

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Campus tour booklet



I loved the campus – the atmosphere
and vibe were brilliant and I could
really see myself fitting in there.

Campus visitor

Challenge what you know.

Student Recruitment

Welcome

Welcome to the University of Birmingham. This guide has been produced to provide information about the University and its facilities for visitors who wish to conduct their own 'self-guided' tour around the University campus. A map of the campus is provided on the inside back cover and the following pages provide information about the sights you will see on your tour.



The University

The University of Birmingham has a long history of academic excellence and innovation. We were the first civic university, where students from all religions and backgrounds were accepted on an equal basis. Our spirit of innovation continues today with ground breaking research in areas ranging from cancer studies to nanotechnology. Our students receive a first-class academic experience with us during their studies, as well as becoming equipped for life beyond university.

Today you will see some of the attractions of our campus, and you may also visit the city centre of which we are rightly proud. There are great social and recreational opportunities for students. The University, with its own campus train station, is only two stops from the city centre. Birmingham has an illustrious history of industry and invention, and continues to attract significant business investment today. The city centre has had over £9 billion spent on regeneration over the past few years and is home to the Bullring, one of Europe's largest shopping centres. The attraction of the city is such that around 40% of our graduates choose to stay in Birmingham after they have completed their studies.

Our student community is composed of representatives from over 150 different countries. We are also a founder member of Universitas 21, a network of research intensive universities conducting research projects around the world.

We hope that you have an enjoyable day here at the University of Birmingham and that you benefit from your campus tour. Information about our open days and other events can be found on our website.



Campus tour: an introduction

The University is a safe, friendly environment with an impressive mixture of sculptures, striking Victorian and modern buildings, and a range of facilities for students, staff and visitors. Lawns, mature trees and pedestrian walkways contribute to a peaceful atmosphere where students can work outside in groups or enjoy refreshments from the cafés around the campus.

We suggest you start the tour at the Aston Webb Building. We have provided information in the following pages about some of the highlights of our campus with each description matching the building numbers shown on the map on the inside back cover. The tour will take you around the campus in a circular direction terminating at our train station.

As you walk through the campus, you will notice various sculptures which form part of our Sculpture Trail, running from the East Gate, where you can see the 1722 statue of King George I by Van Nost, through to the West Gate, where Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's Faraday stands. From east to west you can also see Ancestor I by Barbara Hepworth in University Square and William Bloye's Mermaid in the Guild courtyard.



Entrance to Aston Webb Building (R6), featuring a frieze of nine figures from the worlds of art, philosophy, science and industry



Computer Science building and Faraday statue (Y9)



Mermaid fountain – The Guild (01)



Ancestor I by Barbara Hepworth

1 The start of your tour: the clock tower and Aston Webb Building (R6)

Built in 1900, the **Aston Webb Building** was one of the first buildings on this site and was opened in 1909 by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. It was designed by Sir Aston Webb who also designed the Imperial College of Science, the eastern façade of Buckingham Palace, Admiralty Arch on the Mall and the Cromwell Road frontage of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The Aston Webb Building was used as a hospital in the First World War and the plaques in the foyer commemorate University members who lost their lives during that war. The stained glass windows in the Great Hall of the building represent the various academic disciplines taught at the University.

The Aston Webb Building is the start and end of the University experience for most students – this is where registration and graduation are held. The University's finance offices are housed in this building, as is one academic department – Earth Sciences, and the Lapworth Museum of Geology. The Student Services Hub will see part of the interior of the main Aston Webb Building remodelled to house a number of different services including employability, careers and a 400-seat lecture theatre. This facility will bring together all of our student services into one place, greatly enhancing the student experience at Birmingham. Alterations of the exterior of the building will be modest and will include reinstatement of a full pitched roof.

The **clock tower** is one of the tallest buildings in Birmingham and nicknamed 'Old Joe' after Joseph Chamberlain, our first Chancellor. The tower is just under 100 metres high – the tallest freestanding clock tower in the world – and is based on the Mangia Tower in Siena, Italy. It is said that the tower was the inspiration for J R R Tolkien's 'all seeing eye' in the *Lord of the Rings* series. The largest bell weighs six tons and the superstition goes that if you walk under the tower when the clock chimes, you will fail your degree!

Walking straight ahead and under the clock tower (if you're not superstitious) you will go through the archway to enter the main University Square. On your far right is the **Arts Building (R16)** and ahead is the **Library (R22)**. The **Law Building (R1)** is behind you facing the Library. Beyond the Library you will see the architecturally distinctive **Muirhead Tower (R21)**.



