

Guide to using student records in the University of Birmingham archives

The University of Birmingham archives contain a large quantity of administrative records about students who studied at the institution. These records were kept to manage a student's course of study from admission to graduation and can be used to trace individuals who attended the University. There are a large number of different series of student records. Some of them were kept by staff in the University's central administrative offices while others were kept by staff in University academic departments or groups of departments (known as Faculties between 1900 and 1998). Different series of student records were kept for different purposes, and they can therefore contain different amounts of information about students.

Student records can contain enough information about an individual student to provide a good summary of their time at the University, and can also include details about their family and background as well as about their academic record at the University and about their character, personality and health. Although the primary purpose of the records was to manage information about students during the time they were studying at Birmingham, a small number of record series include some details about students' careers and lives after leaving the University

These records are an important research resource for tracing individual students who attended the University but they are also a significant source for the study of the student demographic at the institution including social background of students, their nationality, gender and ethnicity

It can be difficult to work out what records to check to find out about an individual who might have studied at the University of Birmingham. For some students there might be a lot of information, spread across different record series, while for other students there might be very little information. This guide is intended to help researchers decide which records to look at

Did the person you are interested in study at the University of Birmingham?

The first place to look is the printed **Register of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates**. Editions cover the period from 1900 to 1972 and there is a set available in the Reading Room as well as the set in the archive: [UB/P/12/1 Registers of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates](#)

These registers were published by the University and were based on information provided by the University Registry or central administration. Check the relevant edition for the dates you think the person graduated, including the sections towards the back of each edition which list diplomas and certificates. If the person you are interested in was awarded a qualification from the University of Birmingham their name should appear in these registers.

If they do not appear, it is possible that they studied at Birmingham but did not graduate. Very occasionally there may be students who did graduate but who were not included in the registers.

If a student graduated their name should also appear in the printed degree congregation proceedings, and you can also use these to look for people who graduated after 1972. The

University Archives receives transfers of programmes after each year's ceremonies: [UB/P/13 Degree Congregation Proceedings](#)

If you want to find out more information about a student who graduated or was awarded a qualification or about a student who you think studied at Birmingham but who is not listed in the printed Register of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, there are other record series to check

If you do not know what subject they studied:

There are three separate series of student record cards kept by staff in the central administrative offices of the University of Birmingham.

[UB/STU/A/3/1](#) 1900-1957 (originals missing from Ch to Jo; microfiche copies available)

[UB/STU/A/3/2](#) 1930s-1974 (mostly 1953-1974)

[UB/STU/A/3/3](#) c.1966-c.1987

All three of these series have gaps and some cards have not survived

These record series can contain personal information about people who are still alive and so it is not possible to order them. If you know that the person you are interested in is no longer alive or if you are looking for your own record, please ask to request a search. If the person you are interested in is alive, please get their permission if possible before requesting a search.

You could also check the series of matriculation registers, kept between 1900 and 1961 to record the names of students admitted to study at the University of Birmingham. See [UB/STU/A/1/1](#)

If you know what subject they studied:

You can check the student record cards and matriculation registers (see above) but you can also check student record series kept by academic departments and groups of departments (Faculty student records)

There is a series of registers kept by the **Faculties of Science, Arts, and Commerce** to record income from class fees. Although the primary function of the registers is financial, they provide a comprehensive record of basic information about students in these Faculties between 1900 and 1935 [UB/STU/B/7/1](#)

In addition:

For Arts subjects (English, Classics, Modern Languages, History, Music, Theology, Philosophy) there is a register of undergraduates from 1900 to 1906, and a set of record cards for students from 1947 to 1961. [UB/STU/B/1](#)

If the person you are interested in studied History, Music, or Philosophy there are also some student records kept by academic departments:

History: class and examination registers 1931-1946 [UB/STU/C/7](#)

Music: student record cards 1960-1974 [UB/STU/C/3](#)

Philosophy: student record cards 1963-1979 [UB/STU/C/4](#)

The student record cards are not available for research because they contain information about people who are still alive. See the information in red in the section above for details about how to access student record cards

For Commerce and Social Science subjects (Economics, Social Policy and associated courses) there is a register of undergraduates from 1903-1904, an incomplete series of record cards for postgraduate students 1967-1981, and a series of attendance registers recording student attendance at classes 1919-1924 and 1941-1949 [UB/STU/B/2](#)

There are no surviving student records for individual academic departments in Commerce and Social Sciences

For students studying Education (training to become teachers) there are two separate series of student registers covering the period 1906 to 1938 and 1910 to 1951. [UB/STU/B/3/1](#) and [UB/STU/B/3/2](#)

There is also a series of student files which contain detailed information about individual students 1923-1959 [UB/STU/B/3/3](#). Some of these files are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these student files

There are some records for students studying at other teacher training colleges in the Midlands which were constituent colleges of the University of Birmingham's School of Education. These consist of examination results for students taking the Certificate of Education 1929-1967 [UB/STU/B/3/4](#), and a set of record cards for students studying for the Certificate in Education 1951-1977, most of whom had to re-take examinations [UB/STU/B/3/6](#). The record cards are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these records.

