

Careers & Employability

A Quick Guide To Further Study



University
of Worcester
Student Services

Further Study

A Quick Guide

Types of postgraduate course

There are many different types of postgraduate course including:

A taught course leading to:

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

A research-based course leading to:

- an MPhil (Master of Philosophy)
- a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)

A work-focused course covering the skills or knowledge required for a particular role. This may lead to 'qualified' status for your chosen profession and may be gained through chartership, the completion of professional exams or by reaching a required level of competence. These qualifications usually give you letters after your name.

Reasons for considering further study

More students than ever before are considering postgraduate study and have many different reasons for doing so, including a desire to:

- enable them to enter a particular job eg teaching or social work
- improve their job prospects
- explore a subject area in more depth
- learn about a subject that is new to them

Assess whether postgraduate study is right for you by answering the questions shown at: <https://targetpostgrad.com/advice/choosing-postgraduate/is-postgraduate-study-right-for-you>

Before making a decision, it's also important to consider the following questions:

- 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 won't have an option)

Tips on choosing a postgraduate course that's right for you: www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/studentships/1270/top-10-tips-for-choosing-a-postgraduate-course

Any Queries?

call:
01905 855 166

email:
careers@worc.ac.uk

Gaining entry to a regulated profession

A regulated profession is one where access to, or practice of, a profession is legally restricted to people who hold specific qualifications. You can find a list of UK-based regulated professions, and a link to their professional bodies, on the UKNCP (the National Contact Point for Professional Qualifications in the United Kingdom):

www.ecctis.co.uk/UK%20NCP/Individuals/Regulated%20professional%20titles%20and%20designatory%20letters.aspx

If you're considering entry to one of these professions, go to the professional body's website and check:

- what you need to become a member/ gain chartered status
- whether the course you're considering is recognised as a valid entry route by the profession/ employers

Finding postgraduate courses

The following websites will help you to identify courses in your chosen subject area:

- **FindaMasters** - www.findamasters.com/ (a database of postgraduate masters courses in the UK)
- **FindaPhd** - www.findaphd.com/ (database of PhD opportunities in the UK)
- **Prospects** - www.prospects.ac.uk/search_courses (a database of postgraduate courses and research opportunities in the UK).

If you are considering studying abroad, visit:

- www.prospects.ac.uk/studying_abroad

Funding for postgraduate study

Masters Courses

Students taking a Masters can borrow up to £10,609 towards overall courses costs (including tuition fees and living costs). If studying for more than one year, divide equally across the years.

For eligibility criteria and further information on Masters Loans go to www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/masters-loans

To apply for a Masters Loan go to www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan/how-to-apply

PhD Courses

For eligibility criteria and further information on PhD Loans go to www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/phd-loans

- For information on other sources of funding for postgraduate study go to www.gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study or www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice

- To book an appointment to see a University of Worcester Money Adviser email firstpoint@worc.ac.uk or call 01905 542551

Find out about postgraduate fairs and open days by visiting: <http://targetpostgrad.com/fairs-and-open-days>

Additional information on funding for postgraduate study can be found at:

- **Find A Masters** (www.findamasters.com/funding/guides/masters-funding-guide.aspx)
- **Find A PhD** (www.findaphd.com/funding/)
- **Prospects** (www.prospects.ac.uk/funding_postgraduate_study) for general funding advice
- **Research Councils UK** (www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility) provides information on funding for research degrees
- **TARGETpostgrad** (<http://targetpostgrad.com/funding>) which provides a searchable database of funding opportunities
- **University of Worcester Money Advice Service** (www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice)

The University's Money Advice Service also provides 1-to-1 advice that you can book through firstpoint.

Applying for postgraduate courses

How and when should you apply?

Most courses do not have set closing dates (although see 'teaching' below), but there can be intense competition for some very popular courses, so apply as early as you can in the academic year for the following year.

Application processes vary from institution to institution so you must check what the procedure is for the course(s) you are interested in. There is no central admissions process which covers all postgraduate courses, although a number of institutions use the central apply online service: UKPASS (<https://pgapp.ukpass.ac.uk/ukpasspgapp/login.jsp>). Others will require an application form, either paper or online, sent directly to the institution.

For further advice and information visit:

- **Directgov** (www.gov.uk/higher-education-courses-find-and-apply) provides information and guidance about applications for postgraduate courses.
- **Prospects** (www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate_study) provides information about further study, making applications and completing personal statements.
- **TARGETpostgrad** (<https://targetpostgrad.com/advice/postgraduate-applications>) provides guidance on what to do at each stage of the application process, along with guidance on the timeline for applications for teaching, law and medicine.

Applying for teacher training

Applications for Primary, Secondary, some Further Education PGCE courses and the Schools Direct pathway are made through UCAS. Further details can be found at: www.ucas.com/teaching-in-the-uk

Further information about different routes into teaching and making applications is available from TARGETpostgrad (<http://targetpostgrad.com/study-areas/teaching>) and the Department for Education (www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching)

Writing a personal statement for postgraduate study

If you are planning to progress onto postgraduate study, you will usually be asked to submit a personal statement. Some Universities will provide you with guidance on what they want you to cover in your postgraduate personal statement – make sure you check what they want before you start writing! Also make sure that you take a look at the Careers & Employability information in firstpoint which includes checklists to guide your writing of personal statements for some popular courses, including teaching.

As a general rule, you will use your personal statement to explain:

- why you are interested in the subject
- why you want to study at the institution you are applying to
- why you are suited to studying this subject/why they should select you
- how the course relates to your career plans

Each aspect is covered in the following paragraphs.

a) 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 recent developments in this field, and mention one that is of particular interest to you and why.
- How your chosen postgraduate course relates to your undergraduate study. If it is not a direct progression from your undergraduate programme, explain how your interest developed and how any of the skills/knowledge 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.

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

The institution will want to know why you are interested in them. Research the University, the department and the research area that interests you – identify what sets them apart from other institutions 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?

“Applying for a course is time-consuming, so don’t leave it until the last minute. Check the closing date for your course, especially if it’s a competitive one as these tend to fill up more quickly, and submit your application well in advance of this date.”

(TARGETpostgrad)

c) Why you are suited to studying this subject/why the institution should select you

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 team work skills, your analytical skills, your time management skills, your ability to work under pressure.

d) How the course relates to your career plans

Say 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.

Other tips for writing an effective personal statement

1. Give yourself plenty of time to draft, and redraft, your personal statement. This is not something that can be done overnight.
2. When you start drafting your personal statement, put all of your ideas down on paper - then you can start rewording and editing over the next few weeks.
3. Break your personal statement into paragraphs, and make your opening paragraph as interesting as possible so that the reader wants to read more about you.
4. Keep within the word limit/ required statement length.
5. In your final draft, make sure you have written clearly and concisely using good grammar, spelling and punctuation.
6. Before sending it off, ask a friend or a Careers Adviser to read it through for you – they can check for mistakes and will tell you if any sentences need to be more clearly worded. You can book an appointment with the Careers & Employability team at: www.timecenter.com/worcester or call 01905 855166.

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 team, sign up for a careers appointment at www.timecenter.com/worcester, or via your SOLE page.



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