

BHASVIC

Guide to Higher Education & Employability

Languages & Linguistics

French, German, Japanese
Linguistics, Spanish

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Choosing a course involving MFL – advice from our MFL department

There is a huge range of choices available to you and you need to spend a bit of time thinking which ones will be right for you. From talking to previous students, we think these are the kind of questions you should ask:

- Is the course aimed at post A level students only or will your lectures/seminars/ tutorials include students who are ab-initio (beginners) or post GCSE level? Will your language classes at least be aimed at post A level students, even if other areas may be mixed in terms of previous learning?
- What range of course does this university specialise in for languages? Are they a more **traditional literature/ history-based course**? This suits many students and will be right for some of you. If so what range of authors are offered? What periods of history are covered?
- Are they a **more practical or skills-based course**? If so again what is on offer? Translation? What kinds of translation skills? (technical/legal/ literary – huge range) Interpreting? Sub-titling for film/tv?
- Would you like to do **joint honours with a second language**? If so what is the break-down in terms of points (fully joint? 60/60? Or is there only an 80/40 option available?) What does this mean to you in terms of options available? Are there core units you must take in each language? Would this limit heavily the options available to you?
- Would you like to do **one language post -A level and start another one ab-initio**? Ask what options are available- popular choices are one post A level language (French / Spanish/ German) with another of these three languages ab-initio or with an entirely new language ab-initio: Popular choices are: Russian / Arabic / Mandarin / Italian / Japanese / Korean
- What **joint honours combination courses** are available for those of you who want to continue with your language but also study for another area or qualification. The choices again are huge and ex-students have successfully studied a language with: politics; law; business; history; linguistics; literature amongst others. Again, you should check what the options are in terms of points (fully joint? 60/60? Or is there only an 80/40 option available) Does this limit what options in each subject you can study? What options are available?
- With all of the above. **What does the programme of study and assessment look like?**
Will you be asked to work in pairs/ small groups?
Will this lead to you being assessed as part of that pair/group?
How many essays are required? (In some more academic courses this may be one or even two some weeks; in other universities it may be one or two per term per course)
What format will oral exams take?
What other skills will be examined? In what format? At what point in the course?
- And last but not in any way least **the year abroad**.
What options are available in which countries?
Work placements? Does the university have established links?
Study options in universities or language schools abroad? What links are in place with foreign establishments?
Can you set up your own placement in a company or voluntary organisation abroad?
If you are doing 2 languages how much time will you spend in each country (remember your ab-initio language may need more time than your post A level subject) Is there the option to spend 2 years abroad?

We can probably put you in touch with an ex BHASVIC student who can answer your questions about any of the above- just ask your teacher if you would like to talk to someone about your options.

What to ask on any Languages open day

Doing a language at university means you'll often get the chance to learn about new cultures and live abroad. Use our list of open day questions to help you discover more...

About the course

- Do I need to be fluent in a language before I start this course?
- Is there flexibility in the modules I take, and can I take modules across other courses?
- What books and equipment are necessary for me to buy?
- How much contact time will I have? Do we have 1-2-1s / small seminar groups?
- Can I get extra tuition from my lecturers if I need it?

Placements

- Does the course include a year abroad? How much will it cost? Who organises it?
- Do I have to find my own accommodation?
- How fluent in your chosen language are you expected to be after your year abroad?

Language assessments

- What is the split between individual work and group work?
- What has greater weighting – oral exams or coursework?
- Do I need to complete a dissertation or research-based project?

Graduate prospects for world language students

- How does this course help me get a job?
- What have other students from this course done once they've graduated?
- Do companies like certain languages more than others?

What to ask on a linguistics, literature and classics open day

Interested in poets, philosophers or the literary greats, or studying how language actually works? Check out these questions you can ask on your open day visit...

About the course

- What are the core texts / periods for this course?
- Will I need to do reading over the summer?
- Do I need to have an A-level (or equivalent) in English?
- What's the split between ancient and modern texts?
- What's the split between prose, drama and poetry?
- How many hours of teaching will I get a week? Will that be in lectures, seminars or tutorials?

