

BA English Language and Philosophy



Language and philosophy are intrinsically connected. Without philosophical thought, how can we seek to answer some of the big questions about life and the world around us? Without language how can we give expression to such abstract concepts? You will learn from experts in the fields of corpus linguistics, grammar, stylistics, discourse analysis and applied linguistics.

In Philosophy, you will benefit from studying within a department that has a growing international reputation as a centre of excellence for research in analytic philosophy, especially in metaphysics and epistemology, philosophy of language and mind, and ethics and ethical theory. As a result, you will build a wide range of analytical and other transferable skills that will stand you in excellent stead in your future career.

[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been 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)
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>

Course fact file

UCAS code: QV35

Duration: 3 Years

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

Start date: September

Contact

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[School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies](/schools/edacs/index.aspx)

[Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics](/schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/index.aspx)

Details

In this programme, you study half of your modules (60 credits) in English Language and half in Philosophy (60 credits).

First year

English Language: In two linked modules, *Language Works*, you will be introduced to a range of topics in English Language study, including the phonology (sound system) of English, its morphology (word formation) and grammar; children's language development; discourse analysis, both spoken and written; and social issues, such as attitudes towards language and its role in education. You will also learn how to carry out research on English language topics.

Philosophy: First year modules include: Knowledge and Reality (what is the world like, and how, if at all, do we come to know about it?); History of Philosophy; Logic; and The Individual and Society (covering moral and political philosophy). There are also two seminar only modules: Philosophical Texts I, where you learn how to analyse and criticise some texts on a variety of topics, and Independent Study I, where you learn essay writing and research skills and apply them by writing an essay on a philosophical topic of your choice.

Second Year

English Language: In this year you can choose to take either two linked modules, which, following on from first year work, provide a thorough grounding in technical aspects of the language, concentrating on English phonology and morphology, and then English grammar; or you can choose two modules from a range including *History of the English Language*; *Talk and Text*, which provides in-depth analyses of different kinds of spoken interaction; and *Language Acquisition, Variation and Change*, which studies how these processes happen and what enables them. In addition, you will take the module *Research Skills in English Language*, which is designed to develop your group and individual research skills by guiding you in such tasks as carrying out a literature review, collecting and analysing data, and presenting your results orally, as well as reporting on your research in writing.

Philosophy: In the second year, all students are given some freedom of choice, so you can pursue the topics and questions that interest and inspire you. Second year modules currently on offer include: Thought and Language; Topics in the History of Philosophy; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of Mind; and Meta-ethics. There is

also Philosophical Texts II, where you focus on a single classic book by a particular author (you will have a range of texts in different areas to choose from), and Independent Study II, which gives you the opportunity to further hone your essay writing skills and to write another essay on a question of your own devising.

Final Year

English Language: You will now be able to choose from a wide range of optional modules on such topics as *The Politics of English; Discourse and Society; English Language Teaching; Linguistic Theory; Narrative Analysis, Ordinary Creativity, and Words*. Your degree builds to a final-year dissertation, a research project which you will carry out independently but under supervision: you will select your own topic for research, collect data, assimilate relevant literature and construct a substantial report on the project, showing judgement and persuasiveness.

Philosophy: In the final year there is even more choice of modules. Some areas, like ethics and metaphysics, will be familiar to you, but will be studied at a more advanced level; others, like the philosophy of Schopenhauer, will be new to you. Final year modules currently on offer include:

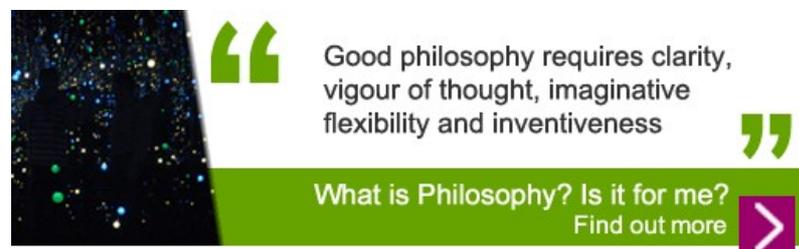
- Contemporary Moral Theory
- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy of Psychology
- Issues in Contemporary Metaphysics
- Realism and Anti-Realism
- Philosophy of Language
- Schopenhauer
- Global Bio-Ethics

Another option is the Philosophical Project module, for which you research and write a dissertation with the help of a supervisor who advises you and generally guides you through the process.

Why study this course

Philosophy is the ideal discipline for people who find they are bothered by questions that their friends can cheerfully ignore, and for people who don't want to settle for conventional answers and received wisdom, but want to arrive at answers that stand up to the most searching examination.

