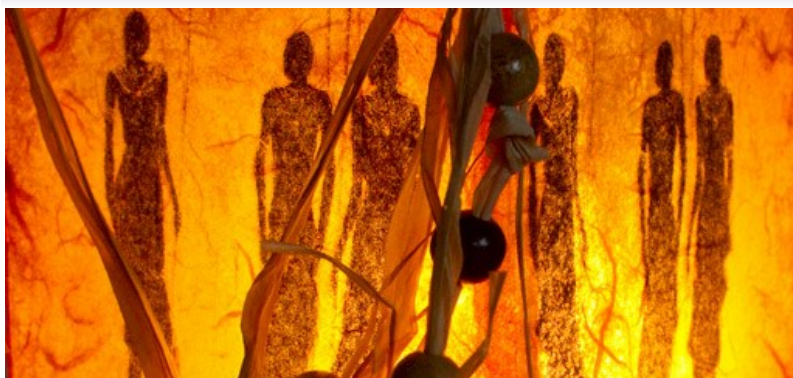


## BA African Studies



Africa is humankind's original home; a continent of vast cultural and natural resources. Whether coping with massive urbanisation, developing new kinds of politics, or inventing original literary and theatrical genres, Africans have been active and resilient makers of their own fortunes.

The Department of African Studies and Anthropology (DASA) at Birmingham is a small, friendly community of undergraduates, postgraduates, visiting scholars and staff. As a result, student satisfaction scores for African Studies at Birmingham are very high, with 96% of students reporting that they are satisfied with the quality of the course. Our BA African Studies graduates also enjoy a high average rate of employability for the subject, with 95% going into work or study within six months of graduation.

**Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14**  
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>

## Course fact file

UCAS code: T500

Duration: 3 years

Typical Offer: BBB (**More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details (? OpenSection=EntryRequirements)**)

Start date: September

## Related courses

[BA African Studies with Development \(/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-development.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-development.aspx)

[BA African Studies with Anthropology \(/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-anthropology.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-anthropology.aspx)

## Contact

Admissions Tutor: **Dr Maxim Bolt**

[\(/staff/profiles/dasa/bolt-maxim.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/dasa/bolt-maxim.aspx) Telephone enquiries: +44 (0)121 414 5752

Email: [historycultures-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:historycultures-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk) (<mailto:historycultures-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk>)

\*NSS 2014



[Department of African Studies and Anthropology \(/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/index.aspx)

**STUDENT SATISFACTION\***

## Details

- [Download the programme brochure for single honours BA African Studies to find out more about the course structure \(/Documents/college-artslaw/dasa/African-Studies-brochure.pdf\)](/Documents/college-artslaw/dasa/African-Studies-brochure.pdf)

African Studies is a broad degree programme which combines arts and social science approaches. Most of our students enter the degree programme with an enthusiasm for, and interest in, either Africa or Anthropology, but few have studied these subjects at school or college. So in your first year in particular, we will help you to adapt to new ways of working and to gain confidence in approaching unfamiliar topics. As you progress, you will be able to follow up a range of topics in greater detail, culminating in your final-year dissertation.

The African continent is humankind's original home. It is a continent of vast cultural and natural resources. The range of African societies today and in the past are enormous: from egalitarian communities to elaborately hierarchical empires. There are extremes of wealth and poverty; ancient oral cultures exist side by side with old traditions of literacy and state-of-the-art electronic media; successful local exploitation of Africa's massive pools of biodiversity contrasts with the famines we are all too familiar with in the news.

What is indisputable is the creativity of the continent. Whether in coping with massive urbanisation, in developing new kinds of politics, or in inventing original literary and theatrical genres, Africans have been active and resilient makers of their own fortunes. The Department of African Studies and Anthropology teaching programmes are

## Why study this course

### Why study African Studies at Birmingham?

The [Department of African Studies and Anthropology \(/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/index.aspx\)](http://schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/index.aspx) (incorporating the Centre for West African Studies) at the University of Birmingham has built up over 50 years of expertise in teaching and research in this fascinating area. Here, students from all parts of Africa, Europe, America and the Caribbean, work together in a friendly community. You'll find we offer exciting opportunities and a commitment to excellence in teaching.

