

Alumni profiles - Claire Smith

BNurs, Bachelor of Nursing, 2011

Staff Nurse

What are your career experiences since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

Before graduating from Birmingham, I gained a staff nurse position on a renal ward in Brighton. Since then, I have not really stopped studying! I was successful in publishing my dissertation in the Journal of Advanced Nursing, have completed renal-based courses at degree level and have also been successful in securing NIHR funding to undertake a Masters in Professional Research.

How did your experience at the University of Birmingham help you achieve this?

My degree from Birmingham has been recognised at every turn of my academic and professional career so far. The standards required by Birmingham are high and as such prepare you well for subsequent professional development. This is not only important academically but also clinically where professional behaviour and attitude does not go unnoticed in the workplace. Having moved to a completely different part of the country has made me appreciate the broad spectrum of placements available through UoB and the quality of those placements. The foundation year incorporated into the degree allows you to experience all branches of nursing which is essential to ensuring you choose the right branch of nursing to enter into and also gives you some experience of other fields within nursing. Furthermore, Birmingham also encourages overseas nursing placements which really makes you appreciate the standard of care and resources available in the UK and increases your cultural awareness.

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

As a mature student, (and probably a geeky one at that), I have to say that the best thing about Birmingham was the standard of work you were pushed to achieve and the sense of achievement when you attained it. It definitely wasn't easy and you were pushed to your limits at times but the camaraderie amongst my cohort made it a little easier, providing support and a shoulder whenever you needed one! For this, UoB students have an excellent reputation throughout the Trusts within the City and I was (and still am) proud to be associated with that.

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

Not only did the School of Nursing provide support in my studies, the facilities available at UoB are of outstanding quality. Whether you like sports, outdoor pursuits, film, acting or socialising, I loved the fact that there was something for everyone. I lived off campus but close to Harborne which had a terrific night life if you wanted it, yet also had quieter places to go if you didn't. The city was a short train or bus ride away which catered for any pastime and beautiful countryside was also easily accessible.

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

Make the most of it because you'll be qualified before you know it and when you have that responsibility on your shoulders, you'll want the best preparation possible. Birmingham can give you this if you get involved and take responsibility for your development. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, 'whatever you are, be a good one'.