'Old Joe' clock tower



Aston Webb Reception (R6)

2 Bramall Music Building (R12)

One hundred years after the opening of the Aston Webb Building, the iconic red-brick heart of the University since 1909, the Bramall Music Building finally completes Joseph Chamberlain's original architectural vision. Providing our outstanding Department of Music with a permanent home at the heart of the University, with state-of-the-art teaching, research, performance and rehearsal facilities appropriate to its reputation, this £16 million facility benefits everyone involved in the University's elite and inclusive music-making and performance, as well as being open for use by our regional communities.

The 450-seat auditorium is the most flexible performance space at a UK university – suitable for performances from solo voice, early music, to a full symphony orchestra. When not used for music, it is a high profile location for drama and dance performance, and for prestigious lectures.



3 Library (R22)

The Main Library is one of 12 libraries/resource centres across the University; others are housed in departments – the Harding Library in the School of Law for example – and off-campus is the library at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Main Library contains over 2.7 million books as well as journals, periodicals and newspapers dating back to 1950, in over 70km of shelving. There is also a study centre and computer clusters with internet access. There are regular 'information clinics' which are subject-specific sessions to help with studies.

On leaving the Main Library, you need to walk back towards the clock tower, and turn left on to University Road East. This takes you out of the Square and past the **Mathematics (R15) and Physics (R13)** buildings towards the **Guild of Students (O1)**.

As you walk, you will pass the **Barber Institute of Fine Arts (R14)**, on your left. Admission is free of charge and a visit is highly recommended. The Institute was established by Lady Martha and William Barber (a solicitor and property developer who contributed funding to help establish the University of Birmingham) as a contribution to their home city. It is one of the world's finest small galleries, containing works from the 13th to the 20th centuries, and is a near-perfect gathering of some of the most influential artists of the previous millennium. Its particular strengths lie in its Old Master and Impressionist collections. The Barber Institute also holds music events as part of its regular concert programme, as well as lectures and family events throughout the year. More information about the Barber Institute can be found at www.barber.org.uk



Main Library (R22)



4 The Guild of Students (O1)

The University of Birmingham's Guild of Students is the recognised students' union. It is one of only five Guilds in the country and is owned and run by our students. It represents and involves all students, undergraduate or postgraduate, home or international, on all campuses. It also runs services such as the Job Zone, which helps students to find part-time and temporary jobs locally during term-time, and welfare services which provide information, support and counselling to students during their time at University. The Guild also looks after clubs and societies, which include diverse interests and activities such as ballroom dancing, the 'Buddy a Granny' volunteer group and the Purple Mermaid Circus Society. The Guild also organises the Freshers' Fairs and Graduation Balls each year. The Freshers' Fair runs features on healthy living at university, volunteering and job opportunities, societies and local community involvement, as well as evening entertainments including club nights, a masquerade ball and live bands.

The Guild building has a variety of shops and services to help new and established students including a travel agency, a newsagent, sandwich shops, an advice centre and 'Job Zone'. The Guild also manages a campus TV and radio station as well as a newspaper. The University's multi-faith chaplaincy **St. Francis Hall (O2)**, is located next to the Guild.

A haven of peace and tranquillity, **Winterbourne House and Garden (G12)** can be found further down the main road (walking along Edgbaston Park Road with King Edward's School on your right). Restored to its Edwardian Arts and Crafts splendour, Winterbourne House is a unique heritage attraction – set within seven acres of beautiful botanic gardens with over 6,000 plant species from around the world.

On leaving the Guild, retrace your steps back towards University Square, this time crossing the Square towards **Staff House (R24)** with the clock tower on your left-hand side. Continue walking straight ahead so that you walk under the archway next to Staff House and into **University Centre (R23)** where you will see Lloyds Bank and Rymans stationery shop on your right.



Guild of Students (O1)



5 University Centre (R23)

University Centre contains two banks, shops, a supermarket, hair salon and optician. There are also several cafés and coffee shops (all serving Fairtrade beverages) within the Centre.

Living, the University's accommodation service is also located in University Centre. As well as allocating University accommodation to students, the Service can provide information about local private sector landlords who have been vetted by the University, and are able to help with checking rental contracts. The Careers Network, also housed in University Centre, provides students with a range of employment assistance. Services include help with finding job vacancies, general careers advice, constructing a good CV and practising interview techniques.

On leaving University Centre, turn right to face the main road. To your left is the **Psychology department (R2)** and on the opposite side of the road is the **Geography department (R26)**. If you take the next left turn, you will see the **Munrow Sports Centre (R25)** on the right.



