

# Our languages

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## FRENCH

French Studies at Birmingham is long-established and well-reputed, and the largest of the Modern Languages sections. We offer modules on a wide range of topics, from French Literature, contemporary French politics and society, recent French history and French Cinema. In some modules we go back as far as the 17th century; others feature events of the last three months. We also range across the Francophone world with options focussing on Africa and the Caribbean.

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## GERMAN

We are one of the major centres for German Studies in the UK. We offer a wide range of modules aiming at developing your linguistic skills, but also giving you a better understanding of all the relevant events and topics that have shaped and continue to shape the German-speaking world, from literature and history, to film and politics.

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## SPANISH

Spanish Studies has a wide range of expertise, including specialists in Iberian and Latin-American literature, history, linguistics and translation studies. We offer a core of wide-ranging foundation modules in literature, history, politics, linguistics and visual arts, as well as numerous specialist options on topics such as the Spanish Theatre, politics in Latin America, and the Caribbean.

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## ITALIAN

Italian at Birmingham is one of the best-staffed centres of Italian in the country, promising an excellent staff–student ratio and a friendly, nurturing learning environment. Our syllabus is organised around five themes: Dante and Medieval Italy; Literature and Art of the Italian Renaissance; Literature and Film; the Politics and Media; and Language/Translation Studies. Our staff teach a wide range of topics, from the worlds of Leopardi and Dante to film, art and digital cultures of contemporary Italy.

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## CHINESE AND JAPANESE

Mandarin Chinese and Japanese are both available to learn from scratch. We are one of the few universities in the UK that allow you to study one of these languages at degree level. Both countries have economies that put them in a strong position on the global stage, and are key trading partners with the UK and Europe. Our intensive beginners courses are taught by highly qualified and experienced native speaker staff. They provide a firm grounding in all aspects of the language, ensure a high level of cultural competence and offer the opportunity to study at a partner university in China or Japan.

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## RUSSIAN

Russian at Birmingham offers a vibrant and supportive atmosphere where students and staff work together to create a stimulating environment, both intellectually and linguistically. Our teaching engages students in a wide range of topics from Russian modernist and post-modernist literature, to the Russian avant-garde and the role of new media in a post-Soviet socio-economic state.

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## PORTUGUESE

We are one of the very few universities in the country that offer Portuguese from beginner level as part of a Modern Languages degree. Portuguese is the sixth largest language in the world, spoken by over 270 million people in over 10 countries, spanning four continents. You will be taught by experienced native speaker staff with expertise in a wide range of topics from Luso-Brazilian Language and Literature and historical diasporas to Portuguese identities and contemporary Portuguese film and culture.

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## CATALAN

We are one of the very few universities in the country that offer Catalan from beginner level as part of a Modern Languages degree. Catalan is a Romance language, and is spoken by over 10 million people across four European states of Latin heritage. Our staff have a wide range of teaching interests; from representations of Catalan cultural identity in visual art, literature, music and architecture to the construction of national and cultural identity in Catalan-speaking territories.

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## ENGLISH AS A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

If you are a non-native speaker of English, you may choose to complement your BA Modern Languages degree with one third taken in the study of English as a Modern Foreign Language. From a starting point of IELTS at 6.5 or equivalent, your linguistic fluency will be strengthened with a sophisticated understanding of your target culture's literature, history, politics and society, and through total immersion during your studies in Birmingham.

'The course understands how being digitally aware is essential for the workplace in today's society, so ensures we are equipped with enough skills to utilise them in the world of work. They do this by moving away from essays and exams, and instead creating assessments such as writing blog posts, creating comic strips or creating a radio interview – all in different languages.'

ZARA, BA Modern Languages

## NEXT STEPS

### How to apply

Apply through UCAS.

### Offer-holder Visit Days

Following the application process, offer-holders will be invited to an Offer-holder Visit Day and are strongly encouraged to take this opportunity to visit the Department and meet staff and students with whom they would be studying.



