BA LIBERAL ARTS

PROGRAMME FAQ

Q: what is a Liberal Arts degree Programme?

Liberal Arts education has a long history in Western civilisation. In its oldest form, it involved students thinking philosophically about questions that crossed the rigid boundaries of disciplines and encouraged them to use critical tools from the humanities, the social and natural sciences and fine arts to address these questions. The Ancient Greeks considered a liberal arts education to be the mark of an educated person.

Modern Liberal Arts programmes retain the core traditional approach of looking at the Big Questions of the world from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in order to gain an understanding of the ways in which different disciplines coincide and converge as well as how they differ. In this way, Liberal Arts programmes are trans-disciplinary. They equip you with a range of skills to analyse issues using methods employed by different disciplines, they encourage exploration of the different solutions offered, their implications and limitations and stimulate creative thinking about alternative ways of approaching issues.

A Liberal Arts programme aims to develop well-rounded individuals with knowledge of a number of different subject areas and a broad range of transferable skills that are valued by employers. Our course also provides you with the opportunity to develop specialist knowledge in a particular discipline or about a particular area of intellectual interest. It offers breadth and depth, as well as giving you the flexibility to tailor the course to your own intellectual interests.

Q: what are the unique features of the Warwick BA in Liberal Arts?

- Our course is constructed around “Problem-Based-Learning” (PBL). This means that you learn about a subject through problem-solving. You examine a problem from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including the social, political, scientific and historic, and learn how to use a range of analytical tools to explore the issues and evaluate the different approaches.
- Our course is very flexible because it enables you to choose a traditional academic discipline, or a Specialist Interest area, and take modules related to your chosen area. This means that you can tailor your course to suit your own interests.
- Our course offers you the opportunity to spend a year studying abroad at a leading Liberal Arts College. We have partnerships with a number of overseas institutions, including in Germany, and the Netherlands.
- Our course enables you to undertake a work placement or an internship so that you get valuable experience which will enhance your employability prospects.

Q: what should I write in the UCAS personal statement?

Tell us why you are interested in studying Liberal Arts and what you think our course can offer you. Since our course is constructed around ‘Problem Based Learning’, we’d like to hear about how you approach problems. Tell us about an intellectual problem or question that you have encountered in your previous study (perhaps in your A levels), or other area of your life, and your response to it.
Liberal Arts courses are described as ‘trans-disciplinary’. What do you understand by this term? How have your educational and personal experiences inspired you to apply for a course that challenges you to think across disciplines?

Applications for our course are read by a panel of academic staff drawn from a number of subject areas, therefore a broad approach is welcomed and you should not assume that the reader will have the same subject interests or subject expertise as yourself.

Q: **what is a Liberal Arts Core Module?**

A core module is a compulsory course of study which you are required to take as part of the degree programme. Liberal Arts Core Modules are taken by all students on the BA in Liberal Arts degree, regardless of their chosen Disciplinary Interest or Specialist Interest.

In your first year, there are four Liberal Arts Core Modules worth a total of **90 credits**:

- **Art and Revolution** (30 credits)
- Science, Society and the Media (30 credits)
- Research Methods I: Arts and Humanities (15 credits)
- Research Methods II: Science and Social Sciences (15 credits)

In the second year, there are two Liberal Arts Core Modules worth a total of **60 credits**:

- Consumption (30 credits)
- Sustainability (30 credits)

In your final year, there is one Liberal Arts Core Module worth **30 credits**.

- Dissertation/Final Year Project (30 credits)

The remaining credits each year (you need a total of 120 each year) are made up from your own choice of optional modules. In your second and final years, these modules will relate to the Disciplinary Interest or Specialist Interest area that you choose at the end of your first year.

Please follow the ‘General course structure’ link under the Degree Overview tab on the course page for an outline.

In your Liberal Arts Core Modules you interact closely with your fellow Liberal Arts students, learning how to analyse a range of issues and contemporary global problems from a variety of perspectives and using different analytical methods to investigate and evaluate the evidence and the solutions offered. In your final year, you bring together the knowledge, techniques and skills that you have acquired throughout the course in the final Liberal Arts Core Module – the Dissertation/Final Year Project.