Equipment and facilities

- How much reading is involved per week?
- What is a reading week? Do I have one?
- Are all the library resources available online?
- Should I buy all the books on the syllabus?
- Are there multiple copies of texts available to borrow in the library?
- How much will I have to spend on printing?
- Do you have specialist facilities - for example, language or phonetics labs?

Assessments

- What is the split between exams / coursework / group projects?
- Do I need to complete dissertation or research-based project?
- How will I decide on a subject for my dissertation? Will I have help?
- Will I get the opportunity to do modules in any other faculties?

Prospects

- What employment opportunities does this course usually lead to?
- What have graduates on this course gone on to do?

French

Would you like to develop your written and spoken French language skills so you could live or work in another country? Are you interested in learning about France's history, literature and culture? If so a modern languages course in French and/ or another European language may be for you. Courses often include time abroad studying at a university, or teaching. Possible careers include translating and interpreting, journalism, law, publishing, museum curator or working for an international company.

- PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS
- LOTS OF READING
- TIME IN LABS
- BA
- TIME ABROAD
- INDEPENDENT STUDY
- CULTURE
- LITERATURE
- MODERN LANGUAGES

Example course modules

- French language
- Reading French literature
- French syntax and vocabulary
- French translation
- Modern French culture
- French cinema of the 1930s
- Gender, the novel and the récit
- French society
- Business French
- Innovations in European literature

Teaching hours / week

The time you'll spend in lectures and seminars each week will vary from university to university, so use this as a guide.



League tables for this subject

[The Guardian](#) [The Complete University Guide](#) [The Times](#)

What students say about French

I study French and Spanish at Strathclyde. The timetable is simple - I have around eight hours of classes a week, including an hour of French/ Spanish culture each week. We have oral classes, tutorials and lectures. The French and Spanish assignments are generally translations or reading comprehensions.

3rd year, University of Strathclyde

I'm a foreign language student and I seem to have quite a lot of classes per week, whether they be lectures or seminars, language or literature. Most of the time we do written grammar work, although in literature seminars we have to talk about books and make notes. We have to write literature essays of 1500 words. The different languages I study all assess me differently for the other elements, though. They all assess oral in a different way, some also assess reading ability or translation ability. They all assess writing, and none assess listening.

1st year, University of St Andrews

Really interesting and engaging course! Really exciting range of optional modules available, it caters to all interests. Really good to have grammar lectures in first year - you suddenly find you can understand things or learn new things and everyone gets to the same level! Good range of type of work - different modules are assessed in different ways, so there's a good mix of essays, practicals and exams. Feedback is always helpful and detailed. FLC (Foreign Language Centre) is great - great to sit and work quietly, watch a foreign film, or learn a new language!

1st year, University of Exeter

A-levels (or equivalent) usually required

- French

Useful to have

- Politics
- English Language or literature
- Any other modern language

Application checklist

- January application
- Personal statement

BHASVIC student's 2020 entry information

See end of guide.

Career prospects

It's often said the UK doesn't produce enough modern language graduates, and graduates from French, German, Italian and Spanish courses have a lot of options available to them when they complete their courses. The general theme is that some graduates go to that country to work, often as English language teachers, some go into further study, often to train as teachers or translators, but most get jobs in the UK in education - as language tutors, unsurprisingly - or translation. Modern language grads can also be in

demand in business roles where communication and language skills are particularly useful, such as marketing and PR. Russian studies graduates make up a small but in demand group of language grads; with Russia playing an important part in world business and politics, graduates usually command some of the highest salaries in this area. Employers say they rate graduates who have more than one language, but remember you need to have them as part of a whole package of good skills.

Transferable Skills

Communication (written and verbal), analysing language, attention to detail, presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, resilience, problem solving, cultural awareness, confidence.

Jobs where this degree is useful

- Copywriter
- Translator
- Language teacher

Other real-life job examples

- Business analyst
- Events manager
- Work experience coordinator

What employers like about this subject

European language and literature degrees can provide students with a range of subject-specific skills, including an understanding of the language and culture of the countries under study; the way that literature and language interacts with society and, of course, how to communicate effectively in the chosen languages. Students on these courses often take a year abroad in the country of study. Students of languages can also learn a number of useful transferrable skills including communication, time management, research and critical thinking and project management, and these skills are in demand from employers, including schools, translation services, accountants and advertising agencies.

