

Liberal Arts at Warwick - Undergraduate Live Chat

An opportunity for you to speak to our tutors and current students about studying Liberal Arts and life at Warwick.



Hello everyone. My name is Dr Kirsten Harris, and I'm the Deputy Head of School for Liberal Arts. I'm also the Director of Admissions. This session is an opportunity to ask any questions that you might have about the Liberal Arts degree or what it's like to be a student in our department. If you want to find out more (e.g. attend an overview session which talks you through the degree and the opportunities it offers; participate in an academic taster session) please do sign up for our Open Days coming up in the next few months. But today please use the session to ask any questions you have about the programme - big or small! If you want to know the student perspective, one of our fantastic recent graduates, Arya, is also here to answer your questions.



Welcome to our Liberal Arts live chat! We're looking forward to speaking to you today. I'm Jess and I'm a Recruitment and Communications Officer in the Liberal Arts Department. No question is too big or too small - please do fire away when you're ready 😊



Hello everyone. My name is Dr Kirsten Harris, and I'm the Deputy Head of School for Liberal Arts. I'm also the Director of Admissions. This session is an opportunity to ask any questions that you might have about the Liberal Arts degree or what it's like to be a student in our department. If you want to find out more (e.g. attend an overview session which talks you through the degree and the opportunities it offers; participate in an academic taster session) please do sign up for our Open Days coming up in the next few months. But today please use the session to ask any questions you have about the programme - big or small! If you want to know the student perspective, one of our fantastic recent graduates, Arya, is also here to answer your questions.

Kirsten mentioned our Open Days - you can register your interest for them now and we'll let you know when bookings open. In Liberal Arts we're planning to host a Virtual Open Day in late October and an on-campus Open Day at the start of November. You can register your interest here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/opendays/>

Virtual Open Days at the University of Warwick

Visit our Virtual Open Days this autumn to find out more about your subject, take part in live chats, and explore our 360 degree virtual tour.



Hey everyone, I am Arya and I am from Singapore! I am a recent Liberal Arts graduate and I studied on an Economics Pathway. I would love to answer any questions you might have about my experience at Warwick and in particular about my journey with Liberal Arts. Please do pop any questions you have for me in the chat :)



When you're ready please do say hi and begin to ask your questions. Often students want to know about modules, contact hours, the degree structure (including our pathways), assessments, studying abroad opportunities, careers support, and generally what it's like to be a Liberal Arts student. (But you might have other things you want to ask about, of course!)



Hi Arya, What are you doing now that you graduated? And what advantages do you see for the Liberal Arts pathway



What subjects are there to choose from?



Hi Hannah. Good question. It depends on whether you want to take a disciplinary pathway or a specialist interest pathway (will explain in a sec!)



What subjects are there to choose from?

If you take a disciplinary pathway you take half of your modules with us in Liberal Arts (all our modules are interdisciplinary) and the other half of your modules in one of our partner departments: Classics, Education, Film and TV, English, Theatre and Performance Studies, Life Sciences, Economics, History, Languages or Philosophy. So it's very similar to doing a joint degree.

PATHWAYS

DISCIPLINARY INTEREST PATHWAYS

If your passions lie in a particular subject, you're also free to follow a single-discipline pathway. You'll choose your optional modules exclusively from one of our partner departments.

PARTNER DEPARTMENTS

English	Economics
History	Languages
Life Sciences	Philosophy
Classics	Theatre and Performance Studies
Education	

Disciplinary Interest Pathways



What subjects are there to choose from?

(On the screen you should be able to see a slide about the Disciplinary Interest Pathways, which Kirsten has just mentioned)



Does the liberal arts pathway take extra time to graduate? 4 years instead of only 3?



So we wouldn't be doing modules from multiple subjects but modules from a chosen subject and the liberal arts department?



Does the liberal arts pathway take extra time to graduate? 4 years instead of only 3?

Hi Sarah, thanks for your question! The BA Liberal Arts degree is 3 years full-time, or 4 years full-time with an intercalated year. The 'intercalated year' could be spent abroad or on a work placement. Does this help?



