

School of Physics

Focus on international students Spring 2015



Focus on international students

The University of Bristol attracts excellent students from all over the world, and the School of Physics is no exception: students from every continent are studying at undergraduate and postgraduate level. In this edition of the newsletter, we have asked our international students about their experiences and their reasons for choosing Bristol. Here we are happy to provide a snapshot of their views.

One of the compelling features of Bristol is that it offers an excellent research and training environment embedded in one of the most attractive cities in the UK. City life in Bristol has been voted the best in Britain in a major national survey of 20,000 university students across the country ([Whatuni Student Choice Awards](#)). We are also proud that Bristol is the first UK city to win the title of European Green Capital 2015, in recognition of its commitment to the environment.

The University of Bristol has been ranked [29th in the QS World University Rankings](#), placing Bristol 7th of UK higher education institutions. Find out more about Bristol at [University of Bristol News](#).

Professor James Annett, Head of School

Pictured above: Physics students enjoy the spring sunshine on campus.
Photo: Dr Terry McMaster, School of Physics.

What attracts students to study and research Physics in Bristol?

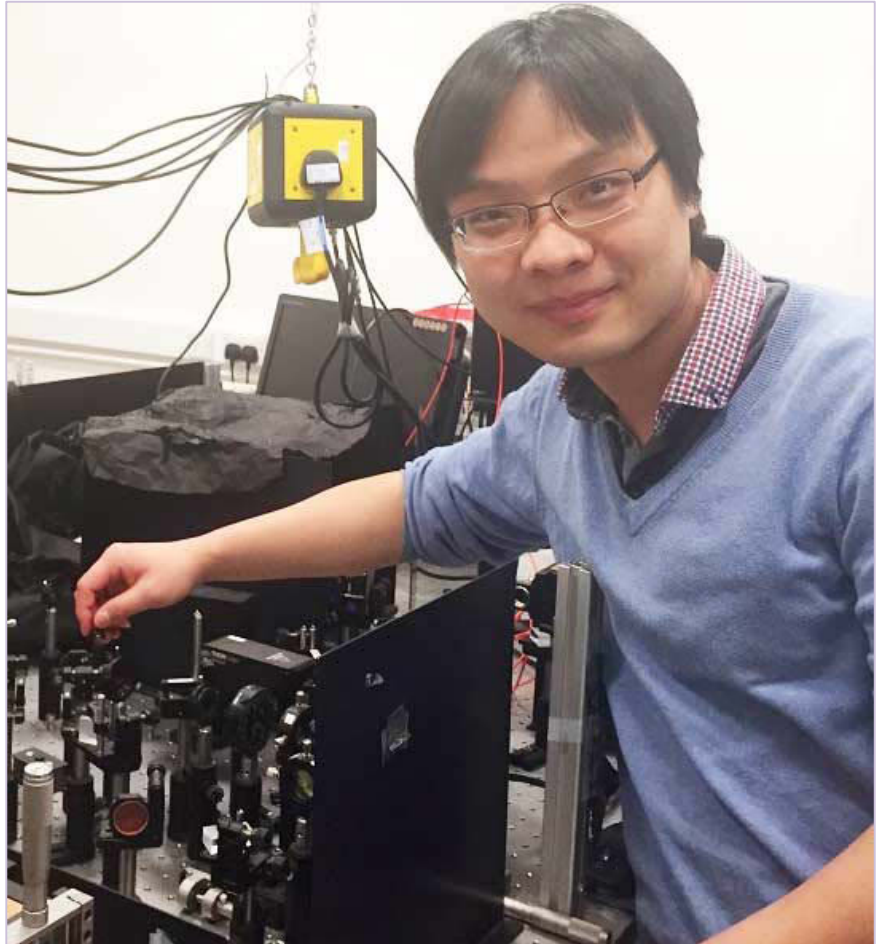
We asked students who have come to Bristol from many parts of the world.