## LEARN MORE

**Email:** [study-languages-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:study-languages-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

**@artsatbham**

Full details on all courses with year by year module breakdown, Open Day talks, student and graduate profiles and year abroad information can be found at:

**[www.birmingham.ac.uk/languages](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/languages)**  
and **[mychoices.bham.ac.uk](http://mychoices.bham.ac.uk)**



This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the School. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be discontinued and new ones offered in their place.

Please note the information in this brochure is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change (June 2019).

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SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES,  
CULTURES, ART HISTORY  
AND MUSIC

# MODERN LANGUAGES



# Modern Languages

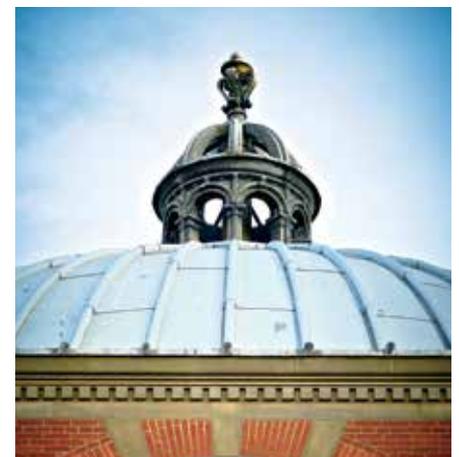
Birmingham's fusion of language and culture places employability at its heart, preparing you to live and work as an engaged citizen of the world.

Modern Languages at Birmingham boasts a truly integrated curriculum, developing both linguistic and cultural fluency simultaneously. To help us achieve this, we pride ourselves on:

- Competitive language contact hours – six hours per week for your advanced language(s) and eight hours per week for your beginner language(s) for the first half of your degree in Birmingham (excluding Catalan)
  - Technology in teaching and assessment to develop your digital skills
  - Small group teaching to foster active language practice
  - A strong focus on employability
- We aim to be a human, progressive Department that gets to know its undergraduates as people as well as students. Through personal tutoring and support from the College of Arts and Law Careers Network, our graduates have gone onto work in a variety of fields, from translation, media and teaching, to fashion, banking and international aid.

Therefore, it is no surprise that we are ranked in the Top 100 for Modern Languages in the *QS World University Rankings 2019*.

- We are one of the major centres for the study of Modern Languages in the UK, offering undergraduate studies in Catalan, English as a Modern Foreign Language, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Across different languages, a huge amount of choice is available. Modules range from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and classical culture experimental cinema, digital surveillance and contemporary society and politics, via topics in history, philosophy, gender, sexuality and identity.
- You can also benefit from the subject expertise of the Birmingham Centre for Translation. The study of Translation at Birmingham can be taken through stand-alone modules or as a minor, where you will specialise in this subject for one third of your degree.
- We pride ourselves on flexibility within our Modern Languages programmes. Qualified students who wish to study several languages can do so, many languages can be followed in major/minor combinations if desired, and students can seek to alter the weighting and combination of subjects as they move through the degree.



'The Modern Languages lecturers have unique personalities and are true professionals in their fields. Their drive, passion and dedication to their work has given me a lot of inspiration and courage to follow my dreams.'

LIJA, Modern Languages graduate

## BA MODERN LANGUAGES (R901)

### One language

You can specialise in a single language, which allows you to study a particular language, culture and history in great breadth and depth. Choose from French, German, Italian or Spanish.

### Two or three languages

You may also study two or three languages. Up to two beginner languages can be taken, as long as one is in either French or Spanish. Otherwise, one beginner language is permitted alongside one or two advanced language(s).

Available from advanced (post A-level or equivalent): English as a Modern Foreign Language, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish.

Available from beginners: Catalan, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish.

### Translation Studies pathway

You will be able to take a minor in Translation Studies, alongside the study of one or two modern languages. This is a professionally oriented component which will hone your practical translation skills, introduce you to theoretical approaches, and give you a strong grounding in the study of language.

On this pathway, your main language will be French, German, Italian or Spanish from advanced level.