Sources & Links

See end of guide

German

Would you like to develop your written and spoken German language skills so you could live or work in another country? Are you interested in learning about Germany's history, literature and culture? If so a modern languages course in German and/ or another European language may be for you. Courses often include time abroad studying at a university, or teaching. Possible careers include translating and interpreting, journalism, law, publishing, museum curator or working for an international company.

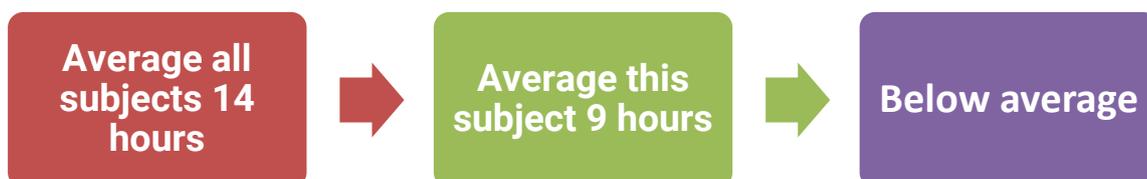
- PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS
- LOTS OF READING
- TIME IN LABS
- BA
- TIME ABROAD
- INDEPENDENT STUDY
- CULTURE
- LITERATURE
- MODERN LANGUAGES

Example course modules

- German language
- Reading German culture
- German interpreting
- Berlin- culture, history and politics
- The foundation of modern Germany 1860-1900
- Reading German literature
- Media in Germany
- New German cinema
- Dealing with the Holocaust in post-war German culture
- Business and society in contemporary Germany

Teaching hours / week

The time you'll spend in lectures and seminars each week will vary from university to university, so use this as a guide.



League tables for this subject

[The Guardian](#) [The Complete University Guide](#) [The Times](#)

What students say about German

The course is made up of a mixture of oral classes, written classes and a dedicated grammar class. You are assessed not only in an exam but on a speaking presentation, a listening test and on your general participation in classes. I think that this diverse way of teaching and assessment means you can play to your strengths and also that you will have the opportunity to develop in all areas. The topics covered are really interesting and varied and you can end up having discussions about anything which is a confidence boost, because you would have never thought you could have an interesting conversation and debate in German on such topics before.

1st year, University of Hull

A-levels (or equivalent) usually required

- German

Useful to have

- history
- Politics
- English literature
- Any other modern language

Application checklist

- January application
- Personal statement

BHASVIC student's 2020 entry information

See end of guide.

Career prospects

It's often said the UK doesn't produce enough modern language graduates, and graduates from French, German, Italian and Spanish courses have a lot of options available to them when they complete their courses. The general theme is that some graduates go to that country to work, often as English language teachers, some go into further study, often to train as teachers or translators, but most get jobs in the UK in education - as language tutors, unsurprisingly - or translation. Modern language grads can also be in demand in business roles where communication and language skills are particularly useful, such as marketing and PR. Russian studies graduates make up a small but in demand group of language grads; with Russia playing an important part in world business and politics, graduates usually command some of the highest salaries in this area. Employers say they rate graduates who have more than one language, but remember you need to have them as part of a whole package of good skills.

Transferable Skills

Communication (written and verbal), analysing language, attention to detail, presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, resilience, problem solving, cultural awareness, confidence.

Jobs where this degree is useful

- Copywriter
- Translator
- Language teacher

Other real-life job examples

- Business analyst
- Events manager
- Work experience coordinator

What employers like about this subject

European language and literature degrees can provide students with a range of subject-specific skills, including an understanding of the language and culture of the countries under study; the way that literature and language interacts with society and, of course, how to communicate effectively in the chosen languages. Students on these courses often take a year abroad in the country of study. Students of languages can also learn a number of useful transferrable skills including communication, time management, research and critical thinking and project management, and these skills are in demand from employers, including schools, translation services, accountants and advertising agencies.

Local Market Information - *Speak German?

The demand for linguists is increasing and Job site 'Indeed' reports that German has exceeded French as the language most needed by employers. Chinese is the third most popular language.

