

Saleha's Distance Learning Experience

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As one of the largest providers of distance learning in the UK, the University of Birmingham offers the option to enroll in online education, with a flexible approach to study. MA Inclusion student Saleha outlines her experience of life at Birmingham as a distance learning student.

My name is Saleha, and I have chosen to study MA Inclusion (Autism Adults) at the University of Birmingham. The best bit about being a distance learner is that I get to schedule my own time flexibly. I am autistic myself, and I want to make a difference in the broader community.

I study online between 3-4 days per week. I will begin a typical week reading my materials in preparation for my lectures. When I need to make notes, I will speak into Word using the Dragon platform, which dictates my speech. I will then attend my lectures and meet my tutor for an hour for mentoring. Towards the end of the week, I attend dyslexia tutoring for two hours, and then I will

read back on these notes. The notes from my lectures and tutoring help inform my assignments, so I make sure to look through these on a Thursday.

On Fridays, I attend campus and utilize physical resources at the university. I like to study at the Arts Building, the School of Education, The Main Library, the Collaborative Teaching Laboratory, and The Guild. However, my all-time favourite to study is the School of Education, as it is very quiet there.

The best part about studying a distance-learning course is that I can have a few jobs on the side. Since coming to UoB, I have been a Postgraduate Student Ambassador. This role allows me to support students via open days and live events, both face-to-face and virtually. I also talk to prospective students online and answer their questions as best as I can. I create content and blogs, and I have had the opportunity to gain further work experience as a Young Consultant at Participation People, which allows me to advise professionals on improving their services.

I find being a distance learner student gives me the opportunity to do a variety of things, whether within the university or in the community. For example, I am able to attend events at the University Graduate School, the university itself and the Guild throughout the year, and I can also join societies. This allows me to be adaptable to my studies.

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