Thank you Jess



What subjects are there to choose from?

But if you choose a specialist interest pathway, this means that you do half of your modules with us in Liberal Arts, then build the rest of your degree around a topic that interests you from any modules around the University. There are some restrictions, and like any degree students don't always get their first choice modules, but you have so many options open to you. So if you were interested in Social Justice as a topic, you might take modules on protest literature in English, on educational inequalities in Education Studies, and on matters to do with gender/"race" in Politics or Sociology



Hi Arya, What are you doing now that you graduated? And what advantages do you see for the Liberal Arts pathway

Hi Sarah, Hope you are well! I have taken a few months off to help my parents with work and am in the process of applying for job right now! For me the main advantage of being with Liberal Arts was the care and attention we received due to it being a small close knit department with staff who I found were always really willing to talk about my interests and help me pursue them in assignments and outside of academics as well. Besides this, the design of the course also gave me the flexibility I wanted to pursue my interests in Economics alongside others, which was really important to me when I was looking for an undergraduate course.



So we wouldn't be doing modules from multiple subjects but modules from a chosen subject and the liberal arts department?

Yes that's correct Hannah, for the Disciplinary Interest Pathways. I think Kirsten has now just mentioned the Specialist interest Pathways, where there is more flexibility to take modules from across the university

PATHWAYS

DESIGN YOUR OWN UNIQUE PATHWAY

Specialist Interest pathways are open to your interpretation. You're free to pursue your interests, whatever they might be. We'll help you design a pathway that meets your needs.

SPECIALIST INTEREST EXAMPLES

Apocalyptic Studies

Business Ethics

Conflict, Culture, and Society

Culture and Identity

Food Security

Health and Human Society

Imagination in Childhood Development

Social Justice

Sustainability

Specialist Interest Pathways



What proportion of credits are from group work or projects versus individual?



(On the screen now we are showing our slide about Specialist Interest Pathways)



So we wouldn't be doing modules from multiple subjects but modules from a chosen subject and the liberal arts department?

Only if you choose to do a disciplinary pathway. If you do a specialist interest pathway you can take modules from different subjects across the University.



Is the Liberal Arts program more competitive to "get into"?



Hi Arya, What are you doing now that you graduated? And what advantages do you see for the Liberal Arts pathway

Please do let me know if you'd like me to elaborate on anything or if I misunderstood your questions :)



So we wouldn't be doing modules from multiple subjects but modules from a chosen subject and the liberal arts department?

I hope this makes sense now, but if not - please just say!



Thank you Arya for your explanation of the benefits of Liberal Arts



(On the screen now we are showing our slide about Specialist Interest Pathways)

And you can find out more about pathways here:
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/liberalarts/prospectivestudents/degrees/pathways/>

Pathways - BA Liberal Arts - University of Warwick

Our BA Liberal Arts features a structured programme very different from other Liberal Arts programmes. At the end of your first year you'll choose a unique pathway through your degree which will allow you to gain in-depth knowledge working in collaboration with leading experts across the University.

PATHWAYS

WHAT IS A PATHWAY?

- Identify a specific strategic focus
- Breadth of knowledge *and* expertise in one particular area
- We'll work with you to choose modules which create a coherent degree
- Align your pathway to your interests and ambitions

"A lot of Liberal Arts courses tend to leave students on their own to decide what pathway they want to go down, but with Warwick there's a focus on making sure you know exactly what pathway is right for you."

Sara,
Liberal Arts Student

What is a pathway?



Can we choose our own special interest pathway or is there a list to choose from?



What proportion of credits are from group work or projects versus individual?

This is tricky to state exactly because it changes from module to module. In most Liberal Arts modules there is a group component. In Y2/Y3 the group components tend to range from 10-20% of a module. In Y1 (where results count for only a very small fraction of your overall results), it may be higher in some modules - though in at least Y1 module there's no group component at all. Modules from other departments have different assessments, so it would vary



Can we choose our own special interest pathway or is there a list to choose from?

