



# Introduction

## **Birmingham City**

Birmingham is a vibrant city that has lots to see and do for almost everyone. The heart of the city offers more than 1000 shops, great hotels, the tastes of many of the world's cuisines, performing arts, world-class museum collections and various sporting arenas. It's a great place to take a break from the books mid-day or enjoy an evening out and getting around is very simple. The Bullring is a very popular destination for shoppers with over 140 stores spread across three levels and located right across the New Street train station. On certain days you can browse the indoor market and the Rag Market behind the Bullring where you can find collections of vibrant fabrics and a variety of fresh produce. Located on the canal side is the Mailbox with many restaurants and designer stores to choose from. Many of the most popular retail stores and chain restaurants can also be found on High Street and Corporation Street. Brindley Place is definitely worth a visit as it is home to some of the best eating in the city with a beautiful view of the canal.



## **Birmingham University**

The University of Birmingham has been leading the way in research and education since the 1900's. Birmingham is a great place to study with lots to offer to its students from brilliant sporting facilities, a wide assortment of social events, a global reputation for teaching, and a diverse student body from over 150 different countries. The university campuses are safe and friendly exhibiting an array of sculptures, and

Victorian and modern buildings. University staff are also very friendly and helpful with any questions or problems.

## Upon Arrival in Birmingham

Once you have arrived and settled in to your residence there are a few things you may want to take care of to get things started:

**Mobile Phone:** You have the option of pay-as-you-go or signing up for a monthly plan. You can visit any of the mobile network stores in the Bullring or various areas around the city to purchase a phone and set up your plan.

You can choose from Orange, Vodafone, 3 or O2 depending on which network suits your needs. If you already have a phone and would just like to use pay-as-you-go you can purchase the SIM card and set-up instructions from any local variety store or gas station.

**Banking:** You will need to have a British bank account set-up in order to pay your tuition by direct debit instalments. You can choose from Lloyds TSB or Barclays on campus but prepare for long lines in the first few weeks of term. You can also visit a different branch or other banks such as HSBC or NatWest around the city.

**Medical Practice:** The university medical practice is located on Pritchatts Road. Once you sign up you will be assigned with a General Practitioner (GP).

**Railcard:** This is very useful if you plan to travel frequently by train as it gives you 1/3 off of the regular price. You are eligible as long as you are under 26 or a full-time student. Forms can be collected from your local train station or online at <http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>.

**Where to live:** If you have not already arranged your permanent accommodation for the year you have a few options to choose from: University accommodation, Private housing, or letting an apartment/house with an agency. Many of the letting agencies can be found along Bristol Rd. in Selly Oak. The following websites may also be useful:

- <http://www.has.bham.ac.uk/studentaccom/housingservices/>
- <http://www.direct-housing.co.uk/>
- <http://www.opalstudents.com/student-accommodation/birmingham/opal-1-oob/features/http://www.birminghampropertyletting.co.uk/>
- [http://www.ukpropertyshop.co.uk/s/West\\_Midlands/letting\\_agents\\_Birmingham.shtml](http://www.ukpropertyshop.co.uk/s/West_Midlands/letting_agents_Birmingham.shtml)

**Note:** Read over your contract carefully and take into account the contract term as the IDD programme runs for a full 12 months and you will be away for field work in the summer.

## Support

You may contact the following people/departments if you require any support regarding academics, finances, disability, the university, or personal matters:

- Personal tutor assigned to you by IDD
- Student mentor (if you live in university accommodation)
- International Student Advisory Service <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/international/>
- Counselling and Guidance Services <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/counsell/>
- Student Resources and Support <http://www.eisu.bham.ac.uk/support/>



# Entertainment

Birmingham has lots to offer whether you are in the mood for a night out on the town, a nice dinner, or catching the latest movie at the cinema. Before you head out make sure you sign up with [www.studentbeans.com](http://www.studentbeans.com) for loads of coupons and discount offers on various venues around the city.



## Food

The food options are endless with menus catering to all of the world's finest cuisines.

**Indian:** Chamon: 507 Bristol Rd. Selly Oak 0871 207 1034, Blue Mango: Regency Wharf, Broad Street 0121 633 4422, Asha's: Edmund House, 12-22 Newhall St. 0121 200 2767. There are also many restaurants to choose from on Soho Rd. and in Smallheath.

