



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

***CHOOSING THE RIGHT
COURSE FOR YOU***



Birmingham City University

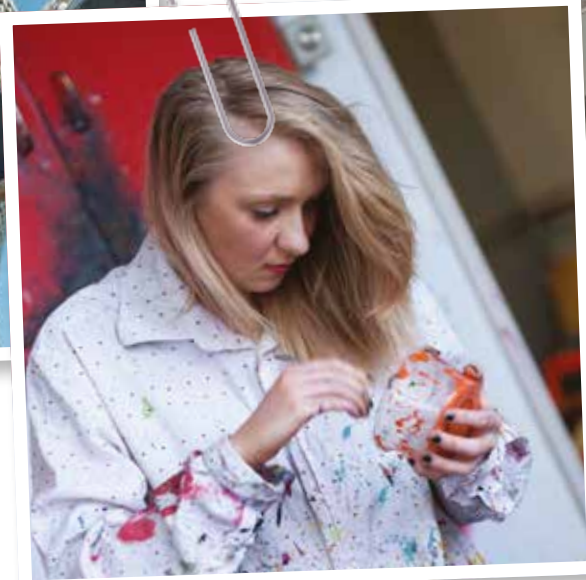
With around 22,500 students from 80 different countries, Birmingham City University is one of the largest universities in the UK and our popularity has grown significantly in recent years. We became a university in 1992, but our history dates back to 1843 and we have a proud record of widening access to higher education.

Our four academic faculties offer over 350 courses, from foundation level, through undergraduate degree programmes, to taught Master's courses and research doctorates. About a third of our students study part-time, combining employment with our professionally relevant courses, improving their career prospects.

Our courses are designed to prepare you for the world of work. Many of our lecturers have real-life experience of working in industry, our facilities match those you could experience in the workplace and you get the opportunity to go on placements with leading employers. We even employ our own students for temporary and part-time roles at the University!

Living in Birmingham offers you the chance to live in an exciting, diverse city with world-class restaurants, entertainment and shops.

Find out more about our open days at www.bcu.ac.uk/opendays or to order a prospectus, go to www.bcu.ac.uk/prospectus.



Key fact:

We are investing £260 million in our facilities, including a major expansion of our City Centre Campus

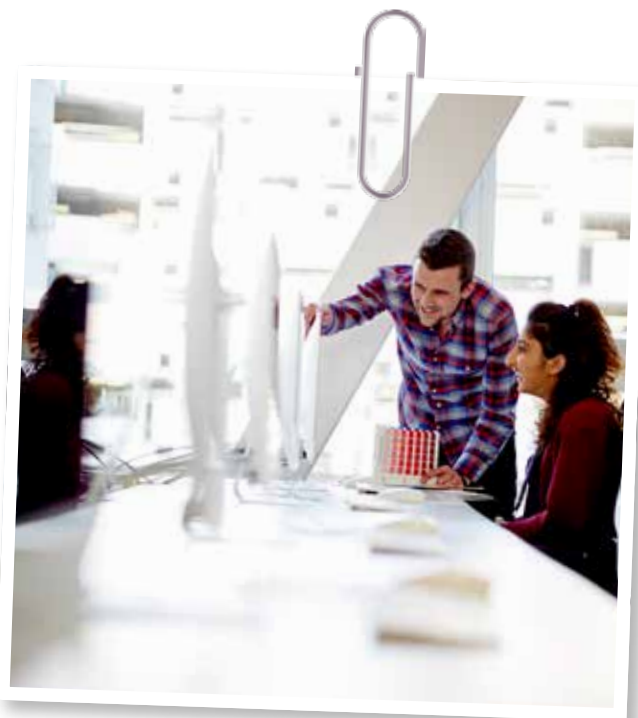
Why go to university?

The first decision to make regarding higher education is whether to go at all, and following the introduction of tuition fees, prospective students are rightly spending more time considering what is right for them.

While a lot will depend on your individual circumstances, you may want to consider the following points:

- **Job opportunities:** Getting a degree may help you to find a job. Some roles, such as nursing or law, require you to have a qualification in that area, while others may require a degree, but not in a specific subject. According to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), one in three jobs in the UK now require degree-level skills.
- **Earning potential:** Graduates generally earn higher salaries — according to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, graduates earn an average of £9,000 more per year than non-graduates.
- **Personal development:** You may not yet know what you want to do as a career, but university can be a great way to find out. Whether through experience, voluntary opportunities or joining a student society, university may open your eyes to new possibilities. The people you meet and the social activities you take part in may also help to broaden your horizons.
- **Academic interest:** You should also not overlook the potential enjoyment of studying a subject that interests you in more depth. Finding out more about an area that you are passionate about shows your commitment and will help you to get good results.

So, if you've decided a degree is for you, what do you study and where do you go? This guide will help show you how to make a decision.



