

POSTGRADUATE STUDY

DELVE DEEPER INTO YOUR SUBJECT OR CHANGE CAREER DIRECTION.

Postgraduate study is a great opportunity to dive deeper into your subject. If you enjoyed your dissertation or research projects, then progressing to Masters or PhD study is a chance to keep doing what you love.

Some career goals also require specialist skills, experience and qualifications. A higher degree can enable you to fulfil those career dreams to become a lawyer, teacher or physiotherapist, for example.

This leaflet gives an overview of some of the key issues to consider before you apply, including: **funding, location and what makes a winning application.**

“A POSTGRAD COURSE CAN FURTHER YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD. EMPLOYERS VALUE THAT EXPERIENCE AND OFTEN ENTRUST PG-QUALIFIED APPLICANTS WITH GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES.”

Ben Davies at Jobs.ac.uk

CLARIFY YOUR CAREER GOALS

Some professions require specific qualifications to give you the necessary skills and experience to practice. If you're not sure what it takes to progress in your preferred career, you can research using Prospects Job Profiles: www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles

Book a guidance appointment to get support in planning your career and further study.

EXPLORE OPTIONS

Postgraduate study needs to be in an area you are passionate about, in a place you feel happy living and learning in. Do research a range of options and go to as many Open Days as you can before you apply. The links below are a good starting point in researching postgraduate courses.

Information on PG qualifications and funding
www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study

Global directory of PG qualifications
www.findamasters.com

Explore further study options at Essex
www.essex.ac.uk/masters

Consider postgraduate study abroad
www.studee.com

Explore MBA study options
www.mba.com/global

Check university rates for research
results.ref.ac.uk

FUNDING FURTHER STUDY

Don't let the cost of postgraduate study hold you back. There are a variety of funding options to consider including loans, studentships, bursaries and grants – you might also get help from your employer.

Postgraduate funding overview
www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study

Essex Alumni discounts for PG study
www1.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/masters/loyalty

PG funding and fees in different countries
www.findamasters.com/funding

Information on loan, studentships, bursaries and grants available to UK/ EU students
www.gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study

Fund PG research via scholarships
www.postgraduatesearch.com/funding

Postgraduate studentships for MSc and PhD
www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk

Postgraduate scholarships for USA study
www.fulbright.org.uk

HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR A POSTGRADUATE (MASTERS) APPLICATION

Your personal statement is your chance to show you're the best. It's vital to showcase your suitability and passion for your subject.

The job of your personal statement is to convince postgraduate admissions tutors that you are capable and motivated. Your personal statement needs to show why you want to study and why study at your chosen university

Clear connections between your most recent study and experience with your chosen postgraduate subject are essential and you must provide a commentary on reasons for your choice. You should demonstrate how postgraduate study will build on your current level of learning

Consider the structure of your personal statement. You need an introduction, the main body and an end. Your opening paragraph needs to lay out your plan and will be your framework for the rest of your statement

The main body must describe your interest, relevant experience and knowledge. Be specific. Keep it factual. Look carefully at the university modules, course or research area and the university's specialisms so you can tailor the statement

Personal statements for courses linked to professional training e.g. teaching or health professions must provide evidence of commitment to that career path

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Why do you want to do the course/research?

Convey your enthusiasm and motivation for study/research. Don't try to write what you think they want to hear, write your real reasons. Write about any projects, dissertations or extended essays that are relevant or demonstrate relevant skills. Mention any prizes you have won, travel or study abroad and relevant employment. Describe anything that shows creativity, dependability or independence

2. Why this subject?

Be clear about your subject choice. Is the programme noted for a particular emphasis, speciality or orientation? When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it? What insights have you gained? How have you learned about this field - through classes, seminars, work or conversations with academic staff?

3. How is your first degree relevant to this study?

Highlight any assignments or projects which are relevant or where you've done well. Include relevant skills, e.g. computing, knowledge of data analysis software, or relevant scientific techniques etc. Explain any circumstances that may have affected your academic results, that you think should be considered.

4. Why this university?

Give reasons why you have selected them as your university of choice and prove that you are not just spreading the net wide. Explain what it is that you feel this university has to offer, why that appeals to you, and how you will be able to contribute to it.

5. Are there specific academic staff you want to do research or study with?

You may want to research who you will be working with so that you can explain why you would like to work with them and what you will learn from them. Do not write vague statements such as 'Prof. Y is a leader in his field' but comment on what he has written and why it has interested you.

6. How are you going to step up to the advanced level of postgraduate study?

Selectors want to be convinced that you are going to cope well with this level of study.

7. What personal skills can you offer?

Demonstrate that you've done your homework about the course/research and that you've seriously considered your strengths and weaknesses for postgraduate study or research. If you have worked during vacations, what skills have you learned? These might include team working, communication or working under pressure. Have you had to overcome any obstacles or hardships in your life? This may show evidence of determination/resilience.

8. What are your career aims?

You may not have clear focus on what you want to do after, but you should have some ideas. A clear direction will strengthen your commitment to do well in your studies and selectors will know this. Your desire to become a lawyer or lecturer, for example, should be a logical result of specific experience in your statement.