Hi Hannah, you devise your own title (with our support and guidance, of course). I believe that some of the titles that our students come up with do overlap though - so for example, we have had students interested in the area of 'sustainability' and Specialist Interest Pathway titles in this area have included 'Gender and sustainability', 'Sustainability communication', 'Business and sustainability' etc.



What proportion of credits are from group work or projects versus individual?

Hi Adrian, just to add to what Kirsten has said, you might be interested in looking at the individual module pages for the assessment breakdowns:
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/liberalarts/currentstudents/modules/liberalartsmodules/>

Liberal Arts Modules - University of Warwick

We're continually updating our modules to reflect the latest research and expertise within our Department.

Liberal Arts Pathways - Thomas



Pathways, Tom

<https://youtu.be/P2Oq4vrYJwU>



Is the Liberal Arts program more competitive to "get into"?

Hi Sarah. That's a great question! Yes, in the sense that our entry requirement is A, A, A at A level (or equivalent). But we are very keen to make offers to students working at around that level who have the kind of intellectual curiosity and passion that suits a degree like this. If students are predicted a grade or two under our entry requirements we will still consider their application - because we understand that many students do better in their A level results than they might be predicted



If I miss the GCSE entry requirements by one grade, but I meet the entry requirements for a-level is it still possible to be considered for the course?



As we've had a few questions on pathways, we're now playing a video from one of our Liberal Arts graduates, Tom, about his thought process when choosing his pathway



If I miss the GCSE entry requirements by one grade, but I meet the entry requirements for a-level is it still possible to be considered for the course?

Hi Aklema, thank you for your question! I'm sure Kirsten will be able to give you a full answer on this, but in the meantime, I just wanted to say that we have recently reduced our GCSE entry requirements to a grade C/grade 4 in English and Mathematics. I hope this is useful to know!



Thank you! How long after starting do you have to pick your pathway?



Oh thank you Jess! That is very useful



Can we choose our own special interest pathway or is there a list to choose from?

Hi Hannah. We have a list of suggested pathways that a number of students choose to take: e.g. Sustainability, Social Justice, Culture and Identity. These are very broad and the students who choose to take them personalise them according to their interests (i.e. there is no set list of modules that you have to take). But most of our Specialist Interest pathway students want to devise their own title - and this often changes over the years as their academic interests evolve. Some student know what they want to do right away (e.g. we have a current Y3 student who knew right from the first term that she wanted to do a pathway in Critical Sports Studies because that's where her passion lies) but most students slowly define their pathway as they move through their degree and take modules in different departments and begin to develop an area of special academic interest.



If I miss the GCSE entry requirements by one grade, but I meet the entry requirements for a-level is it still possible to be considered for the course?

(This reduced GCSE requirement applies for 2022 entry onwards)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A level: AAA, plus grade C/grade 4 in English and Mathematics at GCSE.

Contextual offers made at ABB for 2021 entry.

IB: 38 points including English and Mathematics.

BTEC: We welcome applications from students taking BTECs alongside one or two A levels, plus grade C/grade 4 in English and Mathematics at GCSE.

International entry requirements: We welcome applications from students with other internationally recognised qualifications. You will also need to meet our English Language requirements - our course falls under Band B. warwick.ac.uk/ugoffers

No specific subject requirements.

Entry requirements



For those of you with questions about entry requirements, I have just put out entry requirements slide on the screen for you. If you have any further questions about these please let us know!



What proportion of credits are from group work or projects versus individual?

Hi Adrian, I just wanted to add that as Kirsten mentioned when it comes to your optional modules you can select modules based on your preferences for group work or individual work. My focus was in Economics for example and I was keen on further developing my speaking and presentation skills so I tried to select more modules where there was a small percentage of the module was dedicated to group presentations. Within Liberal Arts core modules, I found we were also encouraged to develop team work and presentation skills, with some assignments especially in first year specifically designed for this.