- **Friendly and relaxed atmosphere** – our academic staff within the **Department of Philosophy** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/index.aspx>) know students by name and are always happy to talk about philosophical questions, provide additional feedback on academic performance and discuss any problems you might be having with your degree programme
- **Taught by experts in the field** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/staff/index.aspx>) - the Department of Philosophy has a growing international reputation as a centre of excellence for research in analytical philosophy, especially in metaphysics and epistemology, philosophy of language and mind, and ethics and ethical history
- **Intellectually challenging and stimulating environment** – focused on ensuring you're a fully supported and active learner
- **High-quality student support** You'll have your own personal tutor as well as the department's welfare tutor and the university's support services
- **Flexibility** – you will have the opportunity to specialise more and 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
- **Study abroad** – in your third year there is the option to study at an overseas university
- **Extra-curricular activities** – we have a highly active Philosophy Society which runs a programme of social events, visiting speakers and debates throughout the academic year
- **Employability** – our unique degree programme is 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
- **Centre for the Study of Global Ethics** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/globalethics/index.aspx>) - the first of its kind in the UK where it addresses the practical and theoretical issues raised by globalisation
- **John Hick Centre for Philosophy of Religion** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/philosophyofreligion/index.aspx>) – dedicated to promoting critical thinking about the metaphysical, epistemological and moral questions concerning religion, belief and reality. The Centre is named after John Hick, Emeritus H.G. Wood Professor of Theology at the University of Birmingham and one of the most prominent philosophers of religion in our time



“ Good philosophy requires clarity, vigour of thought, imaginative flexibility and inventiveness ”

What is Philosophy? Is it for me?
Find out more >

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/phil/what-is-philosophy.aspx>)

Dr Darragh Byrne gives the Philosophy talk at the Undergraduate Open Day September 2014

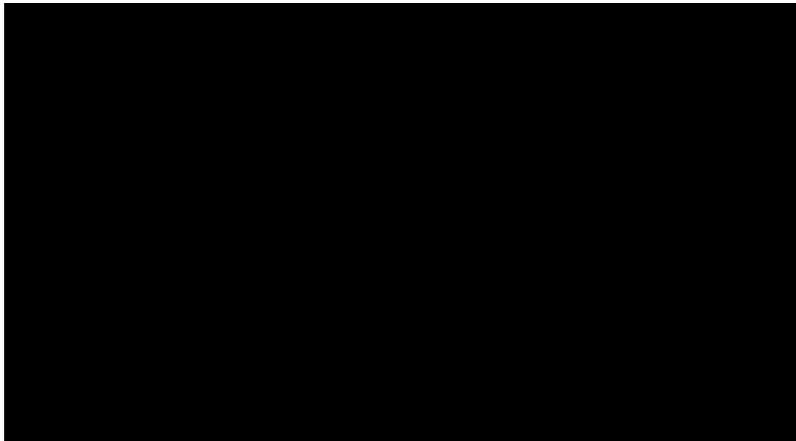
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The English language half of your programme engages with the structure and character of the language including:

- Phonology, lexis, grammar, and discourse
- The variation of the English language
- Theories and methods of linguistics
- Methodologies and practices of linguistic research
- The history and development of the English language

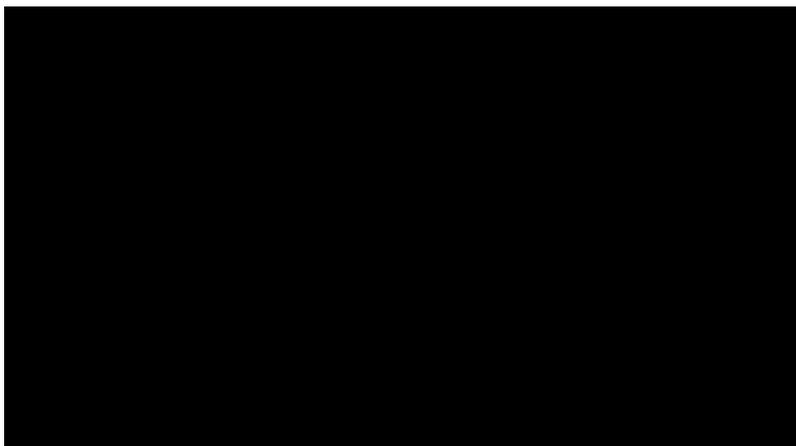
You will gain a broad range of knowledge and understanding of the English language, and critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts.

English Language open day talk



Dr Jeanette Littlemore delivers the 2014 undergraduate open day talk on studying English Language and Linguistics at the University of Birmingham.

Joint honours open day talk



Dr Craig Blunt delivers an undergraduate open day talk about studying Joint Honours at the university.