Key fact:

The university focuses on practice-based learning, providing students with access to cutting-edge facilities and real-world experience.

UCAS Timeline

www.ucas.com

Mid September	Opening date for UCAS applications
15 January	Main closing date for applications
31 March	First deadline for universities to get decisions to UCAS
April	Deadline for applicants to accept one firm and one insurance offer UCAS Extra process for those without an offer to make an additional application
From July	Universities start to receive exam results, most are communicated by UCAS to universities in August
August	Clearing process commences for those who have not yet accepted or secured a place

Which university?

Deciding which university or college of higher education to attend is a big decision. You may know exactly what you want to study and opt for the university with the best reputation or resources in that field, or it may be location that is key. Do you want to live at home, or move to somewhere completely new? Do you want the hustle and bustle of a big city or the tranquillity of a rural campus? Think about what you are looking for and make some notes in the spaces provided.



Location:

Unless you are interested in a very specialised subject, it is likely that the course of your choice will be taught at a range of universities. If that is the case, one way to narrow down your search is to consider where you want to go. Living at home is likely to save you money, but you may miss out on the sense of independence and freedom that you would get from striking out on your own. Even if you decide to move away, where you move to will have a significant impact — for example, living costs are generally higher in London and the South-East than elsewhere.

Reputation:

Many people will look at league tables to compare the performance of different universities. While these can be a useful tool, it is important to look at the rankings for the course of your choice as well as the university as a whole — some universities are very strong in a particular subject area without ranking as highly overall. It is also important to be realistic about your aims — if you are predicted three C's at A Level, you are unlikely to be offered a place at a 'top 10' university, and need to look at one which more closely matches your skills.

Key fact:

Birmingham City University works with companies like Microsoft, Cisco and Cartier to develop cutting edge curriculums and to collaborate on course projects



Cost:

The tuition fees for full-time courses will vary between £6,000 – £9,000. You don't have to pay this fee up front as you can take out a Tuition Fee Loan which you repay once you're employed and earning above a £21,000. There is also financial support available to help fund your maintenance costs whilst studying at university. To find out further information on student finance, visit: www.gov.uk/studentfinance.

Social life:

University isn't all about work — it's also the chance to make new friends, enjoy new experiences and boost your independence. Look into what activities are run by the Students' Union at different universities — particularly if there is a certain social, sporting or religious group you are keen to get involved in — and what the shopping, nightlife and entertainment is like in the town or city where the university is based.

Key fact:

Birmingham City University students can gain industry experience through work placements, mentoring schemes, Erasmus years and sandwich courses (subject to any visa restrictions)

Which course?

Studying for a degree will take at least three years, so it is important that you choose the subject that’s right for you. Here are some of the points you may wish to consider — jot down a few thoughts as you go.

Career options:

If you already know what you want to do as a career, that may influence what you study. Some careers require you to have studied a specific course; others may ask for a degree in a related area, while others do not specify a subject at all. A vocational course aimed at preparing you to work in a certain sector may be more likely to offer industry-standard equipment and good links with potential employers, but it could restrict your career options if you later change your mind about what you want to do.

Personal interest:

If you are not sure about your future career plans, the best option may be to take a degree in a subject that interests you. If you already have knowledge of, or interest in the subject, you may be more likely to get good marks, and studying it in more depth may even give you new ideas of how you could work in a related field.

Entry requirements:

Entry requirements will vary between universities, so it is worth looking at which courses match the results that you have, or expect to get. Some criteria will remain the same wherever you study — for example, many mathematics courses require previous study of the subject, while to study teaching you need at least a GCSE grade C in English language, maths and a science. If you do not have these qualifications, you need to be prepared to retake them before coming to university; if you don’t want to, you need to consider alternatives. The UCAS website, or the university’s own site, is usually the best place to check requirements.

Key fact:

Student employment agency ‘OpportUNity — Student Jobs on Campus’ helps students to find part-time work with Birmingham City University (subject to any visa restrictions)

Teaching methods:

Think about how you prefer to learn. Some courses rely heavily on lectures and seminars while others feature more hands-on, practical work. Many universities have industry-standard facilities, allowing you to gain work-related experience in a realistic setting. Consider whether the tutors are experienced within their particular industry or sector.

Questions to ask

Whether on an Open Day or enquiring by email or phone, university staff should be happy to deal with any questions or concerns you may have. Some questions you may want to ask are:


- How is the course delivered (lectures, seminars, workshops, etc)?
- How is the course assessed (exam, coursework, etc)?
- What careers do graduates from the course go on to?
- Will I have the opportunity to go on placement/work experience?
- What facilities are available to students on the course?
- What additional support is on offer to students who need it?
- What accommodation provision do you make for new students?



Do you have any other questions?

Make a note of any answers here:



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