

Postgraduate Study & Funding

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Undertaking postgraduate study is a big commitment. To obtain your qualification you will need to dedicate a large amount of your time, effort and, in many cases, money to the programme. Consider your options carefully and make sure that the course of study will help you to achieve your aims.

Should you do a postgraduate (PG) course?

You may love your subject or think PG study will give you a competitive edge but will it help you get closer to your career goals?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the course required for the profession or career you are interested in? For some careers, particular PG courses confer professional accreditation. In others a postgraduate level of training may be needed to gain chartered status.
- Is it a conversion course? Usually a 1 year PG course that brings you to the same level as a graduate of that subject e.g. law, IT or psychology.
- Does it give you specialist knowledge that cannot usually be gained at undergraduate level?
- Are you interested in academia or research? A PhD is likely to be required.
- Do employers value the course? Is it mentioned in job specifications as desirable?
- Is it a course that an employer would be unlikely to put you through as part of your training?
- Can you afford the course? If not, can you do the course part-time?
- Could you study overseas?

If you are saying 'I don't know' to a lot of these questions, or you have no idea what you want to do at the end of a postgraduate course you might want to book a careers appointment to discuss your career objectives (Ring us on 0161 275 2829).

How to choose a course

The quality and price of courses vary; you will need to investigate the academic standards and reputation of each institution.

- Enquire if the course has been evaluated by external sources, look at surveys, and check if the course is accredited by a professional body.
- Evaluate the institutions resources (teaching staff, library, IT, International Student Support etc).
- If you are intending to study for a vocational degree such as medicine, dentistry or pharmacy investigate which countries you are qualified to practice in after graduation (professional bodies can provide this information).
- Ask the department or school what other graduates have gone on to do, how many get related jobs?
- Is the course taught by industry professionals? Are there any opportunities to get industrial experience through projects or work?
- If you are studying for a PhD, consider the research reputation of the university, faculty, school, department or research group. Which institutions have the best reputations or impact for your area of research?

If you are thinking of studying overseas, it is important to start your research as soon as possible.

- Funding awards are usually only offered once a year, application deadlines are strict and it can take many months to organise a student visa.
- Terms start at different times in different parts of the world (in Japan and India the academic year starts in April and in places such as Australia and Brazil it is February).
- The duration of the programme may differ from similar courses offered in UK universities (e.g. American doctorate programmes can often take 5 years to complete).

For more information on studying abroad

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/study/postgraduatestudyandfunding/pgoverseas

Rankings for institutions and courses

The same university may rank differently in different rankings – this is because the organisation doing the ranking may weight each piece of data differently. A particular course at a lower ranked university may also outperform one at a higher ranked university. Find out more here:

www.findamasters.com/advice/finding/postgraduate-rankings-tables.aspx

For postgraduate study the TEF & REF ratings can give an indicator of teaching quality & research standing respectively.

www.timeshighereducation.com/content/2018-03-14-tef-ref-ranking

Finding postgraduate courses

Postgraduate study fair

It's a great opportunity to find out more about courses and funding at different institutions in the UK and overseas:

www.manchester.ac.uk/postgradstudyfair

Most universities produce a postgraduate prospectus or guide. To find out about an individual course look at the departmental websites or request a copy of their prospectus.

Search for PG study:

- Search for UK postgraduate courses
www.prospects.ac.uk or www.postgrad.com
- Search for Masters Courses
www.findamasters.com

- Search for PhD opportunities
www.findaphd.com
- 4 International Colleges & Universities
International higher education directory featuring reviews and web rankings of Universities and Colleges in 200 countries. Includes a search for English speaking universities.
www.4icu.org

Making an application

There is no central admissions system for most postgraduate programmes - candidates submit an application directly to the university. You can apply for as many courses as you wish.

The method of application depends on the institution and course – most candidates are asked to complete an application form. (You might also have to submit a CV and a research statement). Some universities now charge an application fee, and will not view the form until payment is made.

In most cases there are no official closing dates for applications (with the exception of dentistry, medicine, law and teacher training*). However, many popular courses fill up quickly so it is important to submit the application as early as possible.

*For more information about deadlines read the specific starting point publications for these subjects

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints

If you are applying for funding there are strict deadlines for applications so ideally begin researching your options 12 - 18 months in advance and start applying 6 – 12 months before the course begins.

For most Postgraduate courses applicants are required to write a statement of purpose or personal statement. This document sets out why you are interested in the subject you have applied for and why you consider yourself to be a suitable applicant.

For advice on this pick up the Application Form Guide or see:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/applicationsinterviews/studyapplication

Admissions departments will usually request that you send a number of supporting documents including a copy of your transcript, degree certificate, and references. Check exactly which documents are required and start organising your application as soon as possible - it can take a long time to gather all the correct paperwork together. The Student Service Centre should be able to supply you with a copy of your transcript or if necessary reissue your degree certificate. As you are applying to further study you should use academic references in your applications.

How much does postgraduate study cost?

Postgraduate study can be very expensive. Where and what you study will have a big impact on costs. For example British students studying outside of the EU need to pay the overseas rate of fees which can be more than triple the cost of the home fees.

In England fees can vary widely between courses and institutions so always check the exact sum with your prospective institution. (Some universities offer a discount in fees to their alumni). Check fee arrangements and eligibility in the rest of the UK.

It is important to factor in all the costs involved in studying. Aside from course fees expenses could include, laboratory fees, accommodation fees, travel (including trips home), books, equipment, travel/health and dental insurance. Ask yourself if you could afford these things if needed. University places are offered on the understanding that candidates will have enough funds to cover all of their costs before the course

commences. In many cases universities will ask to see bank statements or if applicable letters from a sponsoring organisation.

