

A quick guide to

Postgraduate Study



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Further study can be a great opportunity to increase and develop your knowledge, explore a new subject, or gain professional qualifications. Choosing the right course could be beneficial for your future employment but it is vital to research the options.

Think about the following questions to help you decide if postgraduate study is right for you:

- Will postgraduate study enhance my chances of finding work?
- Is the course recognised by the profession that I would like to enter?
- How will I fund my postgraduate study?
- Do I want to study full-time or part-time? (although for some subjects you may not have an option).

targetjobs.co.uk has more information and advice to help you decide if postgraduate study is right for you, search 'postgrad' on their website and then select 'advice and learning'.

Any questions?

www.worc.ac.uk/careers

Send us a message on
myCareer

Postgraduate study could build on transferable skills such as:

- Teamwork
- Research skills
- Project management
- Data handling
- Intellectual rigour
- Critical and lateral thinking

Finding a course

There are many different postgraduate course types and a wide range of subject areas available to choose from. Spending time researching the options will enable you to find the right course for you.

Taught

A taught course leading to:

- a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
- a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)
- a Master's degree, e.g. MA (Master of Arts); MBA (Master of Business Administration); MSc (Master of Science)

Research-based

A research-based course leading to:

- a Master's degree, e.g. MPhil (Master of Philosophy); MRes (Master of Research)
- a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)
- a Professional Doctorate (e.g. EdD, DBA)

Work-focused

- A course covering skills or knowledge for a particular role
- May lead to 'qualified' status
- Could be required by a professional body
- Might involve professional exams or reaching a level of competency

Conversion

- Intensive postgraduate programmes in a subject which is different to your undergraduate degree
- Enables you to transfer your skills into a new field
- Some of the most popular courses are in areas such as psychology, law, health and education

Searching for a postgraduate course

The following websites will help you to explore and identify courses in your chosen subject area.

- www.findamasters.com
- www.findaphd.com
- www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-courses
- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/postgraduate-study>
- www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/study-abroad

Postgraduate fairs and open days can also help you to find out more about courses; you can search for events on FindaMasters.

Funding postgraduate study

Course fees for postgraduate study vary depending on factors such as course length and qualification. For some courses, there may be potential funding options subject to meeting certain criteria.

Master's Courses

Students undertaking a Master's course may be eligible to apply for a loan towards living costs and course fees. For courses more than a year in length, the loan will be divided over the duration of the course.

For more information, eligibility and to apply go to: www.gov.uk/masters-loan

PhD Courses

Funding for PhD study can be complex and could potentially come from a range of different sources including government bodies, student finance, universities, charities & trusts, and industry & business.

For information on funding a PhD, go to: www.findaphd.com/guides/phd-funding-guide

For information and eligibility criteria on PhD loans, visit: www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan/eligibility

Social Work

Funding for postgraduate social work qualifications and training will depend on the route you decide to take.

For the Master's course, which tends to be the most common route, students may be eligible to apply for a bursary; for more information please go to: www.gov.uk/social-work-bursaries

For other training routes such as "Step up to Social Work", "Frontline" and "Think Ahead", bursaries, grants, tuition fee paid and/or a salary for part of the training may be available, please see individual schemes for further information.

Teacher Training

Funding and financial support for initial teacher training will depend on factors such as your training route, previous qualifications, the subject you wish to teach, where you live, where you will be undertaking your training and your personal circumstances.

For the salaried teacher training routes such as Schools Direct salaried and Teach First, you will be treated as an employee and will be paid a salary. For non-salaried routes, loans, bursaries and scholarships may be available to you.

For more information and advice on funding your teacher training please consult:

- England: Get into Teaching
- Wales: Student Finance Wales
- Scotland: Student Awards Agency Scotland
- Northern Ireland: NI Direct – Initial Teacher Training

International Students

If you are an international student considering postgraduate study in the UK, please see the following sources for information on funding:

- For Master's: www.findamasters.com/guides/international-masters-funding-uk
- For PhDs: www.findaphd.com/guides/international-phd-funding-uk
- The British Council: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/>

Bursaries and other sources

There may be other sources of funding and financial support you can access depending on your circumstances. Universities often offer a range of scholarships and bursaries such as alumni discounts, academic excellence awards, and hardship bursaries; contact individual Universities to find out more. A variety of charities, foundations and trusts also provide financial support for postgraduate students. Please visit Prospects and search "Scholarships and Bursaries" for more information.

General information on funding postgraduate study

Direct Gov

www.gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study

Find a Masters, Find a PhD, Prospects and targetjobs

All have information and advice on funding; search "postgraduate study funding".

University of Worcester Money Advice Service

www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice

Applying for courses

Once you have explored your options and decided on your course or courses, the next step is to apply. Putting together a great application takes time as it is essential you show how you meet the entry requirements for the course alongside other elements such as your interest, knowledge and passion for your chosen subject.