University Centre (R23)



6 Munrow Sports Centre (R25)

The Munrow Sports Centre forms the hub of the University of Birmingham's indoor sports facilities. Many sports teams play at a competitive level in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) leagues. BUCS has over 150 member institutions and Birmingham has consistently appeared in the top three for the last 16 years. We also offer a number of comprehensive scholarships and bursaries to support the most talented and dedicated athletes financially, physically and mentally. Students can also enjoy a range of fitness classes including yoga, pilates, aerobics and boxercise, or swimming in our 25m pool.

You may wish to stop for refreshments at the café located next to the Munrow Centre before continuing your walk by returning to University Centre. From there, please cross the road heading west up the campus. On your left is the **Haworth Building (Y2)** which houses Chemistry, and on the right is the **Biosciences department (R27)**. Ahead on the right you will see the **Learning Centre (R28)** which faces the **Computer Science building (Y9)**.



7 The Learning Centre (R28)

The Learning Centre contains numerous facilities available for students to help them with independent study; for example, computer clusters, printers and scanners. From here you can see University station from which there are regular services into the city centre, a journey of approximately eight minutes. University trains go to the main station in Birmingham (New Street) which provides train access to the rest of the country – the journey to London is around one and a half hours.

Your tour ends at this point, but if you wish to view some of our student accommodation, our Vale Village residences are about a 15 minute walk from the main campus. To walk to the Vale, return to University Road East, and walk along Edgbaston Park Road in a northerly direction (the top-right hand corner of your map). You will come to 'The Vale' on your left and a selection of our student residences are located here in landscaped parkland overlooking a lake. If you would like to view an example of standard student accommodation, you may view the show flat in Shackleton Hall. The key to the flat can be obtained from the reception area at Shackleton itself. You will be asked to sign this out and return it to reception when you have finished. Shackleton also contains numerous social facilities for the students on this site.



Shackleton Hall



Learning Centre (R28)

Information about accommodation

Students can choose from single study bedrooms with shared facilities, or en suite bathroom. Students who prefer to cook for themselves can opt for a self-catered flat with a communal living room and kitchen. Alternatively, catered rooms are available where food is provided from Monday to Sunday (term-time only). The Vale's lively community life centres on the food court and social activities at the Hub, where students with a catered package eat and socialise. Other facilities include a launderette, shop and bars, and a 24-hour reception. There is also a Vale Residents' Association which organises regular events.

All our student accommodation allows students to enjoy their independence, while keeping them at the heart of University life. We offer safe and informal surroundings, and there are plenty of opportunities to socialise or find private space when needed. There are student mentors at each site to help students settle in and all study bedrooms have a telephone which can be used to make internal calls to friends across campus free of charge. The facility also allows incoming and external calls outside the campus, but these calls are chargeable. In addition, all of our study bedrooms give unlimited access to the internet and University network. Student security on campus is of great importance to us: all University accommodation is equipped with CCTV and our Security Centre is open 24 hours a day for anyone who needs help or assistance. We also have our own Community Police Officer on campus.

University accommodation is guaranteed for all first year students who have made the University of Birmingham their firm choice and who meet the other conditions of their offers, including returning their accommodation form by the required deadline.

Accommodation for students with disabilities

For students with disabilities, specially adapted halls of residence are available. Contact our Living team for more information on 0121 414 8000.

Living at home

For students that choose not to move into University accommodation, living at home and commuting to University is a good option especially for students who live locally. It certainly doesn't mean that the student experience should be any different from that of students living in halls of residence. All students have access to the same academic, social and sporting facilities. This flexibility means more and more students from the West Midlands are choosing to study at Birmingham. If a student chooses to live at home, the Freshers Off Campus Society (FocSoc), run by the Guild of Students, offers tailor-made support and organises sports teams and social events such as cinema trips and club nights.

Edgbaston campus map

Private accommodation

For students who wish to live in private accommodation after their first year, we provide an annual House Hunting Event which ensures students find safe, affordable housing with reputable landlords. Housing Services is always on hand to help with any accommodation queries or issues that students may have while studying at the University. We also operate a Landlord Accreditation Scheme to ensure minimum standards of provision and maintenance are met by private landlords.

