Welcome from the Head of Department

The University of Bath is a world-class institution. In the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies we offer a range of high-quality degree programmes which make our students highly employable and equip them to face the challenges of the future. We offer excellent placement opportunities and exciting options for study and work abroad; we are renowned for producing internationally mobile students.

Our current undergraduates praise us for our student-centred approach and the support offered by our staff. Our degree in Modern Languages and European Studies is ranked 5th or above, in each of the languages we offer, for student satisfaction on the quality of our teaching (The Complete University Guide 2014).

We look forward to meeting you!

Prof Charles Lees
Head of Department
Undergraduate Languages

Why study Modern Languages & European Studies at Bath?

League tables show that the languages programmes at Bath are among the best in the UK (for example, 5th for French, 4th for German, and 8th for Russian in The Complete University Guide 2014). What’s more, Modern Languages at Bath are ranked joint 3rd for student satisfaction in the Guardian’s University League Table 2014.

We attract high-calibre students, including many from abroad, who choose the degree for a variety of reasons. Among these are:

- Excellent reputation for teaching and learning – many of the enthusiastic and approachable teaching team are internationally renowned experts in their research fields

- A broad-based approach, incorporating history, culture, politics, society and languages, with a contemporary focus

- The study of two equally weighted languages, taught in the context of the countries in which they are spoken and alongside a wide range of integrated options

- An opportunity to study subjects additional to the degree, including other languages

- Total immersion in the foreign language in all classes where possible, helping you prepare for your year abroad and attain levels of near native fluency by your final year

- A full year abroad as an integral part of the course (as a Language Assistant, on study placement, on work placement, or a combination) - highly valued by employers and giving you an advantage in the competitive job market when you graduate

- Graduate employment prospects that have been consistently ranked among the best in the UK (all languages at Bath are ranked fourth or above for Graduate prospects in The Complete University Guide 2014).

What is distinctive about studying languages at Bath?

On our BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies programmes, an equal amount of time is spent studying each language, which includes units in written and spoken language and in the study of the politics and culture of the countries in which the target language is spoken.

Many units are taught and assessed in the target language, which further helps language acquisition.

There is a high number of contact hours with approximately six per week assigned to each language and an additional 2½ hours for the European Studies element. Students are divided into classes containing around 20 students for written and spoken language. Other units are taught by way of large-group lectures, and seminars of around 20 students.

The Department also offers a language based BA (Hons) degree programme in Language and Politics. In addition, International Management and Modern Languages (French, German or Spanish) is a BSc (Hons) degree programme offered jointly by the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies and the School of Management. Three closely integrated strands run through the degree: management, language, and the ‘interface’, which looks, for example, at the legal and business environments, and the internationalisation of business in the language host countries.
What is European Studies?

Europe is changing fast, with former Eastern Bloc countries having joined the European Union, and with new markets from the Baltic to the Pacific. The MLES programme offers the opportunity to achieve fluency in TWO European languages from French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, and to develop detailed knowledge and understanding of the political and cultural issues facing European nations in the 21st century and of their place in the world.

The Department is one of the leading centres for European Studies in the country. Staff expertise ranges over a wide variety of disciplines and includes memory, history and identity across European culture; Europeanisation and public policy; Euroscepticism in nation states; conflict and security in Europe; European cinema; literature and society in contemporary Russia; democratisation; political scandals in Italy; migration into Europe and extreme Right parties.

European Studies is an element common to all the language combinations. Taught by academic staff from across the Department, it facilitates the sharing of perspectives and ideas, unites our students and contextualises the study of individual countries. Throughout the four years of study, active and progressive language learning is integrated with the study of the politics and culture of the relevant countries, within a trans-European framework.

I chose to come to Bath primarily for the multi-disciplinary and contemporary course, and four years on I know I couldn’t have made a better decision! I love the variety of the Modern Languages and European Studies programme. As well as teaching me two languages to a very high level, the course has introduced me to fascinating aspects of history, politics and society.

In a globalised world, it is not enough to speak a language, you have to understand the people of that country, and that’s what you get from this course. The contemporary focus of the course means that what we learn is relevant and useful.