Jianwei Wang (China), a PhD student in the Bristol Centre for Quantum Photonics

I am a PhD candidate at the Centre of Quantum Photonics in the School of Physics, working with Professor Jeremy O'Brien and Dr Mark Thompson.

I have been working on developing integrated photonic devices for applications of quantum communication, computation, simulation, and machine learning.

Bristol is a very nice city and it has topped the list of the most liveable cities in UK. The University of Bristol (UoB) is a world-class university with a high reputation, and it has been well known in many fields, including research at the frontier of science and engineering. I love Bristol and the UoB!



International students need to work harder in my opinion, as here we have excellent students from UK, EU, and overseas. If I were to advise a student thinking of carrying out research in Bristol? My suggestion for potential PhD students is to find what your scientific interests are, and then keep moving with passion.



The School of Physics in the spring sunshine: the classic 1920's physics tower is on the left, with the modern physics building in the centre; to the mid-right is the Centre for Nanoscience and Quantum Information (attached to the School of Physics) while on the far right is the new £56m Life sciences building.

Photo: Dr Terry McMaster, School of Physics.



Mincy Naduthottathil (India) is a first year PhD student at the Bristol Centre for Functional Nanomaterials

I was looking for a university that offers a PhD degree in Nanomaterials, and I came to know about the University of Bristol via the website findaphd.com. Getting admission to such a prestigious university was tough, but I was lucky enough to get an offer letter from my supervisor Dr Terry McMaster.

Now I am a first year PhD student in the Bristol Centre for Functional Nanomaterials. I have now completed all the lecture courses and I am looking forward to starting my PhD research. After eight months here, I am proud to say that I have not only been introduced to a novel conceptual, application-based educational environment but also a complete interdisciplinary system of gathering knowledge. The lecture courses were very informative and the opportunity to work

with people in various backgrounds in different departments gave me an idea of how things are going in other labs and helped me to choose a potential supervisor and a project for my PhD. I am very much looking forward to carry out my research of interest in the coming three years.

The city of Bristol always makes me feel wonderful and enthusiastic because of its sophisticated architecture, beautiful outlook and the historic feel of the streets. The Cathedral, the Will's Memorial Building and the Clifton suspension bridge add beauty to the city. When I entered the building for the first time, I became so excited at its magnificent ceiling and gigantic walls. Bristol is full of life and everything you need is easily accessible.

The academic excellence and high reputation makes the University of Bristol one of the top universities. Apart from studies, the university offers good sports and recreation facilities which is helpful for students to keep them fit both mentally and physically. It is indeed a great privilege to study in such a marvellous university.

I felt comfortable from the moment I arrived as an international student here in Bristol because of the warm welcome given by everyone including the staff and my class mates. All were very helpful and most attentive in every matter. Even now I remember being shown around campus by my PhD supervisor on my first day. The International Office, Accommodation Office, Funding Office and Faculty Office of the university are very helpful and supportive and have been with me at all times.

If I were to give a piece of advice to a student thinking of carrying out research in Bristol, I would say it is extremely interesting. You will have a comfortable working environment with all sophisticated facilities and have freedom of your work. So if Bristol is there in your list of Universities to study, do not think twice. Both you and your studies will be safe in the hands of this city and the university. Be optimistic and follow your dreams.



Mrs Rebecca Emmanuel Mfon (Nigeria), a first year PhD student in the Micro and Nanostructures research group

I am a PhD research student in physics, in the Micro and Nanostructures research group. I am involved in the synthesis of metallic nanoparticles using leaf extracts and their characterisation, for possible applications for the benefit of mankind.

Some of the courses I have attended include biophysics, nanophysics, and functional nanomaterials. My supervisor is Dr Andrei Sarua.

I learned about the University of Bristol from the internet while going through the academic programmes of highly-ranked universities and the profiles of some academics in my subject area (physics) and research interest (nanostructures).

Bristol is a city bubbling with life especially at weekends, and the University of Bristol is a friendly, world class university.

Being an international student feels like being grafted into a family that leaves no stone unturned to ensure that you 'become your dream'. My advice to anyone considering studies here? If you want to earn an enviable degree from the University of Bristol, you must be focused and hardworking, and avoid distractions.