Fees and funding

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

Learn more about **fees and funding** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/undergraduate/loans.aspx>).

Scholarships

Learn more about our **scholarships and awards** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/undergraduate/funding/index.aspx>).

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: AAB

Required subjects and grades: We prefer an A level in English Language, or English Language and Literature, at grade A. We also consider other candidates who demonstrate an interest in and aptitude for the study of language. In this case, A levels in English Literature or a foreign language - or both- would be an advantage.

Additional information: Other qualifications are considered - learn more about **entry requirements** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements>).

International students:

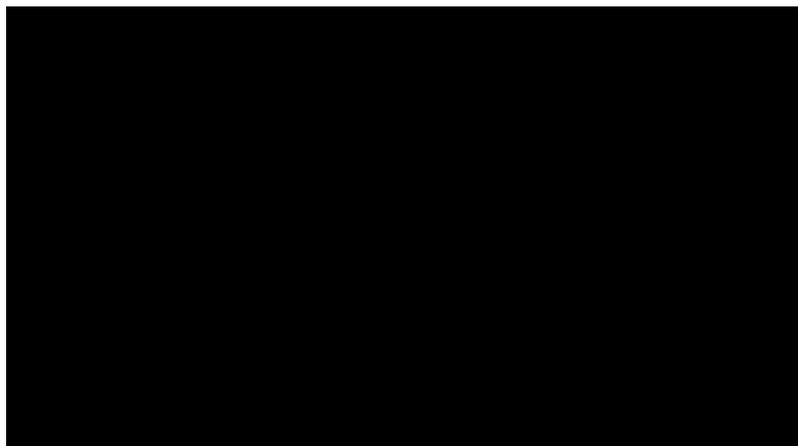
We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. We accept a range of qualifications, our **country pages** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx>)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

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at 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>)



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.

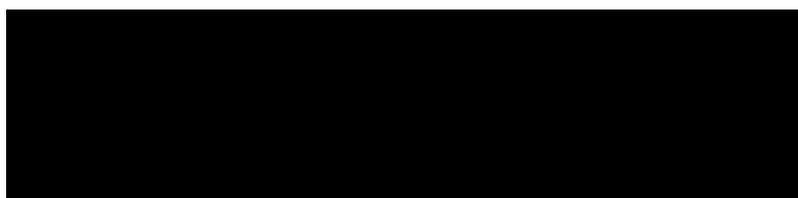
From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your 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) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/index.aspx>) strive to help you get the most out of your academic experience.

Interactive classes are offered in modules which don't feature separate seminars. Here, lecturing time and discussion time are part of the same session and the structure of the classes can be very flexible.



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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).

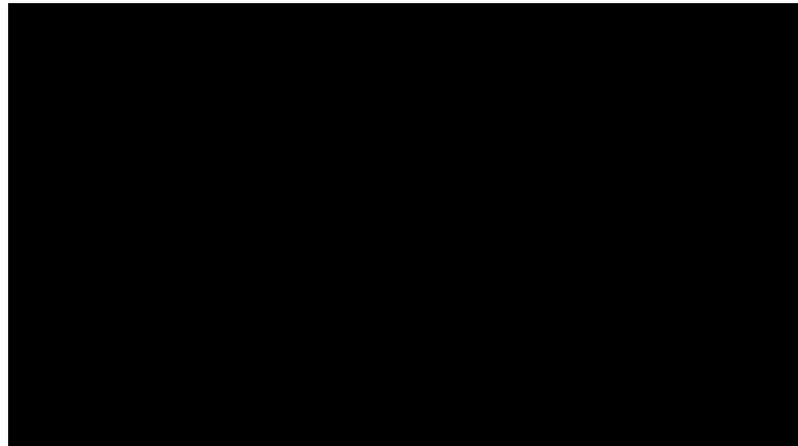
During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

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.

Each module is assessed independently by exams, essays or other forms of written assignment. Some modules are completely assessed by coursework. Most first-year modules are assessed by both an essay written during the year and an exam at the end of the year, with each given equal weight. The assessment for second- and third-year modules also varies. Many modules are assessed by two essays, while some are assessed by an essay and an exam. The Philosophical Project module is assessed by a single long essay of about 6,000 words.

Employability

English Language



[Video above - Dr Jeannette Littlemore discusses careers and employability during the English Language open day presentation]

Studying for an English Language BA at Birmingham is an unparalleled opportunity, not only to engage with a diverse cultural, textual and linguistic discipline, but also to develop skills in intellectual analysis, critical thinking and articulate expression – skills that last a lifetime and qualify you for many possible careers. You will also be encouraged to acquire practical skills that you'll find just as useful in your future career, including oral presentation, professional documentation, group work and the uses of information technology.