At Birmingham, you will benefit from an intellectually challenging and stimulating environment for your undergraduate studies, focused on ensuring you are a fully supported and active learner. Our unique degrees are designed to provide both academic excellence and vocational development; a balance that's highly sought after by employers in today's intellectual and creative industries. The courses are also very flexible, allowing you to specialise more as you progress, culminating in a final-year dissertation that allows you to carry out in-depth, individually supervised research into topics of your choice. You will work with [academic staff \(/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/staff/index.aspx\)](http://schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/staff/index.aspx) who are at the forefront of research in this wide-ranging subject.

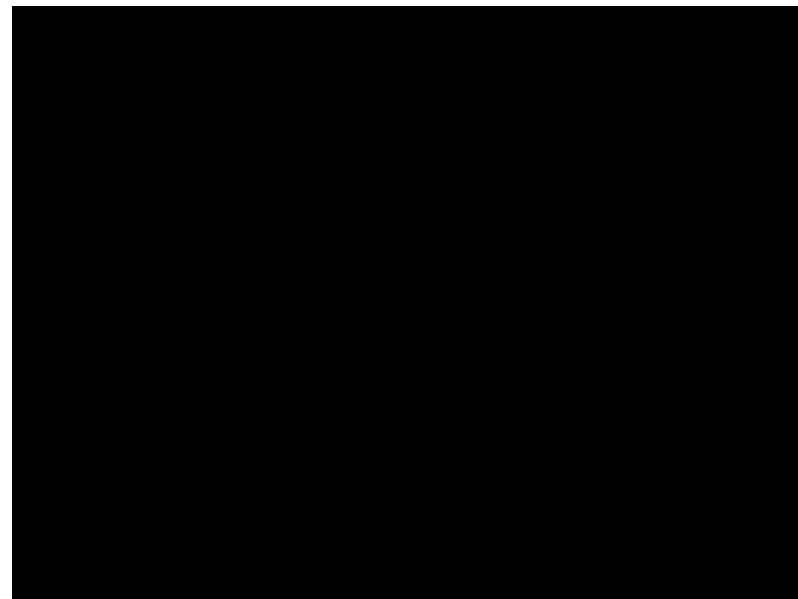
We house the Danford Collection; a nationally important collection of West African art and artefacts.

Student satisfaction scores for African Studies at Birmingham are very high, with 96% of students reporting that they are satisfied with the quality of the course.

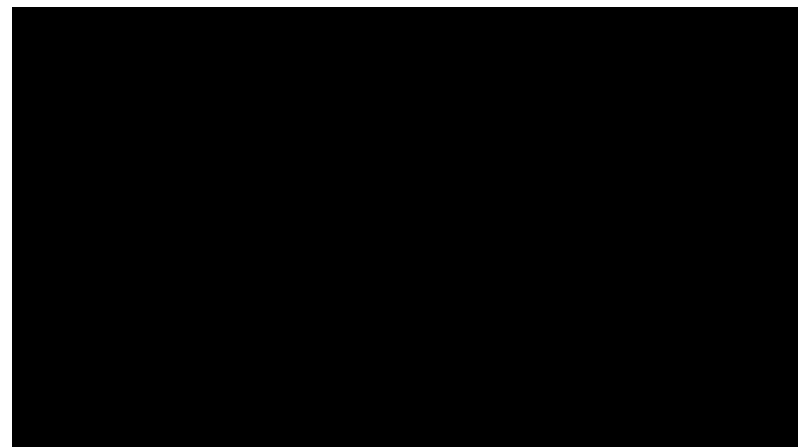
Our BA African Studies graduates also enjoy a high average rate of employability for the subject, with 95% going into work or study within six months of graduation.