Q: **what will I learn on the Liberal Arts Core modules?**

Our course is constructed around “Problem-Based-Learning” (PBL). This means that you learn about a subject through analysis of a problem and consideration and evaluation of the different approaches to viewing the
problem and solutions to it. You learn how to do this on the Liberal Arts Core Modules. Each year, you will take Liberal Arts Core Modules. For example, in the second year of the course, you will consider the global problem of Consumption and focus on ideas, attitudes and current debates around the notion of consumption. You will consider consumption as an illness, looking at the problem from the perspective of medicine and the history of medicine. You will consider consumption as an economic concern and look at the issue from the point of view of business and economics. You will consider consumption in society and culture and view the question from the stance of literature, philosophy, music, drama and film. Examining the problem from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including the social, political, scientific and historic, you will learn how to use a range of key analytical tools to explore the issues and evaluate the different approaches.

The Liberal Arts Core Modules also teach you key research skills required in order to investigate issues. In your final year, you will be able to choose a problem/Big Question in which you are particularly interested, develop a thesis around it and use the analytical and research skills developed in the Liberal Arts Core Modules to conduct independent research and then present your findings, conclusions and ideas in the final year Liberal Arts Core Module called Dissertation/Final Year Project.

Q: what is a Disciplinary Interest?

A discipline is a traditional academic subject for study at University such as History, Economics, Biology. At the end of your first year you may decide that you wish to focus your study on a particular discipline and take modules from that subject area alongside the Liberal Arts Core modules.

You can choose from the following Disciplinary Interests: Economics, English, Film Studies, History, Life Sciences (Biology), Philosophy, Politics and International Studies, Psychology, Theatre and Performance Studies.

If you choose a Disciplinary Interest, you will take modules in that subject in your second and final years and will develop specialist knowledge in that subject which you can use to address the problems and issues explored on the Liberal Arts Core Modules or on other Big Questions that are of particular concern to you.

For example, if you choose the Disciplinary Interest of Philosophy, you will be able to bring the knowledge of Philosophical thought and theory and your skills of philosophical thinking gained in your Philosophy modules to a consideration of the problem of consumption that is studied in your second year Liberal Arts Core module. In choosing your own disciplinary interest, you are able to tailor the course to suit your own intellectual leanings and fascinations.

The opportunity to specialise in this way means that our BA in Liberal Arts degree provides both a depth and breadth of knowledge.

Q: when do I choose a Disciplinary Interest?

Towards the end of your first year of study on the course (around Easter) you will be asked to decide whether or not you wish to declare a disciplinary interest. Please note that you may be required to demonstrate competence in a particular subject – or a related subject - in order to be able to follow some disciplinary pathways. Our tutors will be on hand to guide you and help you make your choice.

Q: what is a Specialist Interest?
This is similar to a disciplinary interest except that instead of being a traditional academic subject, it is a topic or theme which is of critical global significance. At the end of your first year, you may decide that you wish to focus your study on a particular problem that interests you and take modules from departments across the University which cover that topic.

There are 3 Specialist Interest Pathways on offer:

- Social Justice: A pathway that allows you to delve into the social, political, historical, economic issues that relate to this concept in the UK and on a global scale
- Food Security: A pathway that allows you to acquire in-depth understanding of the scientific, economic, social, political and humanitarian aspects of this local and international problem
- Sustainability: A pathway that enables you to study the scientific, socio-economic, historical and humanitarian dimensions of this controversial topic

As with a Disciplinary Interest, you will be able to bring your Specialist Interest knowledge to address the problems and issues explored on the Liberal Arts Core modules. In choosing your own Specialist Interest, you are able to tailor the course to suit your own intellectual leanings and fascinations.

The opportunity to follow a Specialist Interest is a unique feature of the Warwick degree and it will enable you to compete for specific job opportunities in the relevant areas. In addition, these pathways will position you favourably for a number of existing graduate courses.

Q: how do I choose the Disciplinary Interest or a Specialist Interest?

Among the team of academic tutors on the BA Liberal Arts we have a dedicated Director of Student Experience (DSE) who will be on hand to guide you as you consider the subjects available and decide which one, if any, you would like to specialise in during your second and final year. The DSE will also help you decide on the most appropriate Specialist Interest pathway.

Please note that you may be required to demonstrate competence in a particular subject – or a related subject - in order to be able to take some disciplines. If you choose not to declare a disciplinary interest, you may choose a Specialist Interest instead.