Throughout my time at Bath, I’ve had so much support and encouragement, and the enthusiasm of the staff makes classes even more enjoyable. Furthermore, the lecturers are all leading experts in their fields, who share their latest research with us. This creates a unique learning experience for us, and has inspired me to continue with research in my future career.

Katie Brown
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and Spanish)

BA (Hons) Modern Languages & European Studies degree programme structure

For further details on the units available, please see our website: www.bath.ac.uk/study
Your degree structure

Year One consists of core units in Written and spoken language, and foundation compulsory units in politics, culture and society for each of your two languages, as well as an introduction to the study of modern Europe. The weighting of the various elements is as follows: Written and spoken language 40%, politics, culture and society 40%, European studies 20%.

Year Two enhances knowledge and skills developed in Year One in core units in Written and spoken language; units in politics, culture and society; and units in European studies, preparing students for their year abroad.

Year Four builds on the knowledge acquired during the year abroad. It develops advanced linguistic fluency and accuracy in a range of contexts and registers and offers a choice of more than 30 National and European options of which six must be taken.

Here is a small selection of our final year options (dependent on language combinations):

- Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité - La France et ses idées
- La persuasion et la propagande
- Le leadership contemporain
- Multikulturelles Deutschland
- Protest und Widerstand
- Heimat und Identität
- Scrittrici Italiane del ventesimo secolo
- Organised crime & democracy in Italy
- The Berlusconi years (1994-2012)
- Modern Russian Cinema
- Gorbachev and Perestroika
- Politics in Post-communist Russia
- The Post-Franco Party Political System in Spain
- Latin American visual cultures
- Gender in contemporary Spain
- The Politics of Ethnicity, Religion & Nationalism
- US Global Politics
- Film and International Relations

Three closely integrated strands run throughout the programme:

- The Written and spoken language core units develop fluency and accuracy, and are taught through a variety of media: exercises in written and spoken language, audio-visual classes and self-access Computer Assisted Language Learning materials. The Department has digital language laboratories and there is a Self Access Language Centre (SALC) situated in the Library.

- Units in politics, culture and society develop and enhance an understanding of the contemporary history, politics, culture and society of the countries concerned. In their final year, students then specialise in areas in which they are particularly interested through the study of National Options. These units are taught in the target language (apart from ab initio languages in the first and second year).

- Units in European studies provide an overarching view of historical, political, social and cultural developments affecting Europe as a whole (East and West).

Students of Spanish are offered an equal range of contemporary options on Spain and Latin America as well as placement and university exchange opportunities in both.

The University’s English Language Centre offers ‘Introduction to TEFL’ as an optional unit for MLES students in Year 2 (which can be extended to a full Cambridge CELTA qualification in the early part of the summer vacation). Students have found this unit to be a very useful way of gaining confidence in teaching for their year abroad in Year 3, as well as providing them with the first stages of a valuable internationally recognised EFL teaching qualification.

As part of the University’s commitment to internationalisation, our Foreign Languages Centre provides our students with the opportunity to learn an extracurricular language. A range of languages and levels are on offer. Students can benefit from weekly language classes from scratch through to post A-Level standard. Further details are available on the Foreign Languages Centre pages: www.bath.ac.uk/flc
A day in the life

We asked some of our current students to write about a typical day on their programme, whether based on campus or on their year abroad. Here are their contributions.

A day in the campus life of…

…a first year student

“As with any first year student, many days of the week you wake up and have to find some words to exclaim just how great you feel, the only difference for an MLES student is that we have a wider vocabulary to employ!

Having made it to the first seminar of the day, a little switch will go and you’ll learn to just tune into the language you’re using for that hour, be it French, German, Italian, Russian or Spanish. I know I no longer have any difficulty mixing my two languages up. A grammar seminar is a nice, methodical way to start, allowing you to ease yourself into being awake.

Between then and the next seminar or lecture comes the time when you can tell yourself you’re working by watching the news. It counts if it’s in your target language. The same goes for doing a bit of reading. What other students may struggle to find the time to do, we can do as part of our work.