**Bangladeshi:** Rajnagar Tandoori: 256 Lyndon Rd. Olton, Solihull 0121 742 8140. Many restaurants to choose from in the Sparkbrook area also.

**Latin American:** Las Iguanas: Arcadian Centre, Hurst St. 0121 622 4466, La Tasca: Regency Wharf, Broad St. 0121 643 9888

**Italian:** Del Villagio: 245 Broad St. 0845 203 1730, Strada: International Convention Centre, footbridge to Brindleyplace 0121 212 2661, Cielo: 6 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace 0845 202 4659, Bella Italia: 102 New Street 0845 202 4641. San Paolo: 24 Ludgate Hill 0121 233 1919



**French:** Cafe Rouge: Waters Edge, Brindleyplace 0845 202 4651. Chez Joules: 5a Ethel St. 0121 633 4664

**Thai:** Thai Edge: 7 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace 0845 203 1729, Kinnaree: 22 Waterfront Walk 0845 202 4681.

**Pan Asian:** The Oriental: The Mailbox, 128-130 Wharfside St. 0845 205 1725, Wagamama: The Bullring, Edgbaston St. 0845 203 1736.

**Malaysian:** The Oriental Bar Restaurant: The Mailbox, 128-130 Wharfside St. 0121 633 9988.

**Chinese:** Sum Ye: 639 Bristol Rd. 0121 472 5942, Chung Ying Garden Cantonese Restaurant: 17 Thorpe St. 0121 666 6622.

**Japanese:** Shogun Sushi & Noddle Bar: The Mailbox, 27-29 Wharfside St. 0121 632 1253, Shogun Teppanyaki Japanese: The Water's Edge, Brindleyplace 0121 643 1856.

**Greek:** Ulysses: 42A Bristol Street 0121 622 3159, Athens Greek Restaurant: 31 Paradise Circus 0121 643 5523.

**Caribbean:** Dutch Pot: 427 Dudley Rd. Winson Green 0121 558 5414, Mojam Caribbean Takeaway: Alcester Rd. Moseley Village 0121 442 4483, Xaymaca Jamaican: 34 Bristol St. 0121 622 3332.

**African:** African Restaurant Bristol Rd. 0121 622 4579, Savannah 32 Bristol Rd. 0121 622 4343.

**Vegetarian:** Sibila's Canal Square, Browning St. 0121 456 7634

## Nightlife

- Rococo Lounge: 260 Broad St. Hip-hop, R&B, reggae, chart
- Risa: 259-263 Broad St. Chart, R&B, salsa, rock
- Jamhouse: St. Pauls Square, Jewellery Quarter live rhythm 'n blues
- Mechu (Bar, Grill & Club): 47-59 Summer Row R&B, Chart, Rock
- Snobs: 29 Paradise Circus, Queensway Indie, rock, northern soul and 60's
- Gatecrasher: 182 Broad St. 3 rooms playing R&B, drum & bass, chart
- Oceana: Hurst St. 2 rooms playing R&B, hip-hop, chart



## Events



There are many events that take place throughout the city during the year which are definitely worth a visit. There is the German Christmas market that runs from November 12 to December 23 in Victoria Square and Upper New Street, the St. Patricks Day parade in Digbeth, the Summer food festival in June in Cannon Hill Park, the Moseley Folk festival in the first week of September, and the Flatpack film festival that takes place in February at

various theatres in the city. There is also the International Car Show that takes place in January, the food and garden show in June, and fashion week in December, which all take place at the NEC.



## Other things to do

- The Staff House on campus is a great place for a drink and some karaoke
- Carling Academy: 52-54 Dale End- Live indie/rock music
- Flapper and Firkin: Kingston Row- live gigs throughout the year
- The Victoria: 48 John Bright St. -pub with live music
- Cinema: Cineworld 181 Broad St., AMC 220 Ladywood Middleway, and the Electric Cinema (also shows independent films) 47 Station St.
- Bowling: Broadway Plaza Multiplex, 220 Ladywood Middleway



## Places to go (within an hr of Birmingham)

There are some great places to go on day trips and weekend's away from Birmingham. Here are some of the highlights within an hour or so of Birmingham:

**Oxford:** takes about an hour to get to via train or to drive. It's a beautiful city with a real mix of ancient and modern. There is plenty for the tourist to do such as visiting the historic buildings and the University colleges, museums, theatre shows and going punting along the river. Not too far away there is also a good discount shopping centre called Bicester Village.