*"There was never really one defining moment in my life when I decided that I was destined to study Africa, like most things it started as a vague possibility and gradually grew on me. When choosing my degree subject, I always knew that it would include some geographical element... African Studies seemed to be a sort of enhanced degree in that it was everything I loved about Geography but with a lot more focus. Also I loved the idea of contrasting lectures..."*

### Sarah Nwafor (BA African Studies, third year)



### African Studies, Anthropology and Development at Birmingham June 2013 open day talk given by Dr Maxim Bolt



## Modules

### First year

All first-year students take our Focus on Studying Societies module, which involves working with a tutor in a small group and trying out all the basic steps in researching, planning and writing a university-level essay. After receiving detailed one-to-one feedback on this assignment, you will then choose your own topic, practising the same skills in researching and planning, and working as a group to prepare a presentation, developing your teamwork and oral communication skills.

You'll also have a series of options which allow you to explore aspects of African History, Politics, Culture, Geography, Society and Development, giving you an awareness of the diversity of the continent.

**Optional modules include:**

- African societies
- Doing development
- Introduction to African culture
- Introduction to African history
- Introduction to African societies
- Introduction to African politics
- Introduction to geography and Africa
- Thinking anthropologically
- **[Detailed descriptions of first year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-first-year.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-first-year.aspx)**

## Second year

Most modules in year two encompass a mix of lectures, seminars or group work, and independent reading. We prefer project work and assessed essays to timed exams because we believe these forms of assessment develop the skills students need in employment or further study.

In this year, you will take the compulsory Perspectives on Africa module; a student-led seminar course that takes on issues of immediate contemporary concern in Africa, focusing on the way they're debated in Africa itself and situating these debates in their global context.

## Options (second and third year)

- Aid, NGOs and Development
- The African Canon
- African new writing
- African popular culture
- African religion and ritual
- Atlantic slavery: West Africa and the Caribbean
- Caribbean fiction
- Caribbean poetry
- Gender and development in Africa
- Ghana: state and society
- Independent Study
- Rural livelihoods and development interventions in West Africa
- Social life of the economy
- South Africa in the 19th century
- South Africa in the 20th century
- South Africa since apartheid: politics and culture
- Theory, Ethnography and Research
- Trajectories of emancipation
- **[Detailed descriptions of second and third year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-secondthird.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-secondthird.aspx)**

## The option to study for a semester abroad

You will have the option to study abroad in either the first or second semester of your second year, so you will still be able to complete your degree in three years. Credits are gained in your subject area at the institution you choose. There is a wide variety of universities to choose from which are approved by the University of Birmingham's International Office with the Study Abroad and Exchanges Scheme.

## Third year

In your final year, you can choose your taught modules from a list available within the department. Students will be taught in a combination of lectures and seminars and will be able to develop more specialised knowledge and analytical skills, often drawing on the first-hand research experience of their tutors. Final year students take one 40 credit dissertation, plus four African Studies optional modules of 20 credits each, of which one may be an Module Outside the Main Discipline.

The number of taught modules is slightly fewer in the final year because of the emphasis that we place on the Dissertation. This is the culmination of the enquiry-based learning that students have been working towards throughout their degree programmes. With the guidance of an academic supervisor in a series of one-to-one meetings, you will have the opportunity to identify a topic that is of particular interest to you, formulate relevant and interesting questions, search for and evaluate different sources of information, and present your findings and conclusions in a 10,000 word dissertation.

In order to support you through this potentially daunting task, we arrange a series of workshops in which students present their work-in-progress, and receive useful feedback from members of the academic staff and their fellow students. Your supervisor will also read and comment on your drafts in order to help you produce a well-organised and well-presented piece of work. Successful completion of a dissertation enables students to demonstrate a wide range of skills that are transferable to employment and to further study.

- Dissertation
- 80 credits of DASA modules, or, 60 credits of DASA modules and a 20 credit MOMD (examples listed above).
- **[Detailed descriptions of second and third year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-secondthird.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/dasa/african-modules-secondthird.aspx)**

## Fees and funding

**Standard fees** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard>) apply

Learn more about **fees and funding** (</undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx>)

## Scholarships

Learn more about our **scholarships and awards** (</undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx>)

## Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: BBB

General Studies: accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 32 points

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements).

We expect applicants to have an interest in Africa rather than a detailed knowledge of the continent.

We welcome applications from mature and Access students.

