

My undergraduate life

We welcome students to the School of Physics from the UK, Europe and further afield. Our teaching staff come from leading universities all over the world. This diversity helps you to learn about ground-breaking physics surrounded by like-minded people.



Natasha – MSci Physics and Philosophy

Studying Physics and Philosophy at Bristol has been one of the best experiences of my life. After four years in the Physics department, I think it's safe to say we are one of the friendliest in the University! Studying for a joint honours degree is hard but rewarding. Physicists and philosophers both try to understand the universe, but sometimes in very different ways! Some of my favourite courses have been on quantum mechanics, the philosophy of physics and relativistic field theory.

“Being able to approach problems from both sides has really made me value my degree.”

In your final year, a wider range of unit choice allows more of an overlap between Physics and Philosophy. I've loved being able to do my physics project on symmetric quantum walks in discrete space, and my philosophy project on discrete time! Being able to approach problems from both sides has really made me value my degree. My advice to anyone thinking of studying physics at Bristol is - get involved: join societies, go to events, meet new people, and absorb as much information as you can!

Ilin – MSci Physics

The University of Bristol is an almost ideal fusion of academic and student life. The University staff and facilities provide an exceptional place to grow academically, and the city of Bristol is ideal for students who want to enjoy life to its fullest.

“Everyone, from the students to the staff, is as passionate about physics as you are.”

The lecturers and tutors treat their students as equals and have more than enough patience to answer all questions that a curious student might have.

One aspect that I found particularly interesting was the mechanics part of core physics - an in depth and mathematically interesting perspective on a familiar subject.

If you are thinking of studying physics at Bristol, I would say go for it. Some people are hesitant to pursue physics at university level – is it weird to like science? At the University of Bristol that is not the case. Everyone, from the students to the staff, is as passionate about physics as you are.



My undergraduate life



Pete – BSc Physics with a Preliminary Year of Study

I'd attempted to get into higher education the traditional way, but at 18 I didn't know what I wanted to do. After having worked for several years I had a much better understanding of what I wanted to do with my life, but I didn't know how to get back into education. Finding out about the preliminary year course offered at Bristol was a turning point in my life.

“Finding out about the preliminary year course offered at Bristol was a turning point in my life . . . I quickly surpassed what I thought I was capable of.”

As someone who had been out of education for a while, the prospect seemed daunting at first but I've learnt more this year than I have in a long time. The structure of the course, the way it's taught and the support given is phenomenal. Physics is an amazing subject, and while I've been here I've been surrounded by people who think that too. It surprised me how quickly I was able to relearn how to learn and I quickly surpassed what I thought I was capable of. I am already looking forward to starting my second year in September!

Rosie – MSci Physics

My time at the University of Bristol as part of the School of Physics has been rewarding in many ways. Not only have I learnt much about physics and myself, I have had the opportunity to engage in two summer research placements, one experimental and one theoretical, which have reassured me that I want to pursue a career in physics.

“I have had the opportunity to engage in two summer research placements . . . I'm now a named contributor on a paper published in Nature Physics.”

Not only have I had the opportunity to study many areas of physics, I've learnt how research into physics is done first hand. Because of the work contributed in my first placement, I am now a named contributor on a paper published in Nature Physics.

After my final year, I am going on to study for a PhD in theoretical physics, focusing on gravitational and quantum field theory analogues in non-linear optics.

The atmosphere in Bristol's physics department is why I chose to study here; staff and students are welcoming and supportive, and it is clear they have endless enthusiasm for what they do. I am so grateful to have been here, as the people I have met have undoubtedly played a large part in what I have achieved.



My undergraduate life

Each of our students brings their own experiences and we aim to support each individual to get the most from their studies. We have a number of mechanisms in place for students with long-term illnesses or disabilities, helping you to manage your studies if you need it.



Jane – MSci Physics

I came to Bristol to study for an MSci in Physics, already in my mid-twenties and determined to do as well as I could in my degree. From the second year I got some set backs due to various health issues. I had a herniated disc in my neck which was trapping a nerve in my right arm and took about a year to get correctly diagnosed and have surgery to remove the disc.

“I was unable to take any exams at the normal times, but I managed to sit them all in the supplementary period and did quite well.”

I had been on heavy pain killers and I was unable to take any exams at the normal times, but I managed to sit them all in the supplementary period and did quite well.

Once I started my third year it became clear that I hadn't recovered properly from the surgery, so the department and I decided the best thing was for me to go and recover and then restart the third year next year.

“I came back fully recovered and ready to start back on my degree.”

I came back fully recovered and ready to start back on my degree, but then got glandular fever which turned into post-viral chronic fatigue and I've had to battle through that for the past two years. It's been a slow road back to recovery but again the School of Physics were really supportive. Again, I sat most of my third year exams in the supplementary period.

The University and my department were incredibly helpful and supportive. I'm very proud that I have managed to get through it all and finish my degree. I've had an amazing time here at Bristol and despite the challenges, I've made it through! I've finished my degree and hopefully done reasonably well.

“The department were totally supportive and understanding.”

Throughout this time I was also suffering with depression and the department were totally supportive and understanding. I'm not sure anywhere else would have been as great - I'm seriously glad I came to Bristol.