After that comes a nice part of the day, European studies. These lectures are mixed with students from the rest of the PoLIS department who have chosen it as a module. You can relax a little more than the others because there’s a chance you will be going through the same topics again in your cultural and history side of your languages, but that’s only until they move away from France and Spain.

During that last hour before your final lecture of the day, it’s usually time to skim through the presentation that will already be online. So long as you have a vague clue on what is about to happen then the improvements in Spanish society during the 60s can’t confuse you too much. You’ll make it through the lecture, with a fair pile of notes. Once these notes have been organised enough to be coherent, you are once again, a normal student with that larger vocabulary. Any student will be able to tell you what happens from the evening onwards!”

Mike Deeks
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and Spanish)
... a second year student

“On an average day, I aim to get onto campus by at least 9:30am. As a second year you have to get used to living in town and not having the comfortable five-minute walk to classes!

Seminars during the second year are very diverse. For those relating to the ‘politics, culture & society’ units, there are student-led presentations and discussions on a given topic that is important to the course. In our Language units, time is spent improving our written and spoken language, regularly using the Audio-Visual Lab.

I can have anything between two and five hours of contact time so the rest of my day is spent accordingly. When I’m not in seminars or lectures, I normally head to the library to complete assignments and key readings for upcoming lectures and seminars. Assignments can range from translations and grammar exercises to reading newspaper articles and watching video clips.

I am also Chairman of Bath Finance Society and as a result my day will include dealing with these responsibilities - liaising with members and sponsors, organising events and so on - as well as keeping up with financial news throughout the day.

Outside of work - I don’t spend all of my time in the library! - I use the university swimming pool regularly. On top of this, I’m a musician and typically I’ll spend at least one evening a week playing with a small University jazz club during the evening.

It’s hard to give a simple ‘standard day’ because there is so much variation. Essentially, I view life as a second year MLES student at the University of Bath as a great combination of intense academic challenge coupled with time to pursue all your other interests.”

George Vowden
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and ab initio Italian)

... final year students

“After a trek up Widcombe Hill, we usually arrive at Uni just before 9:00am and head to the library for a ten minute flick through Le Monde. In the French Written Language class, there’s a short discussion of what’s in the news, then going over homework; a few brave ones read theirs out to the class. Next week’s homework is to prepare an article about global warming.

Then time for a coffee in 4W café with course-mates, to talk about work and life in general. This merges into a presentation meeting (coffee continues in background) where we review ideas so far – we’re meeting with the lecturer later to discuss.

After a visit to the library to get some books for a 1000 word assignment due next week, it’s time to meet for lunch in Student Centre with friends. We need to see the PoLIS secretary to discuss the agenda for the next PoLIS Staff-Student Liaison Committee and to highlight potential issues.

We then spend more time in the library to read over documents, send a few emails, and do some more reading. We check over our presentation plan and re-read lecture notes to check we haven’t missed anything obvious. Our meeting with the lecturer leaves us feeling reasonably confident but under-prepared, so we agree to read more over the weekend and meet as a group again on Monday.

The last class of the day is French translation. We debate about whether the French President meant what he said or not in his victory speech. Afterwards, it’s another visit to the library for some more books, then walk home with friends. All finished off by dinner with housemates, followed by a drink at the pub.”

Ailbhe Rees and Caroline Leach
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and German)
The year abroad

We offer a ‘thick sandwich’ programme, which means all our students spend their third year abroad: as a Language Assistant within Europe or beyond; on a study exchange in Europe (Erasmus exchange) or study placement including outside Europe; or on a work placement. It is possible to ‘mix and match’ both the activities and the countries they take place in, but a period of at least three months abroad must be given to each language during the course of the degree.

Language Assistantships

Teaching English as a Language Assistant in a school or college is a popular and rewarding option. Applications are processed by the British Council. Experiences vary - students may find themselves in a large city or in a rural community, teaching English to small groups of children at a reduced number of hours per week. An ‘overseas’ option is also possible and some of our students have found themselves for example in the exotic locations of La Reunion, Mexico and French Guyana. Assistantships differ in length from country to country but on average last nine months.