**Stratford-Upon-Avon:** The birthplace of Shakespeare has easy road and rail access. It will take about an hour and half to get to via public transport from Selly Oak. You can visit Shakespeare's houses, get a real taste of olde England, walk around the parks and gardens on the banks of the river Avon and for theatre goers there is always something showing at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

**Warwick Castle:** Around 40 minutes from the city centre. It costs around £14 to enter. It's a great day out to see the castle and be entertained by several shows throughout the day.

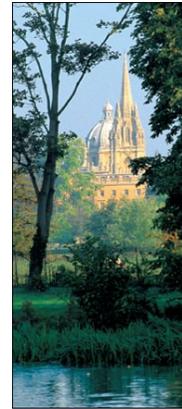
**Alton Towers:** Open until the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009 before it closes for the winter, the theme park is about an hour from the city centre. It costs £30 for entrance which includes some excellent theme park rides. Check out the website for more details [www.altontowers.com](http://www.altontowers.com). There is also the theme park Drayton Manor which is much easier and nearer to reach than Alton Towers.

**Black Country Museum:** Based in Dudley, it has some period houses and a mock-up of a coal mine. Its about half an hour away from the city centre.

**Cadbury's World:** Based in Bourneville, only about 10 minutes away from the University. It's a tour and history of one of the most famous chocolate brands and includes lots of free chocolate. It's a great day out and costs around £10 for students.

**Lichfield:** It is only half an hour from Birmingham City Centre and has a good shopping centre, extensive parkland, the Cathedral, plenty of historical references and also The Garrick Theatre. Depending on dates in January it may still have the seasonal Pantomime and is a must for a British experience.

**Ironbridge:** It has several attractions for a day out including 10 museums and a valley. Its based in Shropshire and around an 40 minutes away from Birmingham.



**Star City:** This leisure and entertainment centre it is just 10 minutes away from the City Centre. Buses number 66 and 66a which head to the centre can be found within the city centre, so it is quite easy to get there.

Address: 32 Watson Road, Birmingham, B7 5SA

Website: [www.starcity.org.uk](http://www.starcity.org.uk)

### **National Sea Life Centre**

- This is a tropical paradise in the heart of the busy Birmingham. With over 60 displays of sea life, the Sea Life Centre gives you an experience that is just out of this world!!

Address: The Waters Edge, Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HL

Website: [www.sealifeeurope.com](http://www.sealifeeurope.com)



### **Discount Outlets:**

If you are a shopaholic and if you don't mind buying things that are six months to a year out of date, you can do very well.

There are discount outlets in the Midlands:

- East Midlands Designer Outlet in South Normanton, Derbyshire  
[www.eastmidlandsdesigneroutlet.com](http://www.eastmidlandsdesigneroutlet.com)
- De Bradelei Mill Shops in Belper, Derbyshire and Lutterworth near Leicester  
[www.debradelei.com/store](http://www.debradelei.com/store)

Some people prefer to go to **Bicester Village Outlet Shopping** [www.bicester-village.com](http://www.bicester-village.com)

Bicester Village, near Oxford, is a place for luxury shopping, but it is the savings that bring the customers. Everything is at least 30 to 50 or 70 % off normal prices - almost a secret. There you can find discount prices in more than 100 chic designer and brand name boutiques (Versace, Timberland, Burberry, Tommy Hilfiger, etc.)

**From Birmingham**, there are daily services from Moor Street Station to Bicester North station, with journey times from just over an hour. On arrival at Bicester North station you can take a Taxi Bus straight to the Outlet, just for £ 4 return.

**BICESTER VILLAGE**  
OUTLET SHOPPING



# Life in Birmingham

## Working/volunteering in Birmingham



There is definitely enough time to complement your academic studies with a part-time job or volunteering. It really depends on the individual and how much you need the money but it would be best not to work more than 2-3 days a week on the full-time programmes. Before committing to a set # of hours per week it would be advisable to have a keen understanding of weekly class/work load. A great place to look for student jobs or short-term positions is the **JobZone** within the Student Guild. They have bar work, administrative jobs and other temporary positions. It might also be worth visiting some of the Temp job agencies within Birmingham city centre who can sign you up. Also check out the new Job Centre which has opened in Selly Oak next to Sainsbury's supermarket.