Q: what are the Pathways?

A Pathway is the route which you choose to take through the degree course. Our course is very flexible because you can choose your own disciplinary interest or specialist interest and take modules which correspond to that interest, thereby forging your own individual path through the course.

Q: what does each Pathway look like?

Examples of the possible Pathways through the course are available at under the ‘Degree Overview’ tab on the course page. These show that in addition to Liberal Arts Core modules, in your second and final years you will also take modules which correspond to the Disciplinary Interest or Specialist Interest that you have chosen. The Pathways illustrated show the modules that are available on each route.

Q: tell me more about the certificates
Our course provides the opportunity for you to gain a number of certificates which testify to your attainment of professional skills that will enhance your employability. Each certificate involves attendance at workshops over either a five or ten week period. You will produce either an individual written assignment, journal or e-portfolio which will be assessed.

**Certificate of Digital Literacy** – 90% of new jobs require excellent digital skills. You will be encouraged to think through the capabilities you need to live, learn and work in an increasingly digital society. You will learn about different digital media platforms and how to manage a professional online identity.

**Certificates in Coaching Conversations and Coaching Relationships** – These two certificates aim to develop your coaching and leadership skills through practical exercises and reflection.

**Certificate of Communication Across Cultures** – You will use the experience of your work placement to reflect upon the different styles of communication adopted for different professional contexts (or cultures) and will gain an understanding of the reasons for those different styles and their appropriateness. You will reflect on the relationship between professional culture and communication and the implications for your ongoing study and future career.

**Q:** what will my degree title be?

BA Liberal Arts.

Whatever disciplinary interest or specialist interest you choose, the title of your degree will be BA Liberal Arts. The pathway that you have chosen will be shown by the details on your personalised HEAR.

**Q:** what is the HEAR?

The HEAR is the ‘Higher Education Achievement Report’. It is an electronic document issued to you at the end of your studies which records all your academic and non-academic achievements at Warwick, as verified by the University. It includes information about achievements such as volunteering and prizes awarded as well as information about module marks and the Degree Classification awarded. You can show your HEAR to potential employers in order to prove your attainments.

**Q:** how much contact time will I have with Warwick staff each week?

To some extent this depends upon the modules which you choose to study. Each module has a set minimum number of timetabled hours that you will be expected to attend, but these differ depending upon the way in which each module has been designed. In each year, you will take Liberal Arts Core Modules each of which typically involves attendance at one x 1 hour lecture per week plus a seminar or workshop lasting for 90 minutes or two hours per week.

In your first year, you take three Liberal Arts Core modules per term so can expect to be required to attend formal timetabled sessions for approximately 9 hours per week for your Liberal Arts modules. However, in addition to this, in the first term you attend a weekly one-hour lecture for five weeks as an introduction to Liberal Arts education. In the second term, you take the Digital Literacy Certificate which involves attendance at a weekly two-hour workshop for five weeks of the term.
In addition to the Liberal Arts Core Modules, you choose optional modules from other departments each year which may involve more or less formal teaching time per week than the Liberal Arts Core Modules. You can find information about minimum number of timetabled hours for these modules on departmental websites.

Generally speaking, (and to give you an idea of your workload!), you should expect to spend 10 hours of study (timetabled, non-timetabled contact with tutors and private study or self-directed study) per unit of credit. Since undergraduate bachelor’s degrees typically comprise 360 credits, this means that over the standard academic year, you will be engaged in approximately 3600 hours of study.

Q: What type of support is available to help me decide on a career?

Warwick’s Centre for Student Careers and Skills offers a range of services designed to support you as you think about and plan your future. These range from one to one appointments with a dedicated careers adviser who can provide advice on developing your c.v. and making applications, careers fairs, employer presentations, mock job interviews, providing information about opportunities to help you get work experience (e.g. through volunteering schemes or internship programmes both in the U.K. and abroad), and access to relevant networks and workshops to help you to acquire and hone the skills which employers value. Take a look at the website for more details of the services available: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs

Q: What jobs can I do with a BA in Liberal Arts?

Our Liberal Arts degree will equip you with a range of transferrable and practical skills including: highly developed analytical thinking, creative problem-solving and communicating across cultures. These and other skills you’ll attain, evidenced by professional certificates, are highly valued by public and private sector employers in the UK and globally.