Events and activities at the University of Birmingham

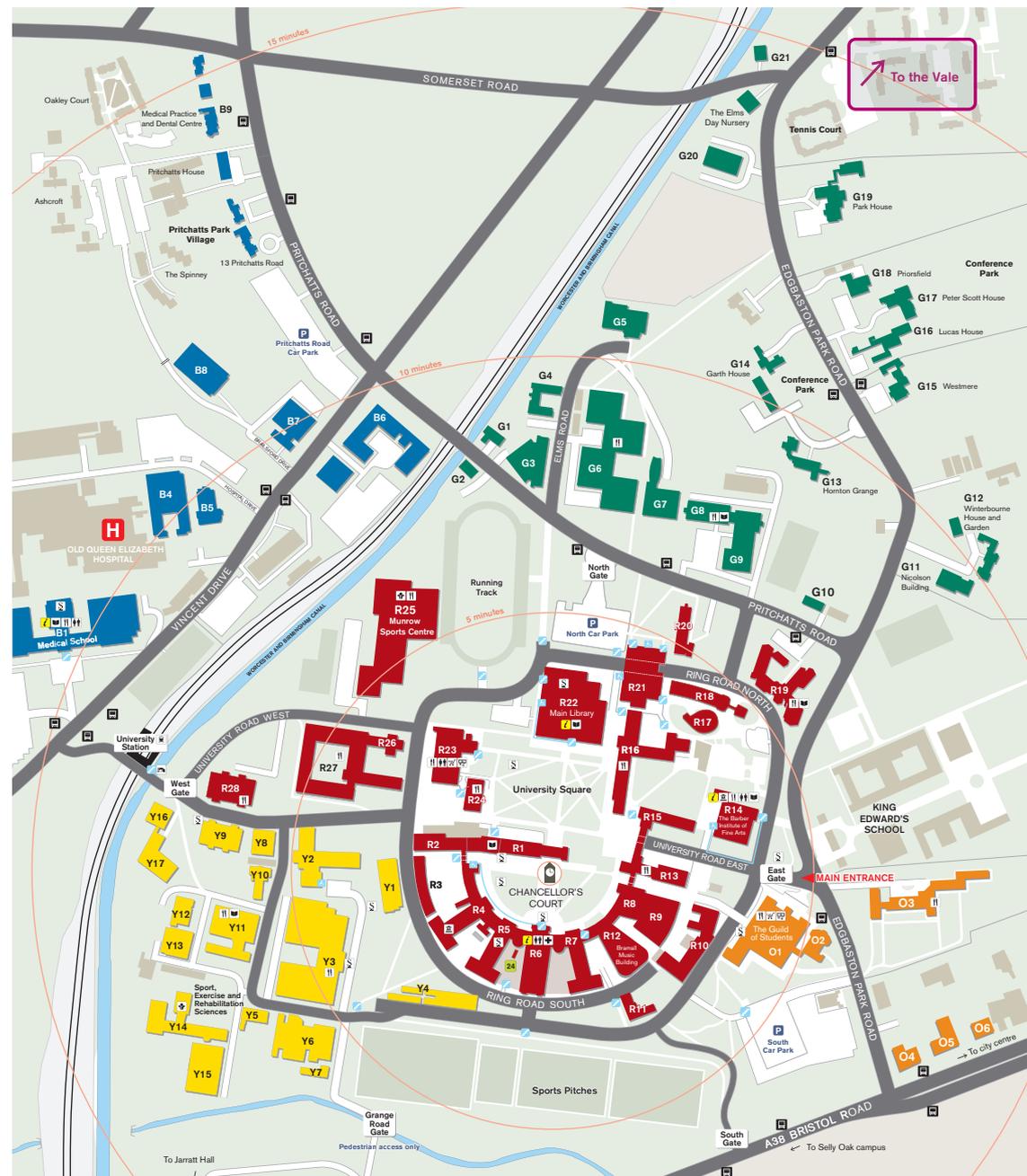
The University has a great number of activities that occur on campus, many of which are open to the general public or students and parents interested in looking at the University. The major events for prospective students are the annual open days which take place in June, September and October each year; and for students who have already applied, the applicant visit days take place from November to March, offer insight into life at Birmingham. Details of all of these events can be found on our website at www.birmingham.ac.uk. You can also order a prospectus from the website and watch a virtual tour of the campus and accommodation if you wish to revisit the tour you have taken today!

Other useful information

Our website contains a number of audio and video links to recordings and films of our students talking first-hand about life at the University of Birmingham. The subjects covered include information about finances, life as a student, how to choose a subject and tips for applicants, as well as other areas of interest to prospective students. You can also download video clips of Admissions Tutors discussing what they look for in applications and how to write a good application. These can all be found on the University's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/unibirmingham.

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