Tsou Yung-I (Taiwan) is a first year postgraduate student on the Master's programme in Nanoscience and Functional Nanomaterials

I found out about the MSc from the United Kingdom Education Advisory Service (UKEAS) when I was looking for advice on studying in UK.

The University of Bristol is one of the greatest places to do research. It is also a big challenge to work with the best research in your area. The Master's degree in Nanoscience and Functional Nanomaterials involves three different projects to finish in one year. The challenge will be adjusting to a different research area and research group. I feel that everyone is friendly to international students, and willing to respect different cultures, but it is a personal challenge to study in a foreign country using a second language.

If I had to summarise the city of Bristol, the university, and my research, I would say: the city of Bristol is amazing but slightly expensive; Research, leave your comfort zone!





Poemwai Chainakun (Thailand), a second year PhD student in the Astrophysics research group

I'm doing PhD research about modelling the X-rays that can be detected from around a supermassive black hole using the reverberation technique. This technique allows me to probe the innermost region very close to the event horizon. I've been conducting this research with Dr. Andrew Young since I was a Master's student in 2011.

I first found out about the university when I googled for Master's degree courses and research. The University of Bristol captured my interest because of its effective research teams and its high-ranking profiles, especially in physics. That then led me to search through various aspects of the city. I found that Bristol, with its beautiful scenery and peaceful environment, is very attractive for living.

Being an international student here is a very good opportunity. I found that the University of Bristol can provide not only strong academic support but also a good environment in which to live, learn and share experiences with people from across the world. It is obvious to me that Bristol is uniquely peaceful and hospitable for overseas students. If asked to summarise the city of Bristol, the university, and my studies – I'd say they are extraordinary!

If I were to give advice to a student thinking of carrying out research in Bristol, I'd say that being a research student here, you'll be surrounded by experts who will kindly encourage you from the beginning of your research until you choose your career path after graduation. You're missing out if you don't choose the University of Bristol!



Yan Zhou (China) is a first year PhD student working on microstructures

I am a PhD student working on Gallium Nitride at the Centre for Device Thermography and Reliability, supervised by Professor Martin Kuball. I discovered Bristol through a friend's recommendation and QS world university rankings, an academic ranking.

To me, being an international research student at the University of Bristol means freedom, equality, homage, high efficiency, diligence.

If I had to summarise the city of Bristol, the university, and my research in three words I would say: clean, beautiful, meaningful.

Bristol is a good place to fulfil your scientist's dream, just come and play with the interesting science!



Xing Chen Chen (China) is a first year undergraduate BSc Physics student

I did my A levels here in Bristol and heard about Bristol University in my school. Because it is not too far away from where I lived I went to all the open and visit days. Through talking to staff and students in the university, I decided to apply to this great uni. The city is great, and I figured it would be fun to stay here for three more years.

Bristol is a city with a mixture of cultures; as well as knowing other Chinese students, I also met some other international friends who come from all around the world. There are hundreds of societies, activities and clubs for anyone to get to know anyone else.

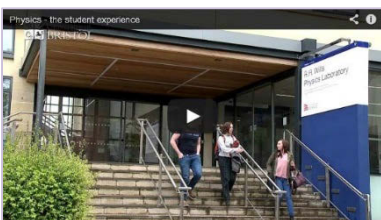
The time I have spent here is incredible. I am doing a physics degree with over 250 other undergraduate students.

Bristol in three words? Fulfilled, happy, hard!

If I were advising someone who is considering studying here I would say: be prepared, it is not as easy as it might sound,

Bristol has a really high standard so if you just want to play and get a degree, reconsider! Also you need to learn how to manage your time, because life here is very exciting.

School of Physics on video



Bristol welcomes students from the UK and from around the world. Three short films showing the School of Physics are now [live on video](#) on the website and give you a great chance to find out a little more about the experience of our students, and a glimpse of what Bristol physics is all about. Find out more about life as an international student at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/>.



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