Sources & Links

See end of guide

Japanese

Would you like to develop your written and spoken Japanese language skills so you could live or work in another country? Are you interested in learning about Japan's history, literature and culture? If so a modern languages course in Japan and/ or another European language may be for you. Courses often include time abroad studying at a university, or teaching. Possible careers include translating and interpreting, journalism, law, publishing, museum curator or working for an international company.

- TIME IN LABS
- EXAM-INTENSIVE
- BA
- TIME ABROAD
- INDEPENDENT STUDY
- ESSAY-WRITING
- JAPANESE

Example course modules

- Japanese language and linguistics
- Japanese history and culture
- Modern Japanese society
- Religion in Japan
- Contemporary Japanese popular culture
- Language and society
- Constructing words and meaning: morphology
- Modes of reading
- Japan: Geography, economy and society
- Japan in war and peace

Teaching hours / week

The time you'll spend in lectures and seminars each week will vary from university to university, so use this as a guide.



League tables for this subject

[The Guardian](#) | [The Complete University Guide](#) | [The Times](#)

A-levels (or equivalent) usually required

- No Specific Requirements

Useful to have

- Any modern language

Application checklist

- January application
- Personal statement

Career prospects

Relatively few students graduate with world language degrees each year, so it's still a fairly unusual and specialist area to pursue and we'd recommend going on open days and speaking to tutors about what previous graduates went on to do. One in five Japanese graduates went to work aboard in a variety of roles where they can apply these language skills and cultural & historical knowledge. These can include roles as teachers, interpreters and translators, as well as within the tourism and finance sectors. But remember – whilst employers rate graduates who have more than one language, you need to have them as part of a whole package of good skills, even if that language is rare and valuable to business.

Transferable Skills

Communication (written and verbal), analysing language, attention to detail, presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, resilience, problem solving, cultural awareness, confidence.

Jobs where this degree is useful

- Translator
- Teacher of English as a foreign language (TEFL)

Other real-life job examples

- Housing officer
- Information analyst
- Financial advisor

What employers like about this subject

Language and literature degrees can provide students with a range of subject-specific skills, including an understanding of the language and culture of the countries under study; the way that literature and language interacts with society and, of course, how to communicate effectively in the chosen languages. Students on these courses often take a year abroad in the country of study. Students of languages can also learn a number of useful transferable skills including communication, time management, research and critical thinking and project management, and these skills are in demand from employers, including schools, translation services, accountants and advertising agencies.

Sources & Links

See end of guide

Linguistics courses

How do children learn language? Why do people have accents? What causes a stammer? If these questions fascinate you, linguistics could be for you. Linguistics is the study of the structure of language, speech sounds and how we use language to convey meaning. Linguistics can be used in a variety of careers, such as helping adults regain speech after a stroke, supporting children who have difficulty communicating or developing computers that recognise or produce speech.

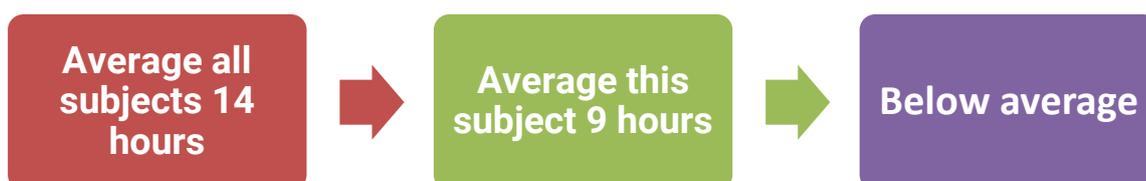
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- TIME IN LABS
- BA
- TIME ABROAD
- COURSEWORK-INTENSIVE
- INDEPENDENT LEARNING
- MODERN LANGUAGES
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Example course modules

- The structure and grammar of English
- Text analysis: genre and style
- Semantics
- Language and psychology
- Corpus linguistics
- Pragmatics, meaning and truth
- Non truth-conditional semantics
- Elements of linguistics: sound, structure and meaning
- Applications of linguistics
- Sound and voice

Teaching hours / week

The time you'll spend in lectures and seminars each week will vary from university to university, so use this as a guide.



League tables for this subject

[The Guardian](#) [The Complete University Guide](#) [The Times](#)

What students say about linguistics

My language and linguistics course is awesome! We're in for nine hours a week, usually one or two days every week! We cover everything from semantics, pragmatics and syntax, to social conversations and phonetics! It's extremely interesting (although often quite challenging!). We have some course-specific facilities including our phonetics lab, which is an excellent resource!