For IB entry requirements, does Math need to be at higher level or can standard level be fine?



Hi Arya, I wanted to ask what has been your biggest take away from studying liberal arts?



Thank you Kirsten, Jess, Arya, that's helpful



If I miss the GCSE entry requirements by one grade, but I meet the entry requirements for a-level is it still possible to be considered for the course?

Hi Aklema. Good question! As Jess says, we've now reduced our English and Maths requirements, so hopefully it acts as less of a barrier. But students do usually need to meet this requirement. However, there are often cases where exceptions can be made - particularly where a student comes from a less privileged educational experience. My advice to a student who has missed a GCSE grade would be to contact me directly and have a chat to me about their individual circumstances so I can see if an exception might be made. (I should add that I don't have final say on this - we have to act according to University regulations - but I can certainly find out so you know before applying)



While we're answering your questions (thank you for these!), we'll play a short video by one of our Liberal Arts graduates, Lily Rose

Liberal Arts Alumni Stories: Lily Rose



Alumni Stories - Lily Rose

<https://youtu.be/p7mQuwfR6Ps>



Thank you Kirsten! Quite luckily the grade boundaries have been reduced just in time



Thank you! How long after starting do you have to pick your pathway?

You pick your pathway mid-way through Term 2 in Year 1. But if you think you might want to do a disciplinary pathway you need to be thinking about it at the beginning of Year 1 because it will impact which modules you choose to take. We guide you through this whole process to make sure you don't miss out! But if, for example, you took a core History module in Year 1 because you thought you might want to take a History pathway, but mid-way through Term 2 you want to move onto a specialist interest pathway, that's totally fine. Students doing a specialist interest pathway would declare their title at the same time (mid-way through Term 2 Year 1) but this would be a "working title" - it will often change many times before a student graduates. The point is to help you develop an area of expertise and interest rather than tie you irrevocably to one topic!



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?



Thank you! How long after starting do you have to pick your pathway?

And there is some flexibility built in. For example, we've had students begin on an Economics pathway who then decide they want to broaden it up in their final year to Economics and Sustainability, or Economics and Business. This is usually fine



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?

Hi Aklema, there are two options for studying abroad, I'll jot them down here for you:



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?

The first is an intercalated year at a Liberal Arts partner institution. You could spend a year at one of our specifically selected Liberal Arts partner institutions. We've partnered with institutions in Europe and Canada, allowing our students to study Liberal Arts programmes that share our passion for interdisciplinarity and critical thinking



For IB entry requirements, does Math need to be at higher level or can standard level be fine?

If you have met the GCSE requirement then it doesn't matter what you do or the grade you get. If you haven't then you either need a 5 at Higher level or a 6 at Standard level. Does that make sense?



Thank you Kirsten! Quite luckily the grade boundaries have been reduced just in time

Oh hooray!



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?

The second option is an intercalated year at one of Warwick's partner institutions. You will have the choice of the University-wide intercalated (non-credit bearing) study abroad year options



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?

And you can find out more about studying abroad here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/liberalarts/prospectivestudents/studyabroad/>

Study Abroad - Liberal Arts - University of Warwick

Do you want to broaden your horizons by studying overseas? Find out about the routes available to you for studying abroad as a Liberal Arts student at the University of Warwick.

STUDY ABROAD

YOUR OPTIONS

1. Year-long study abroad with a **Liberal Arts** partner university

Germany

- University College Freiburg
- Leuphana University
- Jacobs University

Netherlands

- Leiden University College
- Amsterdam University College

Canada

- Concordia University

2. Year-long study abroad with a **University of Warwick** partner university



Study abroad



What study abroad options are available for liberal arts?

I would also just add that one of our academic staff guides you through this whole process, giving you loads of information and helping you to decide what to apply for. He's super keen on studying abroad and is really committed to helping our students find places that suit them



Thank you for all your great questions so far! Is there anything you'd like to know more about - our teaching style, first-year module content, societies?



How many students in the 1st year LA classes?



