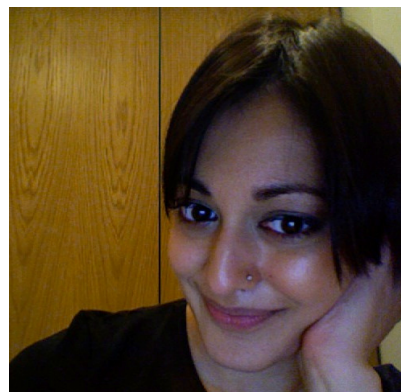


Student Story

Name:	Miss Anuja Thirani
Nationality:	Indian
Course Studied:	MA Creative Writing



Hi! There are perhaps few better ways to learn about a system, than to talk to someone who has been in it! As an international student at Bath Spa University, I want to share with you the wonderful experiences I have had here, so that you can get a better idea of what it is like to be a student in the UK.

My experience in a nutshell:

Having decided to come to the UK to study Creative Writing for my postgraduate degree, Bath Spa's program was one of my top choices. The MA offered here routinely came up as one of the most reputed programs of its kind in my web search and was also highly recommended by independent agencies I contacted during my application process. I knew that this program boasted an excellent student-teacher ratio of 8 to 1, and therefore the selection process was very competitive. Needless to say, I was thrilled when I got in and I had every reason to be. I have been taught by prize-winning authors in an intimate workshop setting, and had the privilege to work with some very talented fellow writers. What is more, as part of my program, I have been to talks by agents and publishers who have given my classmates and me valuable insights into the business aspects of writing. We have been on an enjoyable weekend retreat and many of us have participated in the prestigious Bath Literary Festival. In short, as aspiring writers, we have never been short of things to learn and do here!

Bath Spa University has an excellent support structure in place for students even outside of their academic pursuits. The Student Welfare office offers counseling services, should you face any difficulty during your stay here and the Careers Office is an excellent resource when considering what to do after graduation.

Bath itself is a beautiful city to be in. Its picturesque location, cobble-stoned city centre, Georgian architecture and Roman Baths rank high on tourists' must-see lists, and once you live here, it's easy to see why. Bath has consistently been rated one of the best places to live in England and one of the reasons is because even though it has all the comforts of an urban centre, it is quaintier than bigger, busier cities. It boasts a vibrant art scene – with commercial and art house cinema houses, year-round attractions for theatre and music lovers and excellent performances by resident students of Bath Spa University and University of Bath. The small boutiques that litter the city offer something unique and different from the big-name chains.

Of course, Bath is located only 90 minutes away from London by train and 10 minutes away from Bristol, should you want to get away every once in a while... All in all, judging from my time here, I can say that Bath will provide a memorable university experience, indeed a memorable life experience, for anyone who chooses to study here.

Some practical pointers:

- **Rents:** Living in Bath is a lot cheaper than living in London, but rents vary depending on what kind of accommodation you want for yourself. As a postgraduate student, I didn't want to live in the dormitories (called "halls" in England), but I found it quite tedious to find good shared accommodation once I arrived here. My recommendation would be to start communicating with the accommodation office early if you want to rent a house with fellow class mates, otherwise it may be wiser to look for studio accommodation (though this is more expensive.) In general, be careful when signing with landlords who don't come recommended by the university accommodation office, because it really helps to have the university's support if you are dissatisfied with your living situation for one reason or another.
- **Living costs:** When budgeting your living expenses (rent, food and transport), it's often easy to forget routine expenses like haircuts! Haircuts in the UK are expensive, even with student discounts. One piece of advice for girls: Some salon treatments, threading for instance, that you would consider routine, are in fact considered beauty treatments here and are priced accordingly! Manicures and pedicures are also usually well out of a student's budget. Branded toiletries (like contact lens solution) and prescription medications are also very expensive, so you'd be well advised to bring a small medicine kit prescribed by your doctor for non-serious, everyday problems that might occur during your stay.
- **British culture:** British people might sometimes come across as a bit reserved and formal in their interactions with you, but they are genuinely happy to meet people from different parts of the world, and I have found that talking about where I come from, my culture and experiences is often a good icebreaker. Another fantastic way of meeting like-minded people is joining activity groups within the university or outside. The international students' office has plenty of suggestions!

Making the most of it:

- **Punctuality:** It is important that you make it to class and to all of your appointments on time, and inform others of your intended absence in advance. You will most likely need to sign up for a time slot to have personal tutorials with your professor or tutor and not being on time for these could mean that you might lose your slot entirely, because tutors' office hours are usually quite heavily subscribed. I recommend keeping a planner, whether it's old-fashioned paper, or electronic.
- **Venturing out:** Although university life will take up the bulk of your time, do branch out and see and do other things that interest you. Go to the city centre for a coffee with friends, watch an art film or save up to watch the symphony or the ballet, and for the really adventurous: Rent a car and see as much of England as you can during Easter or Winter breaks!
- **Ask and you shall receive:** What am I talking about? Why, HELP of course! If you are unwell, or in trouble of any sort, or simply want to talk to someone, reach out – to your classmates, to your teachers, to your international student advisor, to campus welfare professionals – to anyone you feel comfortable talking to, but know that if you ask for help, it will be readily available for you at Bath Spa.