For me, the fact that linguistics requires you to be equally strong across a lot of sub-disciplines like science and philosophy is a highlight, and is just challenging enough to make you really want to work. Some people find the diversity off-putting. It's a tiny department at Cambridge, so we don't have that much contact time - around eight hours per week is probably one of the least heavy schedules out of all the Cambridge courses. Still, we're turning out about four essays over ten days, plus preparing for practicals which are roughly fortnightly and more frequent for phonetics, so we get plenty of stimulation.

A-levels (or equivalent) usually required

- No Specific Requirements

Useful to have

- Mathematics
- Modern foreign language
- English literature and language
- English language

Application checklist

- January application
- Personal statement

Examples of degrees and combined degrees for BHASVIC student's 2020 entry

- English Language and Linguistics
- Languages, Cultures and English
- French and Linguistics

Career prospects

Linguists are in demand across the economy, from marketing to IT, so this type of degree has a better than average employment rate. Graduates from language subjects are, not surprisingly, more likely than most others to get jobs working overseas, with Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) a popular option. Linguists are particularly likely to get jobs in marketing, finance, education and in management, but remember – whilst employers say they rate language skills, you need to have them as part of a whole package of good skills.

Transferable Skills

Communication (written and verbal), analysing language, attention to detail, presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, resilience, problem solving, cultural awareness, confidence.

Jobs where this degree is useful

- Translator
- Teacher of English as a foreign language (TEFL)

- Education or learning support officer

Other real-life job examples

- Recruitment consultant
- Advertising executive
- Publications editor

What employers like about this subject

Linguistics students can expect to pick up subject-specific skills during their study that include an understanding of how language is acquired and used; how language is used and the principles of phonetics, phonology and linguistic analysis, syntax and semantics. Students of linguistics can also learn a number of useful transferable skills including communication, time management, research and critical thinking, and project management, and these skills are in demand from employers, including PR agencies, schools, hospitals, management consultancies, libraries, banks, translation agencies and IT companies.

Sources & Links

See end of guide

Spanish

Would you like to develop your written and spoken Spanish language skills so you could live or work in another country? Are you interested in learning about Spain's history, literature and culture? If so a modern languages course in Spanish and / or another European language may be for you. Courses often include time abroad studying at a university, or teaching. Possible careers include translating and interpreting, journalism, law, publishing, museum curator or working for an international company.

- PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS
- LOTS OF READING
- TIME IN LABS
- BA
- TIME ABROAD
- INDEPENDENT STUDY
- CULTURE
- LITERATURE
- MODERN LANGUAGES

Example course modules

- Spanish language: oral skills
- Spanish language: written skills
- Hispanic culture and society
- Franco's Spain: narratives under dictatorship
- Spanish literature
- Cinema and society in Europe and Latin America
- Myths and realities of contemporary Spain
- Gender, race and nation in modern Latin America
- The outsider in Hispanic texts

Teaching hours / week

The time you'll spend in lectures and seminars each week will vary from university to university, so use this as a guide.



League tables for this subject

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What students say about Spanish

I study French and Spanish at Strathclyde. The timetable is simple - I have around eight hours of classes a week, including an hour of French/ Spanish culture each week. We have oral classes, tutorials and lectures. The French and Spanish assignments are generally translations or reading comprehensions.

3rd year, University of Strathclyde

I love languages, so my course is perfect for me. The classes are small, which gives each student enough space to ask and be asked. Staff is very supportive and helpful, not to mention very knowledgeable in their subject, and their feedback is always suited to help the student to do better and to concentrate on the future assessments. The modules are very versatile, so I get to choose what I like to concentrate on (for example poetry or drama, Spanish or Latin American history, etc.). One of the most interesting and fun parts of the course is the compulsory year abroad between the 2nd and final year. Assessments vary from module to module, and it's a mixture of essays, translations, reports and oral presentations, with written and oral exams at the end of each semester. There is a lot of material available to help with each assessment, including dictionaries, books, journals, DVDs with movies in foreign languages etc.

