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 Careers Advice 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. These links are a good starting point:

- 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: www.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, grants, studentships and bursaries— 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 loans, studentships, bursaries and grants available to UK 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

https://careerhub.essex.ac.uk/
HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR A POSTGRADUATE (MASTERS) APPLICATION

Your personal statement is your chance to showcase your suitability and passion for your subject.

It should be as unique as you are - avoid being generic by making your content personal to you and particular to your chosen course and university.

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 go to 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 and fit into your future plans.

Consider the structure of your personal statement. You need an introduction, 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. Think about the flow of your statement and how you can lead the reader through to a positive conclusion.

The main body must describe your interest, relevant experience and knowledge. Be specific. 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 further study?
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 or speciality? 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/projects which are relevant or where you’ve done well. Include relevant skills, e.g. computing, knowledge of data analysis software, or scientific techniques etc. Explain any circumstances that may have affected your academic results, if you think they 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. Demonstrate that you’ve done your homework about the course/research and that you’ve seriously considered your strengths and weaknesses.

7. What personal skills can you offer?
If you have worked or volunteered 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 a clear focus on what you want to do after, but you should have some ideas. Direction will strengthen your commitment to do well in your studies and selectors will know this. For example, your desire to become a lawyer or lecturer should be a result of specific experience.

https://careerhub.essex.ac.uk/