Thank you Jess and Kirsten! I'd like to know a bit more about the teaching style e.g. are there any seminars? Also, how are you assessed in first and second year?

TEACHING STYLE

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

- Examine problems
- Variety of perspectives
 - Social, political, scientific, historic, artistic, cultural, economic...
- Conduct independent research, share ideas, and work together to produce a response



PBL



Hi Arya, I wanted to ask what has been your biggest take away from studying liberal arts?

Hi Aklema, I think studying Liberal Arts has really enabled me to believe in my ideas and in solutions. I personally feel very prepared to learn new things and pursue what I am interested in because I feel equipped with the skills to learn quickly and develop holistic solutions. For example, I am now keen on pursuing a career around environmental solutions and many of the jobs I am interested in are quite technical roles. I feel confident conducting my own research to gain the knowledge I need to understand the field and enter it. Of course, I also tried to cater my degree to towards sustainability as I realised this was my interest. This has been important as well but the research skills that I have developed are incredibly transferable and is just one skill that I really value from my time with Liberal Arts.



Thank you Jess and Kirsten! I'd like to know a bit more about the teaching style e.g. are there any seminars? Also, how are you assessed in first and second year?

Hi Aklema, Kirsten/Arya will be able to answer these questions fully for you. In the meantime, I've put a slide up that gives you some information on teaching style, and you might be interested in taking a look at this web page when you have the time to:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/liberalarts/prospectivestudents/degrees/teaching_and_assessment/

Teaching and assessment - Liberal Arts - University of Warwick

Find out about our unique teaching approach, assessment methods, and typical contact hours in the Liberal Arts Department at Warwick.



Is the teaching style (problem based learning) different from the rest of the university courses?



Thank you Jess and Kirsten! I'd like to know a bit more about the teaching style e.g. are there any seminars? Also, how are you assessed in first and second year?

Also just to add, we'd encourage you to join our Autumn Open Days (virtual/in person) as this will give you a good feel for the teaching style 😊



Thank you so much Arya, that is very helpful into knowing how tailored the degree can be



How many students in the 1st year LA classes?

There are usually between 10-18 students in our core modules - in Y1 and Y2. Our optional modules (i.e. you don't have to take them but if you want to study more interdisciplinary Liberal Arts modules) usually run between 5-18 students



I have registered and I am looking forward to it!



Fantastic! 😊

What is Liberal Arts?



What is Liberal Arts?

<https://youtu.be/SQ9bLCbwXlo>



We'll now play a short video (featuring our very own Kirsten) that should give you more of an insight into the teaching style in the Liberal Arts Department



You can access any of the videos today (and more) here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/liberalarts/prospectivestudents/usefulresources/>

Useful Resources

Our undergraduate brochure provides information about our Department, our course, modules, studying abroad, and professional development opportunities.



Both Aklema and Saraj asked about teaching styles so I'll respond here. We don't do lectures in Liberal Arts (i.e. where the teacher stands at the front of the classroom and delivers information to students for an hour) - but you might have some lectures when you take other departments. Our classes are usually 2 hour interactive workshops (often called seminars). How these are run depends a little bit on the staff member - we encourage staff to be creative and develop their own style - but they will all be a mixture of pairs/small group discussion, whole class discussion, mini-lectures, practical activities, etc.....The main thing that sets apart our teaching is that we do lots of group work in our classrooms and our students really play an active role in the classroom. You will do lots of research to prepare for the class and you'll spend time teaching each other what you have learnt as well as learning from someone like me. Students get really good at collaborating and working together to explore ideas.



Thank you very much for this explanation!
Impressive and interesting!



I agree with Sarah, it is really active and engaging!



Is the teaching style (problem based learning)
different from the rest of the university courses?

Problem-based learning is different to a lot that goes on elsewhere in the University, mainly in how active it asks students to be. As a result students become really confident at speaking in class, and we often get feedback from other departments that Liberal Arts students tend to contribute more than even their own students. So it's different - but not in a way that will disadvantage you when you go into other departments.