Study exchange

On an Erasmus exchange you can spend either one or two semesters in our partner universities in France, Germany, Italy or Spain. Our diverse range of exchange universities are located in capital cities, medium- and small-sized towns, where you can experience studying in a very different university system. You will become fully integrated into your selected University, choose a number of appropriate units and undertake assessment in them. A separate exchange with Voronezh State University provides study placements for students of Russian. Students of Spanish may also study in Santiago, Chile and Guadalajara, Mexico.

Work placements

The aim of a work placement during the year abroad is to provide you with a professional experience, usually within a commercial business environment, that will be of value both during your studies and in your future career. Due to the flexibility of this option students frequently spend shorter, as well as longer stretches of time, on work placements either side of their other year abroad activities. Our dedicated and experienced Placements Officer will support and guide you through the recruitment process to gain your placement.

A day in the year abroad life of…

… a Language Assistantship student

“I was a Language Assistant in a secondary school just outside of Dresden, Germany, and my days tended to vary as my lessons differed from class to class. I mainly spent my time talking with small groups about the topics they were studying, helping them with class assignments or playing games. I also found that there are other opportunities to help out at school, for instance, I taught some of the dance classes in my school.

Another great thing about doing the Language Assistantship is the amount of free time you get as you only do 12 hours a week at school. This means that, thanks to early finishes and long weekends, I felt like I got to make the most of living abroad and everything Dresden has to offer, including language practice when you are out and about.

The year abroad is definitely one of the best things I have ever done; I just don’t want it to be over!”

Zoe Edis
Language Assistantship in Dresden, Germany
... a study exchange student

“My average weekday starts with the short commute to university, and a couple of lessons broken up by coffee or lunch with friends. More often than not, the University will have organised talks or debates with world-renowned academics or politicians which are free for students to attend, so I can sometimes be found there!

Being an MLES student means that I need to keep up my second language, but with the extremely international student body and the many cultural activities on offer in Paris, this isn’t hard to do.

Studying with some of the best students in France obviously requires hard work from time to time. However, the possibility to choose subjects from almost any social science, and the fact that the lectures are given by leading academics and practitioners in their respective fields, means that the hard work is definitely worth it.

Evenings are a mix of work, going out with friends, or taking advantage of the vast range of activities that Paris has to offer.

My year abroad has undoubtedly been the best part of my course so far, not only thanks to the brilliant city, but also the knowledge that this year has been as academically rewarding as it has personally.”

Liam Farrow
Erasmus study exchange at Sciences Po, Paris

... a work placement student

“When asked to describe an average day with Molino, my response is always there is no such thing! Apart from my daily commute from the centre out to the office, I never know what awaits me day-to-day within the company.

Once in the office, I check my emails and read up on the latest linguistic and computing news – there is always some interesting titbit of information to share with colleagues or mark as a potential future Molino project: new language apps, linguistic progress, computing knowledge to research… My main job then mainly involves translation tasks including Spanish grammar books, the company’s online presence, blog entries, literary texts – anything and everything gets thrown my way.

I also get the opportunity to attend conferences and webinars with renowned professionals and I go along to our weekly slot on a Spanish radio show about the curiosities of the Spanish language.

Outside of work, I try to make the most of socialising with Spanish people – going to the gym, going out for drinks, taking in the sights of Madrid. It is a beautiful, vibrant and friendly city with so much to explore and there is always something new to see, discover or learn about. I am so grateful for the opportunity provided by my year abroad to be able to live here and I know I will definitely return in the future!”

Susannah Tarrant
Work placement at Molino de Ideas, Madrid
Our students further afield...

