Why study Russian and Czech at Bristol?

Expertise in modern languages has never been more important as the United Kingdom forges a new relationship with its European partners and seeks to develop its trading and cultural ties throughout the world.

Bristol offers an exciting range of degrees involving Russian and Czech. Russia’s dramatic history and complex culture give it exotic appeal, while studying Czech allows you to explore the richest episodes in European history from the perspective of a small nation striving to preserve its identity at the heart of the continent.

As Russia reasserts itself as an independent political and economic force, Russian expertise becomes increasingly vital in a range of professions.

The modern Czech Republic is at the centre of the expanded European Union (EU), and knowledge of a less widely spoken language is highly prized in many professions. Bristol is one of very few universities to offer a full Czech programme including language, literature, history, cinema and contemporary society.

‘There is a great variety of modules and a lot of scope to research what you are interested in within and outside the outlines of each module. Studying languages has proved indispensable to getting my first graduate job.’

Isabella (BA Spanish and Russian)
Alongside language learning, you will study diverse historical and cultural topics. The exceptional variety of optional units includes topics from literature, history, political and religious thought, gender and visual culture. An excellent range of year-abroad opportunities includes study and work placements with our contacts in Russia, Kazakhstan and the Czech Republic.

Teaching occurs in relatively informal tutorial or seminar settings. Speaking, listening, translating and writing skills are assessed through a mixture of coursework and examinations. Assessment in non-language units varies but can include essays, exams, commentaries and presentations.

**Russian**

In year one, beginners in Russian follow a core language course with a specialist teacher, while students who have A-level Russian study advanced language units. Both groups benefit from frequent contact with experienced teachers who are native speakers. Our cultural programme in year one equips you with the knowledge and skills to explore aspects of Russia in more depth later. All students study key periods in Russian history alongside selected texts, images or films. Single honours and post A-level students also take units on classic Russian literature, contemporary Russia through the media, or beginners Czech, which all other students may take up in year two.

Options in later years allow you to explore Russia through the study of its literature, history and visual culture and its religious, political and artistic ideas. You may also take interdisciplinary units in the School of Modern Languages. Recent examples include World Cinema, Translation as Professional Practice, Linguistics, The Radical Right and Communism in Europe.

**Czech**

Czech is a Slavonic language, like Russian or Polish, and provides an excellent introduction to this group of languages. Its grammar and vocabulary also reveal the effects of a long co-existence with German. No prior knowledge of the language is required. Our students regularly achieve excellent fluency after four years’ study. Our course allows you to explore the contemporary socio-political priorities of the Czechs in the context of their longer history and culture, and students are encouraged each year to shape the precise focus of cultural options.

Options which have recently been available to students of Russian or Czech include:

- Dostoevsky
- Chekhov on the World Stage
- Anticipating the End: Russian Thought in the Shadow of the Revolution, 1890-1917
- The New Soviet Man and his ‘Others’: Politics and Identity in Soviet Russia, 1917-1945
- Gender in 20th- and 21st-Century Russia
- Russian Orthodox Culture
- From Nation-Building to Rat-Catching: Czech Literature 1836-1913
- Introduction to Czech Cinema since 1963
- Gender Identity in the Czech Republic

**Year abroad**

Most of our students choose to study at a Russian or Czech university during their year abroad. Bristol has strong links with universities across Russia, including in Moscow and St Petersburg, in southern Russia (Krasnodar) and, for the adventurous, in Siberia (for example Tomsk and Tyumen).

Many students choose to teach English, undertake internships or find other work. The department will help you to arrange study or work placements and the Global Opportunities office will assist with associated administration. Czech study and work placements are currently covered by the Erasmus+ programme.

Your year abroad will provide you with a highly attractive skill set for employers. If you study two languages, you divide the year equally between countries where they are spoken. Many students find that studying two languages makes them stronger linguists.

"The Russian department is structured really well. The small cohort of Russian students has created a very tight-knit group which is definitely something I value highly."

Harry (BA Russian)
A Russian or Czech degree stands out as a sign of individuality, intellectual ability and zest for unusual challenges. Russian and Czech expertise is in demand in a wide range of professions. Russia is a major diplomatic and trading partner of the UK and a key centre for the energy industry. The Czech Republic is firmly established in the EU, with Prague as a key regional centre, and many government and international organisations favour speakers of two major EU languages and one minor.

A degree in modern languages develops skills essential to most graduate careers, including communication, critical thinking and analysis. The study of another culture, along with work or study abroad, builds self-confidence and self-awareness and a capacity to understand and empathise.

The Bristol Skills Framework enables our students to recognise their development in academic writing, problem solving, group work and individual and group presenting. We will equip you with the tools to market your skills, your achievement and your potential in whatever career path you choose to pursue after you graduate.

Careers and graduate destinations

The skills that arts students traditionally bring to the workplace are valued in every part of the employment market. Our arts students go on to succeed in careers as diverse as the subjects they study here, including commerce, tech start-ups, law, accountancy, theatre, museums, publishing, the charity sector, journalism, politics, education and international relations, as well as sectors not immediately associated with arts disciplines, such as engineering and IT.

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Making your application

The opportunity to learn Czech alongside my other languages was a huge bonus. Having a rare Slavonic language is a huge asset to potential employers. It is the main reason that I was offered a job as a translator at the European Parliament.

Catriona (BA French and Russian, MA Translation)

Typical offer for BA Russian*

Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug19-russian or bristol.ac.uk/ug19-czech for Joint Honours and other qualifications.

A-levels AAB (contextual BBB†) including B in a modern language.

IB Diploma 34 overall (contextual 31†) with 17 points at Higher Level (contextual 15†), including 5 at Higher Level in a modern language.

English Language profile B††

GCSEs No specific subjects required.

†For information on contextual offers, visit bristol.ac.uk/contextual-offers.

††For details of English language profiles, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

Selection UCAS or Common Application.

Further information

Find out more about the Department of Russian: bristol.ac.uk/russian.
Contact us

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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol  
bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

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