You will have the opportunity to undertake a work placement so you can experience the working world and gain a competitive advantage over other graduates. You will also have access to an international network of alumni and Liberal Arts graduates who can support you as you start your career.

Graduates from Liberal Arts courses go on to pursue careers in teaching, the media, law, business, politics, marketing and public service.

Q: What are the entry requirements for the course?

A level AAB plus B in English and B in Mathematics at GCSE. No specific subject(s) or combination of subjects is required. However, you may be required to demonstrate competence in a particular subject – or a related subject - in order to be able to follow some disciplinary pathways/specialist interest routes. Please contact the Liberal Arts team for further guidance. Offers normally exclude General Studies/Critical Thinking.

International Baccalaureate 36.

We welcome applications from students with other internationally recognised qualifications. For more information please visit the international entry requirements page.

Q: Will there be an interview?
We do not typically interview applicants. Offers are made based on your predicted and actual grades, along with your personal statement. Occasionally, some applicants may be interviewed, for example candidates returning to study or those with non-standard qualifications.

Q: can I learn a new language or continue study of a language on this course?

Yes. Warwick’s Language Centre offers a number of language learning opportunities, whether as part of your degree (i.e. to earn credit towards your degree) or in your spare time. You can choose to study Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian or Spanish. Courses are offered at a range of levels from beginners to advanced, depending on the language, and there are accelerated options for those who wish to develop their language skills at a faster pace. Modules are free to undergraduates who register formally and take them as part of their degree course. On the BA Liberal Arts course, you may choose to take a language module as one of your free options in your first year or as an option related to your disciplinary interest or specialist interest in your second and final years. If you decide that you want to learn a language, but not as part of your degree course, you can do so by paying a fee.

Q: where can I go if I choose to do the intercalated year?

We have selected a number of Liberal Arts Colleges with which we have formed partnerships. All have been chosen because of their expertise and excellent reputation for Liberal Arts education. In all cases, the language of teaching is English.

   University College, Freiburg, Germany
   Jacobs University, Bremen, Germany
   University College, Maastricht, The Netherlands
   Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Q: do I have to apply to do the intercalated year?

Yes. Places available at overseas partner institutions are limited and therefore there is a competitive application and selection procedure. If you are interested in studying abroad, you will need to apply during the first term of your second year. More information about the process will be provided to you nearer the time.

Q: what will I study when I’m abroad?

You are free to study whichever modules or courses offered by the partner institution interest you most provided that you fulfil the academic requirements. You may decide to continue to take modules that correspond to your Disciplinary Interest or Specialist Interest or you may choose something completely different. Your Personal Tutor at Warwick will be able to guide you in your choice. All of our partners offer a range of options with a level of demand that is at least equal to Warwick’s and they are at an appropriate level. Your choices will need to be approved by your Personal Tutor at Warwick.

Q: how much will it cost to take the intercalated year?

You will pay a reduced fee rate to Warwick whilst you are abroad. Please see the Student Finance website for more information.
But you pay nothing for tuition to your host institution abroad.

You will have to find money to pay for your travel to and from the overseas country and you will need to meet your living costs whilst you are there (as you would have to do if you stayed at Warwick). The best way to find out what these costs are is to speak to others who have studied abroad previously in the country to which you would like to travel. The Study Abroad Team in Warwick’s International Office will be able to help.

The intercalated year on our BA Liberal Arts course is optional rather than compulsory and is not part of the ERASMUS scheme which means that you will not be eligible for financial support in the form of travel grants or maintenance loans. However, should you encounter severe unforeseen financial difficulties whilst you are abroad, you may apply to Warwick for a loan of up to £500 to help you out. The loan must be repaid at the start of the term when you next attend Warwick.

Q: do I still have to pay fees to Warwick if I’m abroad?

Yes, because you will still be in receipt of services from Warwick whilst you are abroad. For example, you will continue to receive the advice and support of your Personal Tutor whilst you are abroad and he/she will have to approve the modules which you choose to study whilst you are abroad in order to ensure that they fit in with your Warwick course. You will pay a reduced rate for home fees. Please see the Student Finance website for more information.

Q: if I go to a non-English speaking country, do I have to learn the language?