3rd year, Queen's University Belfast

I'm a foreign language student and I seem to have quite a lot of classes per week, whether they be lectures or seminars, language or literature. Most of the time we do written grammar work, although in our literature seminars we have to talk about books and make notes. We have to write literature essays of 1500 words. The different languages I study all assess me differently for the other elements, though. They all assess oral in a different way, some also assess reading ability or translation ability. They all assess writing, and none of them assess listening.

1st year, University of St Andrews

A-levels (or equivalent) usually required

- Spanish

Useful to have

- history
- Politics
- English literature
- Any other modern language

Application checklist

- January application
- Personal statement

BHASVIC student's 2020 entry information

See end of guide.

Career prospects

It's often said the UK doesn't produce enough modern language graduates, and graduates from French, German, Italian and Spanish courses have a lot of options available to them when they complete their courses. The general theme is that some graduates go to that country to work, often as English language teachers, some go into further study, often to train as teachers or translators, but most get jobs in the UK in education - as language tutors, unsurprisingly - or translation. Modern language grads can also be in demand in business roles where communication and language skills are particularly useful, such as marketing and PR. Russian studies graduates make up a small but in demand group of language grads;

with Russia playing an important part in world business and politics, graduates usually command some of the highest salaries in this area. Employers say they rate graduates who have more than one language, but remember you need to have them as part of a whole package of good skills.

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Jobs where this degree is useful

- Copywriter
- Translator
- Language teacher

Other real-life job examples

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- Events manager
- Work experience coordinator

What employers like about this subject

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Sources & Links

See end of guide

What our teachers say....

Growing up in Northern Ireland in the “troubles”, in a family where holidays were something only rich families had, my only exposure to Modern Foreign Languages was through the Eurovision Song Contest. Being catholic, the Irish language, or Gaelic, was compulsory at my secondary school and my older brother loved Spanish, so I too opted to learn languages and I did A level French and Spanish. When choosing a university, I could not wait to get away from the “troubles” and study in England and when I failed to get into my first choice, Liverpool, as my grades were not what I had hoped for, I was lucky enough to be offered a place in Portsmouth. Unusually, the year abroad there was done in the second year of a four-year degree. In the first year I did options in Spanish language, literature, History and linguistics and French language as a minor option. It was great- all that I hoped for in terms of living independently, making new friends, being challenged with new ideas and thoughts. I had to learn to manage my time to allow me to enjoy the huge range of social opportunities available with studying and getting ready to go abroad the following year. There were a few stressful times but so many great times too.

The year abroad was amazing. Again, it was not without challenges but I now see that it was probably instrumental in making me the person I am. I was just 19 when I arrived in Madrid. I could put together beautifully constructed sentences in Spanish but I could not understand one word that was said back to me! After hiding in my room for an evening I learned to go out and ask people to speak slowly. After a month I was good on a one-to one basis; after two months I could cope in groups in bars and after three months I could answer the phone with panicking. By the end of the year I was dreaming in Spanish and had a real love of the language and the people. The culture; literature; history and politics all became much more accessible and real to me.

I returned to Portsmouth, swapped French for Portuguese for the last two years and I finished my degree. Having decided that I wanted to teach, I had to offer French so I did a PGCE at the University of York (another stressful but fantastic year in a great city) and then I spent a year in Geneva as a language assistant and I studied French grammar in the evening at the university. Again, at first, I struggled with fluency but as the year went on I grew in confidence. I also learned to ski in nearby France, travelled a lot in Germany and Italy, and learned that I could love different languages and different cultures. I accepted their differences and loved what they had in common too.

I taught French and Spanish in comprehensive schools London for five years before moving to Brighton. I taught part-time at Portsmouth University while setting up a business with a partner importing craft and furniture from Latin America. For over 10 years I spent short periods of time mainly in Mexico, but with frequent trips to Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Costa Rica too. My three daughters were exposed to travel at an early age and two of them went on to study languages at university. I returned to teaching when my girls started secondary education and I taught in a large comprehensive school in Crawley before coming to BHASVIC.