International students:

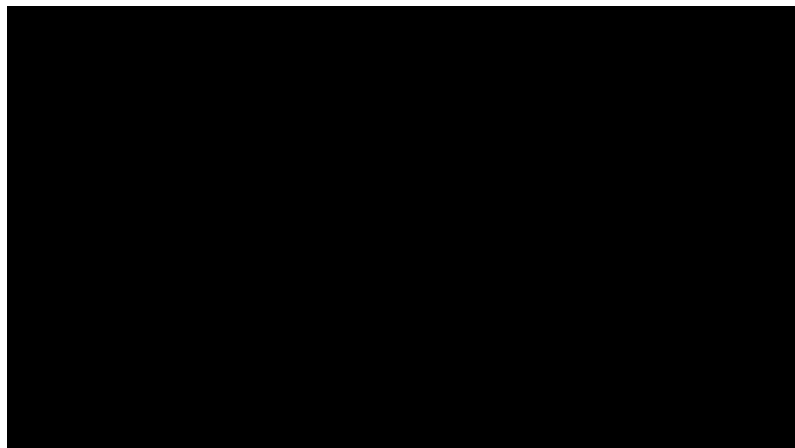
We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. We accept a range of qualifications, our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the [foundation academy web pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx).

## How to apply

Apply through UCAS at [www.ucas.com \(http://www.ucas.com/\)](http://www.ucas.com)

Learn more about [applying \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)



## Joint Honours combinations

- [Anthropology and African Studies BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/anthropology-and-african-studies.aspx\)](#)
- [Anthropology and Classical Literature and Civilisation BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/anthropology-and-classical-literature-and-civilisation.aspx\)](#)
- [BA Anthropology and History \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/anthropology-and-history.aspx\)](#)
- [Anthropology and Political Science BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/anthropology-and-political-science.aspx\)](#)

## Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the [Unistats website \(http://unistats.direct.gov.uk\)](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk) you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

## Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. At Birmingham we advocate an enquiry based learning approach, from the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

## Support

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we will enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our **Academic Skills Centre** also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

The **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** will provide you with individual support from an academic writing advisor and postgraduate subject-specialist writing tutors. You will receive guidance on writing essays and dissertations at University-level which can be quite different from your previous experiences of writing. Support is given in a variety of ways, such as small-group workshops, online activities, feedback through email and tutorials.

## Student experience

Supporting you throughout your transition to University, offering research opportunities and study skills support and helping you develop and prepare for your post-University careers - our **Arts and Law Student Experience Team** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/index.aspx>) strive to help you get the most out of your academic experience.

## Contact hours

These vary slightly according to your choice of modules. However, contact is timed carefully and we're very clear about what you should do during your independent study hours. During contact hours, you will have the opportunity to work in small groups, to build relationships with your tutors and fellow students, and to receive one-to-one feedback on your assignments.

## Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a new style of learning, and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

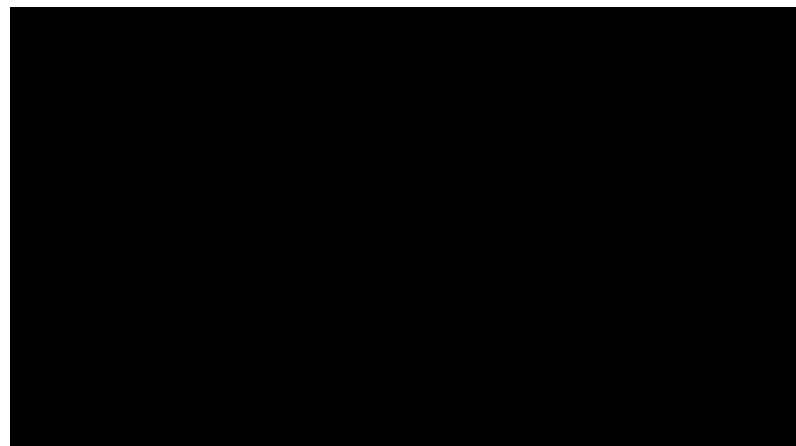
You will be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations and formal exams (depending on your chosen degree).