When and how to apply

Each institution will have their own application process, so it is essential to check their procedure.

Most courses do not have a set closing date with the exception of teaching. Apply as early as you can, ideally before Christmas of your final year - particularly if you are interested in a popular course.

There is no central service for postgraduate applications although some institutions do use UCAS Postgraduate. Most institutions will require applications to be sent directly to them.

Teacher Training

Applications for Primary, Secondary and some Further Education PGCE courses and Schools Direct are made via:

www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training

Information on teacher training routes and making an application can be found at Get into Teaching, targetjobs and Prospects, search "teacher training".

Current UW students

If you are applying for postgraduate study at UW as a current student you may be able to apply directly via your SOLE page. Please be aware that not all UW courses are eligible for this application route. For further information please contact admissions@worc.ac.uk

Postgraduate interviews

For some postgraduate courses you may be invited for interview. Interview styles and questions may vary depending on the institution and course, but the key focus will be to find out how prepared you are for further academic study.

For advice on preparing for interview and example questions visit Prospects and search "postgraduate interview questions".

Using AI effectively

AI can help you structure a personal statement, however ensure you check for accuracy, avoid generic statements, and convey your individual voice and motivation.

Writing a personal statement

As part of the postgraduate application process, you will usually be asked to submit a personal statement. It is important to check any guidance from the course provider before you start to write your statement.

Generally, you will need to cover the following in a personal statement:

Why you are interested in the subject

You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and motivation for studying and researching this particular subject. Here are some of the things you could talk about:

- When and how you became interested in it and what you have learned so far. Make sure you are up-to-date on developments in this field, and mention one of interest to you and why.
- How your chosen postgraduate course relates to your previous study. If it is not a direct progression, explain how your interest developed and how any of the knowledge and skills developed during your degree will support your postgraduate studies.
- How you have learned about this subject e.g. through academic study; extracurricular studies; independent research; field trips.

The institution will want to know why you are interested in them. Research the University, the department and the research area – identify what sets them apart from others offering the same area of study. In your personal statement you could:

- Explain why you have chosen this particular course, at this particular University: for example, does it have a particular emphasis or specific content that attracts you? What facilities and resources does it offer?
- Are there any specific members of academic staff who you are keen to work with who are teaching on the course and have research interests that are of interest to you?

Why you want to study at the institution you are applying to

You need to explain how your experiences, knowledge and skills match those required by your chosen postgraduate course:

- Talk about your relevant experiences e.g. projects, assignments, employment, placements, travel.
- Don't just describe what you've done - use this as an opportunity to demonstrate you have the skills required by the course. For example: your personal skills such as your ability to work independently; your teamwork skills; your analytical skills; your time management skills; your ability to work under pressure.

Why you are suited to studying this subject & why they should select you

How the course relates to your career plans

Include something about your future plans even if you don't have a clear idea about what you want to do after your postgraduate course. You could:

- Say what you are considering doing after your course.
- If you have a clear career aim, say how the course will give you the skills, knowledge and/or experience required.
- If you are considering an academic career, explain how this is the first stage in making that possible.
- Whatever you put should be a logical progression from the course you are applying for.

Top tips for writing a personal statement

- 1 Give yourself plenty of time.
- 2 Check if the university you are applying to has any guidelines.
- 3 Keep within the word limit/required length.
- 4 Jot down all your ideas before you start to write your statement.
- 5 Write clearly and concisely using paragraphs and good spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- 6 Make the first paragraph as interesting as possible so that the reader wants to read more about you.
- 7 Draft and redraft to get it right.
- 8 If applying for a teaching course, use the postgraduate teacher training application form leaflet available on the Careers & Employability webpages.
- 9 Ask a friend to proofread and then book an appointment on **myCareer** for a careers adviser to review your final statement.

The main points

1

Ask yourself if postgraduate study is right for you. Think about why you are considering this route and what you would like to gain from it.

2

Give yourself plenty of time to research your options. Use websites such as “Prospects”, “Find a Masters” and “Find a PhD” to explore which type of course and subject would be best for you. Once you have narrowed down your choices, you might want to contact course providers and attend open events to find out more.

3

Consider your finances, how are you going to cover the course fees and your living costs? Funding such as loans and bursaries may be available to you.

4

Apply as soon as you can, especially if you are interested in a competitive course. Make sure you follow any guidance the University gives to applicants and allocate time to proofread and check your final application.

5

Spend time creating a great personal statement. Postgraduate applications usually involve a personal statement which can take time to put together. Think about how you are going to demonstrate your interest, knowledge, and enthusiasm for the course.

Notes

Notes

If you have a question that isn't covered by this booklet or would like to talk through your ideas with a member of the Careers & Employability team, send us a message or book a careers appointment on **myCareer**.



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www.worc.ac.uk/careers