Our partner Liberal Arts Colleges in Europe all teach in English so, in terms of your ability to study whilst abroad, competency in the country’s language is not required. However, you may find it useful from the point of view of your day to day existence in the country to have some knowledge of the main language of communication as this will support you as you interact with people in your daily life and will enhance your experience.

Q: where will I live if I go abroad?

Your host institution abroad may be able to organise your accommodation for you, but you will still need to apply for it.

Q: do I need a visa to study abroad?

If you are a Home (i.e. UK) or EU student paying Home/EU tuition fees to Warwick then you will not need a visa to travel to a partner institution in Europe.

If you are studying at Warwick under a non-EEA Tier 4 visa and you decide to go abroad for the third year of the course, you will need to apply – and pay for – an extension to your existing Tier 4 visa. Warwick’s International Office will be able to provide advice on this process.

In all cases, it is your responsibility to have a valid passport which will cover the time of your stay abroad, and to acquire any necessary visas in time to travel.

Q: what support and contact will I have with Warwick when I’m abroad?
Whilst you are abroad, you will be required to maintain regular contact with Warwick staff as part of your compliance with our Student Attendance and Monitoring Scheme. Your principal point of contact will be your Warwick Personal Tutor who will be required to approve the courses which you study whilst abroad and will also be available to support you throughout your study abroad experience, particularly if you encounter any issues or have any concerns about your progress. You will maintain regular online contact with Warwick and Warwick tutors may even visit you whilst you are overseas. Towards the end of the year abroad, you will need to advise us on your choices of modules for your final year of study back at Warwick.

**Q: how will I be assessed?**

We have devised an assessment strategy that allows you to develop your expertise in addressing problems using a variety of perspectives from the Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences. We will teach you to use quantitative and qualitative methods of research, and this will equip you with a solid foundation from which you can approach contemporary problems critically and creatively. Consequently, the range of assessments on this degree combines the traditional (essays and written examinations) with the innovative (creative projects, portfolios and performance).

For example, in the first year of the degree you will take the Art & Revolution module where you will review films, analyse paintings and draft articles for the media from the perspective of Liberal Arts. Conversely, in the module Science, Society and the Media you will produce data analysis, critique case studies and engage in practical activities, as part of the formal assessment.

In addition, during the course you will produce short critical essays, analyses and written reviews – some of which may be in the form of contributions to online blogs and forums - research papers, reflective journals and portfolios and oral presentations. You will be expected to present your work in a public forum such as the British Conference for Undergraduate Research or the International Conference of Undergraduate Research. You will contribute to group projects and deliver extended pieces of writing (for the final year Dissertation) as well as sit mid and end of year short tests and traditional end of year written examinations.

The methods of assessment across the course as a whole vary according to the optional modules that you choose each year and therefore the route that you follow through the course. For example, if you follow the Life Sciences pathway, you may also undertake laboratory-based assessment.

**Q: will I have to sit exams?**

Yes. The Liberal Arts Core Modules in the first and second year each have an examined component alongside written and practical elements of assessment such as essays, group productions and presentations. The Liberal Arts Core Module in the final year is a Dissertation for which there is no examination. Depending upon which disciplinary interest/specialist interest pathway you follow, you may be required to take exams in the modules required for your chosen pathway.

**Q: what is the ratio of coursework to exams on this course?**

In the first year, the ratio for the Liberal Arts Core Modules is 70% coursework and 30% exam. You will also choose optional modules from a wide range of modules offered by departments across the University. The ratio of coursework to exams will vary according to which modules you choose.
In the second year, the ratio for the Liberal Arts Core Modules is 50% coursework and 50% exam. You will also take modules which correspond to your chosen disciplinary interest/specialist interest. The ratio of coursework to exams will vary according to which modules you take on your pathway.

In the final year, the Liberal Arts Core Module is 100% coursework. You will also take modules which correspond to your chosen disciplinary interest/specialist interest. The ratio of coursework to exams will vary according to which modules you take on your pathway.

Q: *where can I get more information?*

You can get more information about the BA in Liberal Arts on the [Liberal Arts course information](#) pages at:

If you have a specific question about the course, you can contact the Liberal Arts team at:

liberalarts@warwick.ac.uk

You can find out more about the Warwick Experience on our Campus Life web pages where you can get information about the wide range of clubs and societies operating at the University, campus accommodation, part-time working and volunteering, the Students’ Union and fees and funding:

[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/campuslife/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/campuslife/)