“Here in Paraguay I teach English every morning as well as Italian and singing. The position is flexible and allows you to teach other skills as well as having the time to get involved in other activities in Santa Maria de Fe. I practise and perform typical Paraguayan dance, as well as sew with the señoras in the crafts workshop. I sing in the church choir and have sung in charity events. Once a week I also attend the local university, meeting other young Paraguayans. Most weekends I travel around Paraguay and into Argentina and post-placement I shall travel to Peru and Bolivia for two months. Being virtually the only foreigner to come across in the country and living with a very welcoming and fun Paraguayan family, means that not only am I dramatically improving my Spanish but am having a really unique and special experience!”

Suzannah Hance
Work placement in Santa Maria de Fe, Paraguay
“Here in Voronezh I am focusing purely on consolidating my patchy grammar knowledge, speaking as much Russian as possible and finding enough inspiration to write my year abroad essay on the one and only Vladimir Putin. The classes (from 10am-3pm most days) cover practical spoken Russian, verbs, grammar, translating, cultural awareness and phonetics. Furthermore, staying in a Russian family allows you to practise what you learn in class as well as give you the best possible insight into the life of typical Russians. As well as the enjoyable classes laid on at the university, I play football with Russian acquaintances from the area twice a week and enjoy giving English speaking classes on Fridays to students of VGU. After a work placement in France, I welcomed the challenge of moving out to Russia to study and teach and the experience has proved unforgettable. Russia is not all ‘snow and vodka’, it really is a fascinating place to live.”

Tom Davey
Study Exchange in Voronezh State University, Russia

“Living in Latin America is an unforgettable experience for anyone who goes there. The people are amongst the kindest you will ever hope to meet and they are so appreciative of what you do to help. I teach English in three different Teacher Training Colleges in Buenos Aires, where the students hope to become English teachers. I work for around 12 hours per week, giving classes on everything from the British education system to reality TV in Britain. The brilliant thing is that the students want to learn as much as they can about British culture and for many of them I am the first English speaker they have ever met, so you really do become a cultural link to Britain. With so much free time, I’ve had the opportunity to visit so many different places both in Argentina and in other countries in Latin America. I’ve witnessed and spent months living in a culture which is so far removed from anything I could have experienced in Europe, and I’ve become more appreciative of the way things are in Britain as a result. Call it a cliché, but my year abroad has definitely been the most memorable year for all the right reasons.”

Blair Hunniford
Language Assistantship in Buenos Aires, Argentina

We filmed some of our third year students while they were on their year abroad in Paris this spring, please visit our web pages to see how much they enjoyed themselves!
go.bath.ac.uk/year-abroad
Career opportunities

The BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies programmes train graduates not only to be highly competent in their chosen languages, but also to be very socially and culturally aware. They pick up good research techniques, and hone both their written and oral presentation skills.

The types of careers our graduates go into are wide-ranging. A high number of students choose to go directly into employment at a national or international level; some decide to pursue further courses of study such as the Department’s MA in Interpreting and Translating/MA in Translation & Professional Language Skills or the Euromasters/MA in Contemporary European Studies programmes.

The MLES graduate is adaptable, committed and a skilled communicator. Recent graduates have found work in translating and interpreting. Others have found language related positions in, for example, Lloyds TSB, International Tennis Federation, Department for Work and Pensions, European Parliament (Belgium), Jet Air (Germany), Université de Provence (France), Converse, and Louis Vuitton, working in Europe, America and Asia.

As first post-university jobs go, this has been a really good experience so far. The International Chamber of Commerce is a reputed organisation which looks great on a CV, and the work itself is a great generalist position that is proving to be a fantastic opportunity to insert oneself into a French professional environment.

My time at Bath was a well-rounded learning experience; the year abroad in particular really stood out for me as the watershed moment when everything started to make sense and my enjoyment of the course continued to deepen and spread out onto new horizons. I taught as a British Council Language Assistant during my year abroad in the south of Italy. It was unlike anything I had ever done before, and being sent off into the big unknown was intimidating but exciting. I loved it, and I definitely wouldn’t have had the confidence to go for interviews in France without it.

For those looking for work outside the UK, make sure prospective employers know that Bath is a high-ranking establishment and that you don’t undersell the benefits of your degree. The Careers Service will be more than happy to guide you.

