



Thomas Telford Alumni Students - An insight into University Life!

Name:

Becky

A Levels / BTEC Courses studied at TTS:

Religious Studies, Geography, English Lit

What course and where are you currently studying:

I am studying Sociology and Criminology foundation year then moving on to three years of policing, at Birmingham City university

1. What is the best part about student life?

Making friends for life, having the independence by living away from home, night life, having lectures with my best mates three times a week, cooking your own meals and going out for food multiple times a week, just doing whatever you want when you want, while doing a course you love.

2. Are you happy with the course you have chosen, and what is the best part about it?

I'm happy with choosing a foundation year course to start with because it has given me the guidance I need to do assignments and taught me how to do research at university level, and how to reference properly! (which is the worst part about assignments). I also met my now best friends on my foundation year and were now always together and are doing the same policing course next year.

3. How much contact time do you have with course staff and lecturers?

I have three lectures a week which last about four hours, so 12 hours contact time a week. However the lecturers are quite easy to reach if you don't understand something. My lecturers have certain timings a week when you can go in and physically speak to them, or you can always reach them by email and they usually reply pretty fast.

4. How have you coped with self-managed learning? How have you found the change from classroom work to more independent learning, such as attending lectures, managing your own workload, taking notes from lectures and writing assignments?

Self-learning has been really important while at university especially with Coronavirus, as everything is online its up to myself to make sure that I go through the lectures online and do any extra reading if I don't understand something, the lecturers are still easy to contact by email to discuss anything to help so they do give very good support at all times. I have made sure that I have kept up to date with each lecture and assignments, by making thorough plans many weeks before they are due to make sure that they will be done to

my best standard. I also go through the lecture slides and make better notes after attending the lectures. Also having my friends in the same lectures as me means that we always call each other and meet up to walk to the lecture together, or we organise study times in the library so we support each other with the assignments and give each other feedback.

5. How much work do you have to do outside lectures? And are your lecturers there to give support. How well do you know your tutor?

There is always a reading list the lecturers recommend you have a look at so there is always work to do outside of the lecture hall, but first year is pretty relaxed, but when it comes to assignment or exam season I would recommend you don't leave the work to the last minute and do go and push out some hours in the library or study area, either on your own or with friends, if that won't distract you. I'm lucky enough to have my tutor as one of my lecturers so I know him pretty well and he is always available if you need support with anything at all, not just with the work, just as the other lecturers are.

6. Do you have time to get a part-time job, either on campus or nearby?

I originally worked at Mc Donald's in Telford and I managed to get a transfer to Birmingham Mc Donald's during term time and in the holidays work back in Telford. The bull ring is a ten minute walk from my accommodation so I walk to work and Mc Donald's in particular are very understanding of students and will give you hours which are flexible to you and you can change them depending on how you feel you're managing your workload at university. I can't spend any of my student loan as it all goes on to accommodation costs so having a part time job is good so I have money to go on nights out and it is something to do in between lectures as you can get bored sometimes if you have no money and nothing to do, so I would recommend getting a part time job anywhere even for a few hours a week.

7. Would you recommend joining as many extra curriculum activities as possible to get the most out of the student experience? What societies do you belong to?

I personally haven't joined any yet, but there is a lot of different societies you can join, and I would recommend joining them, especially if it's something you like to do or want to try something new.

8. What has been the hardest thing about embracing university life?

I would say the hardest thing would just be getting used to living in a different city, and at the start you are basically on your own, so you have to put yourself out there and socialise with anyone in your flat and especially your lectures, people you initially bond with on freshers are not always the people you end up being best mates with so I would recommend that you continue to socialise and make friends because you will end up clicking with one or a few people and then you're always together and have that bond which will last throughout uni.

9. What is living in Halls like? How safe do you feel?

I only speak to two people I live with in halls mainly because the rest of the girls were not very nice. So sometimes you end up living with people that cause drama or don't think about the other people they live with, however if this did happen and you wanted to move to a different flat then it is easy to and you are able to do that, so you're not stuck with people you don't like or get on with. I didn't move flats as I was always with my friends who lived in different accommodation, so we were either at theirs or mine so it didn't bother me much, but if it happened that you were in a flat that you weren't happy with or if you have complaints about anything or anyone you live with then there will be people you can contact who will sort it all out for you. You're not completely left on your own. There are locks on your doors so your room is safe if you lock it, however if your kitchen cupboards don't have locks on then I would recommend getting some magnetic child locks to keep them locked to keep your food safe because there is always one person who likes to help themselves without asking you.

10. How often do you travel home? Has it been easy to get home when you have needed too?

I don't go home sometimes for weeks or a couple months, I enjoy the student life and talk to my parents every day either text or call. In Birmingham it's very easy for me to get home I just walk to the train station ten mins away from where I live and then it's a half an hour train journey to Telford. Or my dad drives up and picks me up like he did to bring me home for the coronavirus lock down with a lot of my stuff, this would've been a lot harder to do if I went to a university further away.

11. How do you manage money, and have you been able to budget well, or has money been tight?

Well, if you're like me and can't budget very well, your your loan money can get tight but if you have a part time job and work to earn enough that you need then it hasn't stopped me going out 13 nights in a row or out for meals, shopping etc etc . Also, my parents help me out with food as they do a weekly shop for me every now and then. And when you do your own shopping you just have to look for bargains and learn to make meals and freeze them to have in the future, just stuff like that but it's been fine for me.

12. What if you don't get on with people, and you don't want to join a drinking culture? What other clubs and societies are there?

Going to university isn't just about drinking but I would recommend doing freshers because it just gets you settled in and helps to make friends, however I found that my nights out after freshers were A LOT better. But there is a lot around the uni, there are societies for your degree topic, or like rock climbing, a lot of sports and gyms everything really you just need ask around and look around at the fresher's fayres..

13. Are there people you can talk to, who can help with stress and anxiety?

BCU have a health and well being faculty, you can talk to in person or on email. Your tutor is a good person to go to as well if you are unsure and they will be able to give you any advice and point you in the direction you need to go and give you contact details.

14. Is there anything else you wish you had known when researching or selecting Universities? Or any advice you want to pass on to current students:

I would recommend to any student who wants to go to uni to live in halls at least for your first year, I wanted to stay at home but decided not to and it was the best decision I made, and it gives you a much better experience. I'm friends with people who stayed at home and they regret their decision and are moving into halls next year. Don't be scared to put yourself out of your comfort zone, don't be the one who just sits in your room because you will regret that, get out there and do things you wouldn't normally do. Enjoy yourself while you study because it does go very fast.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. We appreciate your help!
Best wishes for the future from all of us at Thomas Telford School.**