There are plenty of volunteering opportunities across Birmingham. Check out **Intervol** in the University student guild who might be able to help you out. They also have excellent events with local nonprofits/charities that one can link up with. This is a great opportunity for students to explore all the great volunteering opportunities. There is also the organisation Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (<http://www.bvsc.org/>). In terms of International Development, some students have volunteered at the Refugee Council in Birmingham. In addition, Christian Aid based in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham is always looking for volunteers in their office. Get in contact by calling 0121 2002283.

## Places of Worship

As well as the ecumenical Chaplaincy in the student guild, there are places of worship to cover all faiths in Birmingham. Here are some which you may wish to attend near to the University:

- **Christian Churches:** Elim Church Centre (just off the Bristol Road in Selly Oak), Weoley Hill URC Church (Green Meadow Road, Selly Oak), St John's Church, Harborne (lively Anglican church with big evening service at 6.30pm attended by students) and City Evangelical Church (Westbourne Road, Edgbaston). A lively and vibrant church that can be found in the city centre is the Birmingham Christian Centre. With diverse nationalities and a strong leadership, this church offers one exactly what they want in terms of spiritual nourishment and rest. It is accessible via the 82 and 87 bus routes and is opposite the Job Centre on the Parade.  
Address: Birmingham, West Midlands, B1 3QQ Website: [www.birminghamcc.co.uk](http://www.birminghamcc.co.uk)
- **Roman Catholic:** Church in Harborne on Vivian Road.
- **Samantabhadra Buddhist Centre:** 38 Silver Birch Road, Erdington.



- **Birmingham Central Mosque:** based in the city centre on Belgrave Middleway. There is also a Mosque on Dartmouth Road in Selly Oak or on Woodstock Road in Moseley.
- **Sikh Temples:** Sri Dasmesh Temple based on 305 Wheeler Street in Birmingham City Centre and Ramgarhia Gurdwara in Small Heath.
- **Jewish Synagogue:** Solihull Synagogue located on Monastery Drive.
- **Hindu Temple:** Vendanta Institute UK located on the Hagley Road in Edgbaston.



## Societies:

A society is an organisation to which people who share similar interests can belong. So why not join one of them according to your preference? There are a wide range of societies (around 100!) within the University. Here a few of them, just to see what they are doing:

**The photographic society.** They have many activities and exciting competitions!

**The film society.** They are screening quality films at the university's campus. You can watch all your favourites and also find some new ones.

**Religious/ Faith societies.** You can find the Anglican, Catholic, Church Central, Fusion, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Krishna Consciousness, Methodist, Navigators, Seeking a More Enriched & Lightened Mind (SAMEEM) and Sikh societies.

**Jazz & Blues Society.** You will find everything you need to know about live jazz, funk, hip hop, latin, and blues music.

**Social Sciences.** They organise social, sporting and careers events open to anyone, but geared towards students studying in departments affiliated to the College of Social Sciences.

**Cultural and International societies.** So far you can find the following: International Student Association, African and Caribbean, *Bharat Parivar* (Indian Family), Bulgarian, Arab, Czech and Slovak, Erasmus & Study Abroad, Hellenic, Latin American, Mauritian, Mexican, Nordic, Pakistan Cultural, Polish, Persian, Romanian, Somali, and Welsh.

# Studying



As recent graduates of the department we can offer some excellent advice on maximising your academic potential this coming year. Here are some hints and tips from last year's students:-

**Make sure you attend the induction week** – it's really useful to help you get started and will provide lots of great advice for the rest of the year.

**Appreciate Ann and Debra** as they can sort everything out for you. You name the query, they have the answer.

Know the key words that your instructors will require in your essays and exams: assess, discuss, describe, examine. **ALWAYS answer the question** however tempting it might be to go off on tangents or answer it in a different way.