Laurence Dorman
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and Italian),
Now working at the International Chamber of Commerce, Paris
"I came to Bath in 2007 to start my undergraduate degree in French and Italian. From the outset, I was impressed by the high quality of teaching and friendly atmosphere at the university. The course was a fantastic mix of politics, culture and languages, allowing me to choose options that really suited my interests.

The languages facilities at Bath are excellent and even include a specialised area in the library (SALC). I was also lucky enough to have language lessons taught by enthusiastic native speakers and individual units led by true experts in the field. Overall, the course at Bath helped me to gain a sound knowledge of European history and culture, especially in relation to France and Italy. It enabled me to become trilingual and instilled in me a true passion for languages.

I then went on to undertake the MA programme in Interpreting and Translating at Bath. This intense but highly rewarding course allowed me to gain practical skills in conference and public service interpreting, whilst building on the translation experience acquired at undergraduate level. As part of this course, I was able to spend a week in Brussels shadowing real interpreters and also a month working with the UN as a translator, both invaluable opportunities.

I am also very happy to say that my story at Bath has now come full circle! I recently started working as a Teaching Fellow in Italian translation with students from first year through to postgraduate level. I am delighted to be able to continue my time within the department at Bath for many reasons; not only is it a great place to work and study, but it’s also a really fun and friendly place to be."

Steven Wonnacott
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies (French and ab initio Italian)
MA Interpreting and Translating
Now Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath
About Bath

The University of Bath has been ranked 3rd in The Sunday Times University Guide 2013 – a clear indication of our position within the elite universities of the UK.

Our welcoming, purpose-built campus is safe and friendly, with a vibrant international community, excellent student services, outstanding arts facilities and a first-class sports complex. The campus is located about a mile from the World Heritage City of Bath - one of the most interesting, elegant and vibrant cities in the UK, home to several excellent museums and galleries, parks, numerous restaurants, cafés and pubs and a great range of shopping.

Frequent bus services link the campus, city and major student residential areas. Bath is not far from Bristol International Airport. By train, London is approximately 90 minutes and Bristol about fifteen minutes away. You are always connected to your work, your home and your social life when studying.
Programme

BA (Hons) Modern Languages and European Studies

This four year sandwich programme is offered with the following language options (*ab initio* means from the beginning):

- French and German RR12
- French and Italian RR13
- French and Spanish RR14
- French and *ab initio* Italian RR1H
- French and *ab initio* Russian RR1V
- German and Italian RR23
- German and Spanish RR24
- German and *ab initio* Italian RR2H
- German and *ab initio* Russian RR2T
- Spanish and Italian RR43
- Spanish and *ab initio* Italian RR4H
- Spanish and *ab initio* Russian RR4T

The Department also offers a language based BA (Hons) degree programme in Language and Politics. In addition, a BSc (Hons) degree programme in International Management and Modern Languages (French, German or Spanish) is offered jointly by the Department and the School of Management. Please refer to our separate brochures or visit our web pages.

Typical offers

A Levels: AAB-ABB
AAA for RR14 (French & Spanish)
An A in one of the two languages to be studied is normally required. An A in both languages is preferred for RR14 (French & Spanish)
110 places available
500 applications

Other undergraduate programmes offered by the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies:

- BSc (Hons) International Management & Modern Languages
- BA (Hons) Language and Politics
- BSc (Hons) Politics with Economics
- BSc (Hons) Politics with International Relations

Contact us

For more information about this programme, entry requirements and admission, please visit our website:

www.bath.ac.uk/study

For further enquiries on entry requirements and admission to the programme, please contact:

Undergraduate Admissions
Tel: +44 (0) 1225 383019
Email: admissions@bath.ac.uk

www.bath.ac.uk/polis
See what our students have to say about the Year Abroad

Getting started with Augmented Reality

1. Download the free Aurasma App from the App store or Google Play store
2. Open your web browser and enter the following URL: go.bath.ac.uk/mles
3. With the camera view displayed on the screen (click on the 📷 icon), hold your device over the image above. Choose one of the four videos, tap the image to play, tap again to choose another. Double-tap to close.