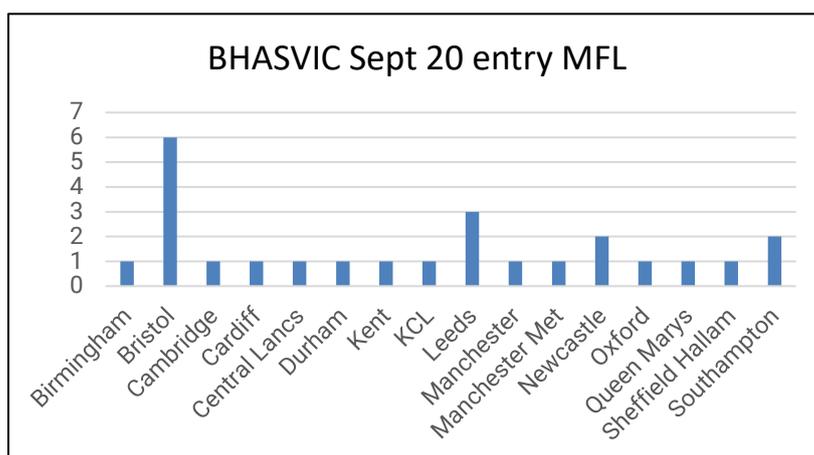
I have entirely benefitted from my life with languages and I have loved the opportunities it has offered me. Teaching languages is also amazing and gives me access to young people with open minds; who can communicate with many; who accept and appreciate the similarities and differences in other languages cultures. We need people like this a lot in this world. My message is that any of you can study MFL at university. You do not have to be the brightest or the best and you should not fixate on getting into one particular university either. Doing your degree, especially the year abroad, is what will make you confident and fluent and allow you to fully embrace the complexities of the language and culture. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Siobhan, MFL

In Sept 2020, 25 MFL students went onto study language related degrees at 16 different universities.

Bristol and Leeds are the most popular universities for MFL in 2020.

Our students often gain very attractive offers from prestigious universities who are keen to recruit to MFL courses.



Top 10 Universities for Languages – Complete University Guide 2020

- **Cambridge, Durham, Oxford, St Andrews, Kings College**
- **Warwick, Exeter, Stirling, Glasgow** – all very high student satisfaction scores
- **Lancaster, Bath, Sheffield, Kent** - all with top graduate prospects

Examples of degrees and combined degrees for BHASVIC student's 2020 entry

- Modern Languages and English
- French and Italian (4 years)
- French and Russian (4 years)
- History and Spanish
- History of Art and Italian (4 years)
- Italian and Spanish (4 years)
- Spanish and Portuguese (4 years)
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Spanish (4 years)
- Modern Languages (French and Japanese)
- Modern Languages and Cultures (with Year Abroad)
- French and History
- History and Modern Languages with a Year Abroad
- French
- Languages and Cultures
- Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies
- History and Spanish
- Linguistics with Japanese
- Linguistics with French
- Modern Languages
- Spanish and Portuguese
- French with Business Management (4 years)
- Languages with International Business (Spanish)
- French and Spanish (4 years)
- Spanish and Linguistics (4 years) Politics with Chinese

Personal statement advice: modern languages

Applying for French, Spanish, German, or another modern or combined languages degree? Read on for some expert pointers from admissions tutors.

Your cultural engagement

If you're applying for modern languages courses that involve studying cultural as well as linguistic elements, then every uni we heard from stressed the importance of reflecting on your own cultural engagement with countries where the language is spoken:

'We like to see evidence of your enthusiasm for, and immersion in, the language(s) outside of your A level studies. This might include time spent in the country, exchange activities, reading the press or books in the target language, watching films, etc.' (Dr Lucy Bell, University of Surrey)

'We would like to know how you have been able to engage with different cultures and communities, and your thoughts on the cultures, histories, or politics of the societies where the languages of study are spoken.' (Irina Nelson, University of Southampton)

Dr Swift at Oxford explains how your 'cultural engagement' can be demonstrated in various ways. 'Doing simple things that are readily available to you via the internet, like reading short stories, following a blog, watching a documentary, or listening to French radio can be extremely valuable if you show what you got out of them. Take advantage of any opportunities available to you. But what's crucial is what you got out of the experience.'

And what you gained from it

What matters isn't so much what or how much you've done, but what you learned from it and how you present this evidence in your statement.

