

Languages at university



What languages can I study?

There is a vast array of choice from Afrikaans to Zulu, although you'll find many more courses in French, German and Spanish than in other languages.

European		African	Near/Middle Eastern	Asian	
Bulgarian	Italian	Afrikaans	Arabic	Bengali	Nepali
Catalan	Norwegian	Amharic	Farsi	Burmese	Pali
Croatian	Occitan	Igbo	Georgian	Cantonese	Panjabi
Czech	Polish	Hausa	Hebrew	Gujarati	Sanskrit
Danish	Portuguese	Shona	Kurdish	Hindi	Sinhalese
Dutch	Romanian	Somali	Turkish	Indonesian	Tagalog
Finnish	Russian	Swahili		Japanese	Tamil
French	Serbian	Twi		Khmer	Thai
Gaelic	Slovak	Yoruba		Korean	Urdu
German	Slovene	Zulu		Malay	Vietnamese
Greek	Spanish			Mandarin	
Hungarian	Swedish				
Icelandic	Ukrainian				
Irish	Welsh				

What sorts of things will I study besides the language?

When you study languages at university you get to study a lot more than reading, writing, listening and speaking. You will find that there is a lot of variety from one course to another. Here are some examples of the sorts of things that you may find on offer.

Language modules will develop the four main skills but you will also work on more specialised skills such as interpreting, translation, summarising, abstracting, report writing, negotiating, analysing, and presenting. These are all skills that will be appreciated by employers whatever career you go into.

You will be able to learn more about language, its use and development in linguistics modules covering topics like sound systems, language in its social context, psychological theories of language use and development and the structure of language.

You will also learn a lot about the countries where the language you are learning is spoken and the history and culture of the people at different periods in time. Modules in literature, film, theatre, history, culture and politics of the country whose language you are studying are all popular options on many languages degree courses.

What sorts of subjects can I study with a language?

There is great flexibility now in the choice of subjects you can study with languages as part of your degree. It's worth finding out whether you can study languages as well as another subject and still develop a specialist knowledge of the language and the culture of the countries where it is spoken. Many courses combining modern languages with other subjects are offered as combined or joint degrees which means that between one third and two thirds of your time is spent studying the language. You can study a language with business subjects, mathematics, whilst training to be a teacher, with sociology, sciences, computing, politics, law, media studies and even fashion and textiles.

Here are some of the most popular combinations.

Getting ahead in business, economics and management

Languages with these subjects are very popular. Degree courses include modern languages and business studies, European and international business, languages for business, economics, European and international management, human resource management, management systems, banking, advertising, and, if you want to be really up to date, some universities offer languages with e-business.



Feeling arty?

Combinations here include classical studies, drama, film studies, history subjects, history of art, literature, heritage management, medieval/ancient languages, music, philosophy and English.

The appliance of science

Combinations with science subjects are becoming just as popular as options with arts subjects. Combinations could include languages with chemistry, biological sciences, environmental science, geography and geology, psychology, physics, ceramic science, food science, pharmacology, neuroscience, plant science, physics, zoology or even glass science.

Area specialist

Languages will often be taught as part of non-English speaking area studies programmes (e.g. African Studies, European Studies), but you can also combine them with things like American studies, British Studies and Canadian Studies.

How else might I study a language?

Degrees with a year abroad

As well as doing a joint or combined degree, it is also possible to learn a language while at university through a period of residence abroad. If you decide to do this, there will usually be an opportunity to study the language before you go away either through tailored programmes, e.g. languages for engineers or through general language courses open to all.

Optional credited courses

Many degree courses include the chance to take optional courses in other subjects as an assessed (but not specifically named) part of your degree. This helps increase the general breadth of your academic knowledge with a view to either complementing or contrasting with your main field of study. These assessed options often include language courses. It may be possible to start a language from scratch or to continue learning a language

Find out more

The following links will help you to find out more about studying languages.

Why study languages

CILT, the National Centre for Languages, with the Department for Education and Skills, has produced an on-line information portal, **Languages Work**, supporting a wide range of products designed to show the true value of languages in the workplace and beyond. The Languages Work website includes a range of help, advice, guidance and factsheets to help you choose what language options are best for you. www.languageswork.org.uk

A gap in the market?

Marketing courses with modern languages are also very popular, while marketing management and even e-marketing are available at some institutions.

Multilingual computer whizz-kid?

Combinations here include computing, business systems, information systems, information technology, e-commerce systems, business information technology and multimedia.

Engineering a varied programme

These combinations cover many types of engineering, e.g. chemical, civil, electrical, electronic, mechanical engineering and materials science, plus some more unusual ones like European engineering, metal science and engineering and polymer science and engineering.

The road to success

Languages with leisure and tourism complement each other well; combinations could include leisure management and hospitality management with modern languages.

spoken at home or already studied at school or college.

These kinds of courses may be available as part of an Institution Wide Language Programme (IWLP), although the ability to take the option as an assessed part of a degree subject may vary between both institutions and departments.

Voluntary courses

Some university IWLPs may offer courses which do not count towards your degree, whilst many others offer paid-for extra-curricular language classes. You will usually be able to take most languages from scratch, while higher levels are usually available in the more popular languages. You might decide to choose these if you are keen to study a language, but do not want your performance to affect your main degree, or you might simply choose them as a more convenient and less onerous option.

The Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies – part of the Higher Education Academy and which provides UK-wide support and services for higher education – also has selection of materials on their website about the benefits of language learning and the possibilities of university study.

www.llas.ac.uk/resources/resources.aspx

University courses

The University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) handles undergraduate applications to study at university. Their website has a flexible search function. When you are searching try searching for 'modern languages' or for the specific language you want to study, particularly if it is not French, German or Spanish. If you are interested in another subject e.g. business studies try searching for that and see what options with languages come up. You can also search by areas of the country. UCAS also produce a range of print publications about applying for degree courses.

www.ucas.ac.uk

Aim Higher is a portal which has been developed to provide those contemplating entering higher education with access to the necessary information from which to make effective decisions and offers an entry point that enables prospective students to seek information about higher education institutions and courses.

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

The CourseSource and **Hot Courses** both list all UK degree courses, searchable by subject, region, college or university

www.thecoursesource.co.uk and
www.hotcourses.com

The Independent newspaper has produced an A–Z of degrees which covers French, European Studies, German, Iberian and Latin American languages (Spanish, Portuguese etc), Middle Eastern and African Studies and Russian, Slavonic and East European Studies. They also have an A–Z of colleges and universities.

<http://education.independent.co.uk/higher>

Careers

The Careers Portal gives information on getting into higher education, the low down on a range of careers and lists of professional organisations that collect information on careers, and a job search facility

www.careers-portal.co.uk

The **Languages Work** web site provide detailed information on the wide range of careers available to people with languages, and includes some case studies.

www.languageswork.org.uk

Dixon, Beryl, (1995) *Getting into languages*, Trotman and Company and a wide range of other careers publications are available from

Trotman Publishing.

www.trotman.co.uk

Going Abroad

If you are interested in taking a 'gap' year before going to university to improve your language level then you may be interested in this website which gives advice and information on finding short or long term jobs abroad.

www.overseasjobs.com

Language degrees will usually include a period of residence abroad. The Subject Centre website contains a set of web pages all about residence abroad as part of a university degree.

www.llas.ac.uk/abroad/students

Further information

For further information about the range of services offered by CILT, please contact:

CILT, the National Centre for Languages

20 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4LB

Tel: 020 7379 5110

Fax: 0207 7379 5082

E-mail: library@cilt.org.uk

For information about the Subject Centre contact:

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