During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you will be given information on how and when you will be assessed for that particular programme of study. You will receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You will be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

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## Employability



[Video above - Dr Maxim Bolt discusses careers and employability in the African Studies open day presentation]

As a student of African Studies you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are highly prized by employers. Our graduates have the ability to research and analyse complex information, work independently and as part of a team, and communicate judgments and arguments effectively. African Studies has the advantage of being a distinctive degree that really helps you to stand out from the crowd. It makes you an Africa expert, opening up an increasing range of career possibilities as Africa's economy grows and African countries become more influential in the world.

The University of Birmingham is ranked highly for employability for all African Studies degree courses. We are third in the 2014 Complete University Guide Middle Eastern and African Studies ranking. Recent graduates have gone into: bank management, teaching, the civil service and Foreign Office, Department of International Development graduate scheme, retail management, aid work, welfare rights, EFL teaching, computer programming and the media. We are proud that our former students have been involved in founding and supporting the NGO **Challenge Africa** (<http://www.challengeafrica.org/>).

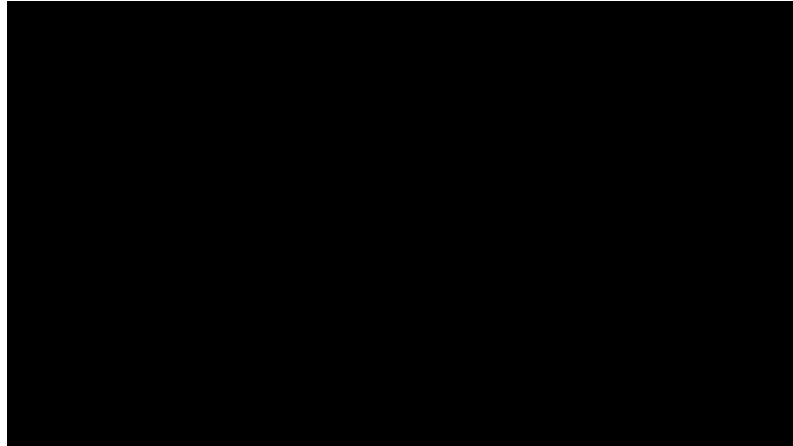
Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our **Careers Network** (<https://www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers>) can help you achieve your goal. This is a unique careers guidance service tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team who can give you expert advice.

We also hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities. Our students are encouraged to apply their skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer; the **work experience bursary scheme** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/index.aspx>) enables students to apply for funding for those career areas where placements are often unpaid. You can even apply for our 'Global Challenge' to work overseas on an expenses paid placement during your summer vacation.

### Extra-curricular activities

To enhance your career prospects even further, you will need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities while you're at university to broaden your skills and your network of contacts. This can include the many societies at the Guild of Students and also the many voluntary opportunities offered with local arts organisations. Our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx>) (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Our College of Arts and Law **undergraduate research scholarship scheme** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/studentexperience/urs/index.aspx>) enables interested students to work on a current academic research project being run by one of the College's academic researchers. Undergraduate research scholars gain work experience over the summer after their first or second year and have the chance to develop skills in both collaborative and independent research.



### Cultural Internships

Our innovative **Cultural Internships** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/volunteering/regionally.aspx>) offer graduates the opportunity for a six month paid internship at a leading cultural institution in the West Midlands. These internships are a unique opportunity to learn fundamental, transferable business and interpersonal skills, through experience of real work in an established cultural institution. Our current partners include Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham REP, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust and the Library of Birmingham. We have plans to expand the scheme to include our own major cultural assets, such as Winterbourne House, the Lapworth Museum, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This scheme will give you professional experience to set you apart in a competitive graduate market.

We also offer voluntary work which complements your studies by helping you gain practical experiences in occupational settings while contributing back to society. This can bring new skills that will be useful throughout your future and can make a positive impact on your learning whilst at university. Volunteering enables you to develop skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline all of which can be transferred into your studies.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

**96%** Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) African Studies  
Full time



To see more details and compare with other courses

Visit  
**UNISTATS** ▶

Official data collected by HEFCE