We have ten minutes to go until the end of this live chat, if you have any final questions for us please do let us know! 😊

ASSESSMENTS

AUTHENTIC AND APPLIED

- Essays, case studies, written exams
- Policy proposals, documentaries, performance

ART AND REVOLUTION

- Critically analyse objects by exploring the archive collection at the University's Modern Records Centre

SCIENCE, SOCIETY, AND THE MEDIA

- Produce videos, documentaries, and podcasts
- Participate in a postmodern science fair

100% of our Liberal Arts students agree that marking and assessment has been fair
(The National Student Survey 2020)



Assessments



Is the teaching style (problem based learning) different from the rest of the university courses?

I should also say that problem-based learning is a broad way of approaching topics. It might be to do with recognisable real-world problems (e.g. food security, the legacies of colonialism). But it also might be about academic, philosophical problems that don't have a "solution" as such e.g. research questions to do with English Literature, History, Philosophy.....



We have ten minutes to go until the end of this live chat, if you have any final questions for us please do let us know! 😊

For the earlier questions on assessment types, we're now showing our assessments slide. 'Art and Revolution' and 'Science, Society, and the Media' are two of the core first-year modules



As Liberal Arts is quite broad, is it appropriate if my personal statement focuses around sociology, politics and international relations or is there a specific criteria admissions tutors look for?



Is the teaching style (problem based learning) different from the rest of the university courses?

The other thing I would say is that the way we teach means that students develop really advanced research skills, and by the final year are working at a standard much closer to postgraduate studies than you would usually expect - this is down to the problem-based learning where you have had so much practice in identifying interesting problems to study, doing independent research, working out what are the most useful methods of acquiring knowledge, and making your own arguments/interpretations/solutions.....



Thank you very much for this explanation!
Impressive and interesting!

Glad it helps!



Welcome slide



As Liberal Arts is quite broad, is it appropriate if my personal statement focuses around sociology, politics and international relations or is there a specific criteria admissions tutors look for?

Hi Aklema. Another good question. It's absolutely fine to keep it broad - particularly if you're applying to other programmes (e.g. if you're applying to Politics as well we'll understand that you need to write about Politics for them!). We're interested in any and all A level combinations. Being intellectually curious about the world (past, present and future) and the different ways that we can know about it is the most important thing to us....



We have just a couple of minutes to go now! Thank you for joining us today, we hope you've found this live chat helpful. As mentioned, it'd be great to see you virtually or in person at our Autumn Open Days. And, you're welcome to get in touch with us at any time: liberalarts@warwick.ac.uk. You might also be interested in taking a look at the blogs/vlogs by our Liberal Arts blogger, Olamide: <https://our.warwick.ac.uk/blogger/olamideajisafe/>

Olamide Ajisafe - OurWarwick

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As Liberal Arts is quite broad, is it appropriate if my personal statement focuses around sociology, politics and international relations or is there a specific criteria admissions tutors look for?

One other thing I'd say is that if you're interested in those subjects here at Warwick, a number of our Liberal Arts students build their pathway out of modules in those subject



Thank you. Bye now!



Thanks Sarah!



Thank you for hosting this event, it has been very useful. I look forward to the open day! :)



Speak to you again soon Aklema!



Bye! Thanks so much for your thoughtful questions



Thank you Jess and Kirsten! I'd like to know a bit more about the teaching style e.g. are there any seminars? Also, how are you assessed in first and second year?

Hi Aklema, from my experience this really varied between the professors. As Kirsten mentioned at Liberal Arts doesn't do lectures but even within classroom settings I found that professors styles played an important role. For example, in my experience in the first year module Art and Revolution (a 30 CAT, 2 term module) two professors led the modules with different teaching styles. In term 1 the professor took an approach that emphasised self-learning and adaptability more. This helped us develop quick critical thinking skills. I felt the second term professors approach emphasised developing deeper critical thinking approaches and focussed on developing out understanding of these techniques. I found in modules like this professors worked together in such ways to complement each others teaching styles.