**Be organised!** Unlike in your undergrad degree where one could write an essay with an "all nighter," lecturers will know how much research went into a paper (hint = the more references the better, at least it never hurts). You should afford yourself at least a few days of researching the topic and materials and at least one full day to edit your paper. Of course everyone will write differently and times will vary yet one should provide roughly a week to write a paper if

not a couple weeks. NOTE: The earlier you start the better! A few weeks before a paper is due would suffice.

Attend some of the extra Tuesday sessions on academic writing, plagiarism, etc.. This is free to all students and exemplifies IDD's commitment to bettering their students.

One book in particular that is particularly useful is '**How to write Essays & Assignment**' by **Kathleen McMillian and Jonathan Weyers**. This book is exceptional because it not only has basic grammar/writing tips but goes over everything from: critical writing, researching a topic, what markers are looking for, writing a draft, editing/revising, referencing, and presentation. For those students who have been out of University for a long time then they should definitely consider using such a book on writing.

On a final, non-academic note, **enjoy the year!** The department is great and is there for you to use to the fullest. Its an excellent community for you to meet others and work so make sure you use it.

# Other Information

## Public Transportation

The University of Birmingham is well connected both by train as well as by bus. There is a train station on campus which is only a few minutes' walk from the main building. Train departs every ten minutes to and from New Street Stations (closest to city centre) whose final destination is either Longbridge or Redditch and return ticket costs approx. £1.70. The time table for the trains departing from University station can be seen at student portal (please log in to



my.bham.ac.uk with your username and password and browse my. campus section). The 11A and 11C have the longest bus route in the city since they go round it, both clockwise and anti-clockwise. (So one is able to see the sights of Brum from both directions, how cool is that?)

Nearer to the university, Bus no 44 is the most widely used route for students since it is free between the Edgbaston campus and the Selly Oak campus. Buses 61, 62, 63 stop along Bristol Road and take you to the City Centre and ticket costs approx £3.30 return, £1.70 single and day saver (unlimited day's travel) for £3.30. Make sure you tender exact bus fare as drivers do not give change. For travel to other cities like London, Oxford, etc Birmingham is well connected and buses can be taken from Digbeth bus coach station operated under National Express. You can make online booking and avail discounts especially check out for fanfares. Trains can be taken from New Street station and you can book early to find best fares.

## Useful websites:

- National rail enquires: [www.rail.co.uk](http://www.rail.co.uk) 08457484950
- TraveLine: [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)
- National Express: [www.nationalexpress.co.uk](http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk)
- Megabus: [www.megabus.co.uk](http://www.megabus.co.uk)
- Easyjet (low cost airline) [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)
- Ryan Air: [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)
- Eurostar: [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)
- Trip Advisor: [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)
- Check out the website [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) for great help and information on getting to places. It will map out the easiest mode of public transport and tell you exactly when and where it will go from and get to.

## Speciality Food

**African** - In addition to the Bullring and indoor markets, there is also the Pac supermarket. This can be found in Cape Hill and is accessible via the 82 and 87 bus routes. Here one can find fresh fruit and vegetables not usually found in the supermarket, which are reasonably priced. Great food to spice up your meals! Website: [www.paksupermarkets.co.uk](http://www.paksupermarkets.co.uk)



**South Asian (Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Sriankan)** Ashkan Halal Butchers on Bristol road sells fresh halal meat. Select and Save on Bristol road is a small supermarket specialised for spices and other food items. There are many Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi shops in Sparkbrook and Small heath.

**Mediterranean (Turkish, Greek, Tunisian, Iranian, etc.)** Ashkan Deli on Bristol Road especially for Mediterranean foods

**Chinese** - There are some Chinese supermarkets at **Chinese quarter** near Birmingham New Street station.

## Hairdressers

A great place to find hair products and accessories is Juliet's Hair and Beauty shop, which can be found opposite Debenhams in the city centre. It is accessible via the 61, 62 and 63 bus routes. Weaves and braids can be found here for all you ladies who need to get your hair done!

University of Birmingham has a hairdresser within the campus. Besides this, there are many hairdressers located near University of Birmingham Edgbaston campus on Bristol Road. Art of Hair Dressing near Sainsbury, Adams Studio near Aldi and Hair Gallery are few of them. Small Heath has many hairdressers which are specialised mostly in South Asian and African men.

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