

## Female student aged 20 studying for a BA Languages at the University of Paisley

I have always had a great interest in learning languages, from a young age. When I was in Primary 5 I attended a French workshop after school once a week. I believe that becoming familiar with a second language at a young age is extremely important and beneficial. I started French in Primary 7 and from then on onwards I was immersed in language classes. In 1<sup>st</sup> Year at school it was compulsory for every student to take French, German and Latin. In 2<sup>nd</sup> year you had to choose between Latin and German and continue to take French up to Standard Grade level. Even in 1<sup>st</sup> year at secondary school the French teacher spoke constantly in French while giving instructions and I think this helped enormously.

I went on to study French and German for my Standard Grades and received both at credit level 1. This encouraged me and I continued with my French on to Higher level, along with the opportunity to take up a module in Spanish. The small number of pupils in both classes was extremely useful and the enthusiasm of the teachers was amazing and inspiring. This perhaps reflected in my results, which were Higher A for French and Intermediate 2 A for Spanish.

During my school years on two occasions my family had exchange students staying with us at home, which meant I was used to the idea of speaking foreign languages. My parents always had a stab at speaking to the foreign students in their mother tongue, which made me interested to learn more, and uninhibited about "having a go". Family holidays to France and Spain further kindled my interest, as did a school trip to La Rochelle and Barcelona. Speaking foreign languages seemed natural, fun, useful and relevant.

I am currently a second year language student at Paisley University. Studying BA Languages at Paisley involves studying at least two languages from French, Spanish and German. In 1<sup>st</sup> year I studied Basic German, Intermediate A Spanish and Intermediate B French. This year I have however dropped German and decided to concentrate on French and Spanish, which I am studying at Advanced Level.

Paisley University focuses mainly on the practical side of the language, which suits me perfectly as I am more interested in and better at speaking and writing. I thoroughly enjoy participating in "Role Plays" and practising writing essays. My downfall is in listening and reading exercises. I am continuing to improve my communication skills by interacting and spending time with French speaking students at Paisley University. To add to this, luckily our lecturer has this year provided each student with an audio CD and a video CD that are improving my relatively poor listening skills. I find grammar in both Languages fairly straight forward and I am always eager to learn new tenses, the most recent being the subjunctive.

Last summer I had the opportunity to spend time abroad at The International College of Cannes for 4 weeks on my own, and a Spanish school in Malaga for 5 weeks with a fellow student. Both these experiences aided me enormously in terms of learning more about these Romance languages, the countries, and cultures. It also gave me the chance to meet various different people from countries such as the Netherlands, America, and Greece.

Next year it is a compulsory part of the language course to spend time abroad studying, in my case French or Spanish. I am undecided as to which country I intend to go to as yet, but after studying at one of Paisley's universities partner institutions I will return and continue with my 'Honours' year. After my degree I would definitely like to use my languages in a job and I may even think about working permanently abroad. In the world today as members of the European Union, I don't feel that being able to speak just one language is enough.