The structure of the English Language programme allows you to pursue potential career areas by developing relevant skills and expertise that will be relevant to future employers. There are four possible pathways, although you are not committed to a particular one, which allow you to make informed choices in your module selection in the second- and third-year of the course.

50% of vacancies advertised for new and recent graduates don't specify a degree subject, and English Language graduates enter a wide range of careers including advertising, journalism and media, government, law, publishing and teaching at every level. About 19% of English graduates pursue postgraduate study to specialise in an academic area or prepare for careers such as law and teaching.

English Language graduates from the University of Birmingham have excellent prospects after graduation. 92% of our English graduates go into work or study within six months of graduation, with 75% immediately entering managerial and professional roles, which is amongst the highest percentages for graduate employability in this subject. Our graduates have started careers with employers including media companies, educational institutions, local councils, publishers, charities and a wide range of large commercial organisations, in roles such as marketing coordinator, editorial assistant, creative advertising account executive, recruitment consultant and parliamentary caseworker.

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 \(https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx\)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx) can help you achieve your goal. This is a unique careers guidance service tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team (in each of the five academic colleges) who can give you expert advice. This includes individual careers advice and events to give you insight into the professions and employers of interest to arts graduates. Our 'Creative careers' series is always popular with our students, and features events with employers and professionals from areas such as advertising, PR and communications, careers in journalism, publishing and writing, and careers in the theatre.

As a School, we also hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities; we're developing links with local arts organisations to create some amazing opportunities for students; and you can even apply for our 'Global Challenge' to work overseas on an expenses paid placement during your summer vacation. We also encourage all our students to apply their skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer; the work experience bursary scheme enables students to apply for funding for those career areas where placements are often unpaid.

Our English alumni profiles



“ Marketing has always been a passion of mine and I'm now working with a company that is invested in developing my skills and my future career. ”

Bianca Burton
Arup

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/undergraduate/alumni-profiles.aspx>

Philosophy

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/phil/why-do-philosophy.aspx>

As a student of Philosophy you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are highly prized by employers. Our graduates understand complex information, write clearly and effectively, can build a case for a particular view, strategy or course of action, respect the views of others even if they disagree with them, and generally think for themselves. If you're taking the year abroad option, you'll develop real confidence and independence that's valued in the working world.

50% of job vacancies advertised for new and recent graduates don't specify a degree subject, so as a graduate of Philosophy you've a vast potential to enter a wide range of careers, including law, journalism and teaching, as well as commerce and industry. Some also decide to pursue postgraduate study.

University of Birmingham Philosophy graduates are very successful after graduation. Our Philosophy graduates have a high average starting salary of

£18,000 per year. Recent graduates have started careers with employers including Government departments, local councils, charities and companies in many business sectors, in roles as diverse as Assistant Literary Agent, Management Consultant, Marketing Assistant and Programmes Officer.

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://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx>) 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. This includes individual careers advice and events to give you insight into the professions and employers of interest to arts graduates.

Our 'Creative careers' series is always popular with our students, and features events with employers and professionals from areas such as advertising, PR and communications, media, journalism, publishing, advertising and politics. We also hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities, and our internship officer develops links with local arts organisations to create some amazing opportunities for students.

Philosophy alumni profiles



“ I would recommend it to anyone who wants a varied, challenging, academic and thought-provoking degree. ”

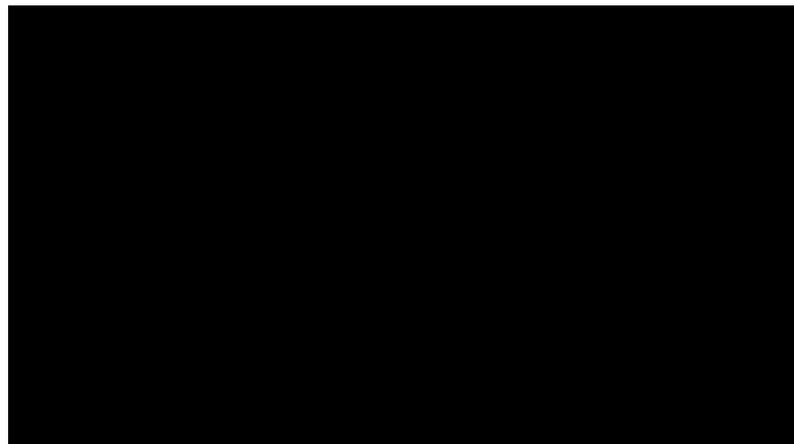
Vanessa Lipman
H R Management Graduate Trainee

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/philosophy/alumni/index.aspx>

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.

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