Simply saying you've travelled or worked abroad won't do – it's only when you explain what you gained from it that it starts to support your application. What tutors don't want is a list of facts about the country, things you've done, or books you've read, without explaining how this has expanded your personal experience.

Dr Swift at Oxford also suggests:

'Try to string together your evidence of cultural engagement to show some development of interest. For example, if you watched a certain film, did you then watch another by the same director, and how would you compare them? Or, if the film was based on a book, did it prompt you to read it, and think about issues of cinematic adaptation? Or, if you're applying for two languages, did you watch something in the other language on a similar theme?' Dr Helen Swift, Admissions Tutor – University of Oxford

What else to include

An honest opinion: Dr Swift advises to 'always be honest in your response to whatever you've read, watched or listened to. If you didn't particularly enjoy Camu's *L'Etranger*, for instance, don't say that you did.'

Your voice: 'Nelson Mandela and Wittgenstein both said interesting things about language, but I think it's really not worth giving over some of the precious 4000 characters to someone else's words.' If you do refer to a quotation, it must be more substantial than 'I think X was quite right in that view.'

Talk about extra-curricular activities: include mentions of voluntary work, how you help younger pupils, or what you're learning from the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) if you're doing one.

Starting a language from scratch?

If your chosen courses include a language you haven't previously studied at an advanced level, then Dr Davies at Aberystwyth University advises that you should indicate what makes you feel that you're likely to be successful. For example, describe your experience of studying it at GCSE, evening class, or any other way you've engaged with it.

We had further advice from Oxford on how to demonstrate motivation and commitment to a culture and language you haven't studied before: 'get to know some of that culture's literature in English translation, or watching films with subtitles. For beginners' courses, we are particularly interested in the connection to the particular language area and what has motivated you to think about that culture above other beginners' options available.'

So a good way to focus this would be to not only answer the question 'why do I want to study a new language at university?' but rather 'why this new language and particular culture?'

https://web.ucas.com/ps_modern_languages

Other routes

Higher apprenticeships (Level 4)

- [Public relations and communications assistant](#)

Degree apprenticeships (Levels 5 – 7)

- [Academic professional](#)
- [Learning and skills teacher](#)
- [Teacher](#)

Sources & Links

<https://www.unitasterdays.com/on-demand.aspx>

Open Learn <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/free-courses>

Target Careers <https://targetcareers.co.uk/uni/degree-subject-guides/313779-from-french-degree-to-japanese-studies-languages-courses-guide>

Prospects <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/modern-languages>

Teach First <https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/events/webinar-language-students-and-recent-graduates>

Translating and Interpreting <https://www.iti.org.uk/discover/career-in-translation-and-interpreting.html>

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/visits/open-days/subject-sessions/modern-languages/>

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/languages/modlang/>

<https://artsoutreach.leeds.ac.uk/our-activities/online-resources/>

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/virtual-open-day/>

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/manchester-live/subject-webinars/>

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/undergraduate/liberal-arts/liberal-arts-with-a-language-year-abroad/>

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/visit/taster-days>

Languages: [Undergraduate Courses, Degrees : Study : University of Sussex](#)

<https://www.unitasterdays.com/on-demand.aspx>

[GRADUATE PROSPECTS](#)

[WHICH? STUDENT SURVEY](#)

[HESA & HEPI-HEA](#)

[Chartered Institute of Linguists \(CIOL\)](#)

[Institute of Translation and Interpreting \(ITI\)](#)

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/uni/degree-subject-guides>

<https://www.whatuni.com/advice/guides/subject-guides/>

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses>

<https://universitycompare.com/guides/subject/>

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/which-subject-should-you-study-university>

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors>

[Languages Subject Guide | Why Study Languages At Uni? | UCAS](#)

<p>Modern Foreign Languages</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A presentation talking through the many different types of courses available with elements of MFL.• A list of universities known to offer excellent courses in MFL.• Links to universities offering Virtual Open Days or Study days in MFL.• A list of universities chosen by previous BHASVIC students.• Testimonials from previous BHASVIC students covering the UCAS process, their experience and any advice they see fit to offer.• Links provided by our Careers and futures department showing useful sites or apps to help in this process.• Links to information on careers involving MFL.	<p>BHASVLE Modern Foreign Language Common Information</p>
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