

Zihui Zhao- MSc Audiology with clinical placement 2019

Why did you want to study Audiology?

My grandfather has hearing loss in one ear and as he gets older he is losing the hearing in his other ear as well. I have taken him to audiology clinics and tried to persuade him to use the technology but right now he is not very enthusiastic. His experience motivated me to learn more about Audiology and I enrolled in university in Beijing to find out how we can help people like my grandfather.

Why did you choose the University of Southampton?

I knew of Southampton's international reputation in researching and teaching Audiology because I spent some time here as an exchange student during my undergraduate degree and enjoyed the experience so decided to come back to study for a Masters.

What is it like studying for a Masters?

Our lectures are interesting and inspiring and link different modules, connecting anatomy to physiology and in turn to pathology. We have hands-on practical sessions and you are expected to carry out more self-study here using the useful resources in the library. The facilities are excellent, there are quiet study and computer rooms with plenty of support with language and academic skills for international students. Sometimes lecturers give you insights into their own research so you are learning about the latest developments in your subject.

For my dissertation, I'm going to look at how universities can support students with hearing problems. I am impressed with the facilities in the UK that use technology to help people with hearing aids to get the most out of visiting concerts and theatres.

What have been the highlights of your MSc so far?

There is a lot to learn in a year and the lectures are more in-depth than at undergraduate level but the academic staff are open, friendly and approachable. I like the weekly practicals as we get to use the theory we learn in class in real life and that helps us to understand complex topics.

There are six Chinese students in our class so it's nice to be with others from my home country as well as students from Europe, Malaysia, Vietnam and Mexico. I am enjoying improving my English and making friends from around the world.

Do you like living in Southampton?

It is a peaceful city with everything you need, and you can walk on the common or by the sea. Southampton feels safe and local people are polite and friendly, you quickly feel you are accepted and belong here. Although it's not as busy as London,

you can easily get a train to the capital if you want to see the attractions. I live in Wessex Hall of Residence which offers 24 hour support, my flatmates are lovely and four of them also come from China.

Are you looking forward to your placement?

I'm going to be working in a clinic in Dublin, Ireland and I'm looking forward to the experience of living in another country and using the knowledge and skills in audiology in rehabilitation. Before then we have had several clinic visits and also tried out our skills by working with actors who are pretending to be patients! I learned a lot from this interaction.