Course	UCAS code	Typical offer
BA Modern Languages	R901	ABB
BA Modern Languages with Business Management	R9N1	AAB
BA Modern Languages and History	R9V1	AAB
BA Modern Languages and English	7Q6Q	AAB
BA Modern Languages and History of Art	5QV1	ABB
BA Modern Languages and Music	R752	AAB
BA Russian Studies and International Relations	RL72	AAB

### Joint Honours programmes

All Modern Languages degrees last four years, the third year of which will be spent abroad. Our Joint Honours Modern Languages programmes are detailed in the above table.

In your first year, study is split equally between the two disciplines. In Year 2, you can either continue with this weighting, or alter the balance of your study, meaning that you could change to a major-minor weighting. In your final year, you have the option to maintain your second-year balance or revert to an equal balance. This flexibility allows you to tailor the course, once you have had the time and experience to consider where your strengths and interests lie.

For BA Modern Languages and History of Art, it is possible to choose up to two languages. If one language is taken alongside History of Art, students can opt for a major/minor weighting from the first year of study.

## BA MODERN LANGUAGES WITH BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (R9N1)

This degree enables you to take a minor in Business Management alongside your blended language and culture study. You can either major in a single language, or combine two languages alongside your business modules.

### 'With language' programmes

Subjects offering a 'with language' minor (up to 40 credits) at the University of Birmingham include Law, International Business, Economics and International Relations. These involve a third year spent at a university or an institution with

particular expertise in the main subject of study. Combinations are not available for every language, so please check our website for details.



### LEARN MORE

You can download a year-by-year breakdown of your chosen combination through our MyChoices app at [www.mychoices.bham.ac.uk](http://www.mychoices.bham.ac.uk)

Not all combinations are possible. For more information, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/languagerestrictions](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/languagerestrictions)



For more information please visit

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/languages](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/languages)

# How will my degree work?

## STRUCTURE

- In each year of your course, you will follow 120 credits' worth of study in total (typically six modules, 20 credits each)

### Year 1

- You will follow two x 20-credit compulsory modules in each language you study
- Unless you have chosen to combine three subjects in your degree, you will also have the opportunity to take some optional modules as part of your programme

### Year 2

- In the first semester, you will take a 20-credit core module in each language you study
- In the second semester, you will follow a 10-credit compulsory module in each language you study alongside a 10-credit research project or optional module
- Further optional modules are available

### Year 3

All Modern Languages programmes at Birmingham are four-year degrees with the third year spent abroad. The year abroad exposes you to many new experiences and people, radically transforming your language skills. The amount of countries you visit will usually mirror the number of languages you are studying. There are a variety of possible ways in which you can spend your Year Abroad, with a combination of studying, teaching, and/or working.

- Studying at one of our partner institutions in a country where your target language is widely spoken is the most popular choice for the Year Abroad. We have a large number of partner institutions across Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Portugal, as well as countries outside Europe such as Argentina, Mexico, China, Japan, Russia, Brazil, Uruguay and Canada. Going to a university abroad offers you plenty of opportunities to make new friends, social contacts and progression towards fluency. You may also be eligible for financial support from bodies such as Erasmus or Universitas 21.

- Some students prefer to spend their Year Abroad as a Teaching Assistant in a school. This is available to students who are studying French, German, Spanish and Italian, and are only studying one or two languages. This is a salaried placement of between six and nine months at a school in a country where your target language is widely spoken. This scheme is administered by the British Council.
- Completing a Work Placement is available to students who are studying French, German, Spanish and Italian. Students who have secured work placements either independently or through the Department have benefited from a significant improvement in their language skills, as well as gaining invaluable experience for their future careers.
- A Vacation Course is an intensive language programme in a summer school abroad, subsidised by the University. You can join one of these if you are studying two languages and wish to complete a year-long study, teaching or work placement in one of your languages. If you are taking three languages, a vacation course will be compulsory alongside two study or work placements.

### Year 4

- You will follow a 20-credit compulsory module in each language you study, focussing on practical language work
- You can choose from a wide range of optional modules
- You will do a dissertation in one of your subjects