For students studying Law there are student registers covering the period 1923 to 1965 [UB/STU/B/4/1](#) and lists of students 1924-1980 as well as lists of first year Law students 1978-1984, and photographs of Law students 2003-2007 [UB/STU/B/4/3](#)

There is also a series of student files which contain detailed information about individual students 1937-1968 [UB/STU/B/4/2](#). Some of these files are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these student files

For students studying Medicine and Dentistry there are substantial student record series which complement and expand on the central records. These include some record kept by staff at the Queen's Faculty of Medicine at Mason Science College, the University of Birmingham's predecessor.

There are matriculation registers 1892-1929; a register of undergraduate students 1900-1905; registers kept for financial purposes recording fees paid by medical and dental students 1900-1934, and registers kept by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine to record academic progress 1892-1929 [UB/STU/B/5/1](#)

There are also series of record cards for medical students 1926-1983, record cards giving information about the academic progress of medical and dental students 1919-1957, record cards for students studying in the Anatomy Department 1930-1941, and record cards for dental students studying between 1933 and 1961 [UB/STU/B/5/5](#). Most of the record cards are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these records.

In addition, there are examination mark sheets for dental students 1932-1938 [UB/STU/B/5/4/3](#) and lists of dental students 1952-1956 [UB/STU/B/5/6](#)

For students studying Science subjects (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Biology and related subjects) there are registers of undergraduates from 1900 to 1908 [UB/STU/B/6](#)

If the person you are interested in studied Botany, Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Physics or Malting and Brewing there are also some student records kept by academic departments:

Botany: class attendance registers 1905-1928 [UB/STU/C/1](#)

Chemistry: student register 1927-1937 [UB/STU/C/8/1](#)

Civil Engineering: student registers 1922-1971 including other registers containing reports on vacation placement work 1954-1959; record cards for postgraduate students 1959-1960 and 1973-1974; register of postgraduate students 1967-1986, and graduate registers recording information about Civil Engineering students who had taken undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at Birmingham between 1905 and 1999 [UB/STU/C/2/1](#)

The registers containing reports on vacation placements and the series of postgraduate student record cards are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these records

Mechanical Engineering: registers recording academic progress 1904-1961 [UB/STU/C/2/2](#)

Physics: registers recording class marks 1920-1927 [UB/STU/C/5](#)

Malting and Brewing: attendance registers 1908-1957; record cards for postgraduate students 1964-1966 and 1973-1978; and examination lists 1919-1958 [UB/STU/C/6](#). The postgraduate

student record cards are closed because they contain personal information about living individuals. Please see the information in red in the section above for details about how to access these records

What can student records tell you about the person you are interested in?

Depending on the type of record, student record might give you personal details like date of birth, address, name of parent or guardian, school attended, their academic progress at the University, sometimes information about their health or about their character and personality, and sometimes information about placements they had as part of their degree or other course of study. Some student records include photographs. See the catalogue descriptions for the kinds of information you can expect to find in different student record series

Are there any other student records to check?

There are other series of student records which might in some cases give you additional information about the person you are interested in. Some of these will duplicate information you may have already found in the records explained in the sections above. These include:

Examination registers [UB/STU/A/1/3](#) and [UB/STU/A/1/4](#)

Graduation registers [UB/STU/A/1/5](#)

Central student lists [UB/STU/A/2](#)

Other student lists kept by academic departments and groups of departments (Faculties)

Explore the entire set of student records [UB/STU](#)

Is it possible to find out more about the student experience of the person you are interested in?

It is sometimes possible to find out additional information about a student if you know more about them, either from the student record or from other research or family knowledge. If the person was a member of a sports team or student society or had an official role in the Guild of Undergraduates/Guild of Students, for example, there might be other records in the University Archive which you could check once you know the exact dates they were at Birmingham.

[UB/GUILD](#) for Guild of Students records including student magazines and newspapers, records of Guild Council and other committees, and photographs of sports teams

[Resource guide for student accommodation records in the University archive](#) if the person lived in a University of Birmingham hall of residence

[UB/SOC*](#) for student societies

There are other sections of the University Archive which are still uncatalogued. Please ask if you have specific queries

What about information about someone's life and career after they left the University of Birmingham?

A few series of student records include information about students' later lives and careers. These include the Education student files [UB/STU/B/3/3](#), the Law student files [UB/STU/B/4/2](#) and the Civil Engineering graduate registers [UB/STU/C/2/1/3](#)

The Education and Law student files often contain testimonials and both these and the Civil Engineering graduate registers can include occasional news about careers and personal and family lives. Printed lists of Civil Engineering graduates can also be found in the sets of official publications of the University [UB/P/12/3](#)

For graduates in other subjects there is the printed **Register of Graduates**. This was published by the Guild of Graduates/Alumni Association from 1926 to 1958 and entries can contain additional information other than the basic details of qualifications which duplicate the entries in the Register of Degrees. These more detailed entries were dependent on information provided by graduates.

You can use the **Register of Graduates** as an additional source of information but it will depend on whether the graduate kept in touch with the University via the Alumni Association and provided information about their life and career after graduation. Some entries include details about graduates' career and give contact addresses. There is a set available in the Reading Room as well as the set in the archive: [UB/GG/H/4 Register of Graduates](#)