Most universities will let you pay your tuition fees in two or three installments throughout the year. Some universities offer a discount to students who pay their personal contribution of the full fees in advance or at the time of registration. Some universities require candidates to pay a non-refundable deposit when accepting an offer of a place.

Funding information UK

Most institutions will offer a small number of scholarships. The eligibility criteria will usually reflect the values and purposes of the founder of the award and is usually discipline-specific. Highly ranked universities usually offer the greatest number of this type of scholarship. The amount of money awarded depends on the scholarship, in many cases the award covers a substantial part of the tuition fees.

Bursaries differ from scholarships as they take into account the financial need of the student. Bursaries usually range from £100 to £4,000. The sum of money may be deposited into the student's bank account, so they can use it to pay for any university related expense they choose or the university may automatically deduct it from the tuition fees. Some bursaries are given on the condition that they are used to pay for specific costs such as childcare.

Funding information for the University of Manchester

www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/finances/funding-opportunities

Masters courses

There are very limited opportunities for UK Government funded Masters. Funding is allocated, via the UK Research Councils, directly to universities. Universities will advertise and select students who will receive funding. Funding for stand-alone Masters is limited to research preparation

masters (Arts and Humanities) and a few professional vocational masters (Arts and Humanities, and Bio/Medical sciences). Other Masters level funding is generally allocated as part of an integrated 4 year PhD. Find out more:

www.findamasters.com/funding/guides/research-councils.aspx

Masters Loans Available up to £10,609: Find out more

www.findamasters.com/funding/guides/postgraduate-loans-guide.aspx

PhD

There is more funding available for PhD courses due to funding streams for research. Speak to prospective departments and PhD supervisors to find out what funding is available for your subject.

Government funding for PhDs is allocated, via the UK Research Councils, directly to universities and research institutes. Universities advertise and select the students who will receive funding – you do not apply directly to the Research Councils. This funding generally comes with training and is often part of a package of support from a number of universities. These are variously known as Doctoral Training Partnerships or Centres (DTPs and DTCs), or Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). Check adverts from these partnerships/centres or individual universities to find Government funded PhDs.

NB UK Research Council funding is not available to international students.

Charitable funding

Whilst most charities are small, there are some major players in research funding, such as the Wellcome Trust and the Leverhulme Trust. As with the UK Research councils, these generally allocate funding to universities and research institutes. You do not directly apply to these large trusts.

UK PhD Loans Up to £25,000

www.findaphd.com/funding/guides/uk-phd-loans-scheme.aspx

Funding search websites:

Learned Societies and professional bodies may offer funding for PhD or postdoctoral research. E.g. Royal Academy of Engineering.

Do your research to discover the smaller learned societies and charities related to your field of study. These funds can often be undersubscribed. There is a list on the Government website – but you'll need search online for the websites.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-bodies-approved-for-tax-relief-list-3/approved-professional-organisations-and-learned-societies>

- Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding
Find out how to apply for funding from charities. The University of Manchester subscribes to the advice and a database of awards, all students and staff can get access using their university email address. www.postgraduate-funding.com/gateway
- Prospects website – UK study:
www.prospects.ac.uk/search_funding_bodies.htm
- Scholarship Search
www.scholarship-search.org.uk
- Postgraduate studentships
www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk
- Research professional
Grants for postgraduate study worldwide, fieldwork, travel costs, studentships, fellowships etc. Access via on campus computers only.
www.researchprofessional.com
- Turn2us – funding search website
<http://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk>
- Information about funding for students with disabilities
www.disabilityrightsuk.org/postgraduate-education-disabled-students

Other ways to fund your course

Part-time work

Many postgraduates undertake part-time employment to help fund their studies. Be realistic about how many hours you can work while studying. Non EU students are usually limited to 20 hours / week by their visa; the university recommends that you work no more than 15 hours / week.

Part-time jobs are advertised on the CareersLink website:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink

Find out more about looking for part-time work pick up the guide from the Careers Service or check out:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/parttime

Residential Pastoral Adviser Employment

The University of Manchester employs many postgraduate students to work in its Halls of Residence as Residential Pastoral Advisers. (Other Universities may offer similar opportunities.) Using your own experience of University life, you will be required to work in a team providing pastoral support and guidance to residents (which also sometimes includes matters of a disciplinary nature). In return you will be provided with accommodation paid for by the University in the Hall itself. You also do not have to pay for any bills (i.e. electricity, water, internet access) however if you obtain a position in a catered Hall of Residence, you will have to pay for your food. Recruitment usually takes place at Christmas, Easter and over the Summer (all PG students will receive an email when vacancies are available):

For PhD Students

Graduate teaching and research assistantships

It may be possible to earn money teaching or as a research assistant where you are studying. Under the scheme, research postgraduates receive direct payment or a waiver of fees in return for undertaking

teaching or research duties. Ask your department about this option.

Posts may be advertised throughout the year on www.jobs.ac.uk, in the educational press and in relevant publications, such as The Guardian, The Times, The Times Higher Education Supplement, and New Scientist. However many opportunities may be only advertised locally ask in your department.

Employer funded study

In most cases, this sponsorship is allocated to a university or research institute who advertise and select the students. You do not apply to the industrial sponsor directly.

In a very small number of cases, a company (such as GSK) will advertise its own co-sponsored PhDs. These opportunities are rare!

Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)

This scheme enables graduates to work within a commercial environment (being paid a salary at industrial rate) whilst studying for a higher degree and with support from academic experts.

For information on the national scheme, organised through KTP visit:

www.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-transfer-partnerships-what-they-are-and-how-to-apply

Funding for International study

Some universities also fund graduates through teaching assistantships, particularly in the USA. You can earn money via this method by teaching undergraduate students.

Many governments wish to attract bright scholars from around the world; consequently there are opportunities for funding, usually for the most academically able. Look on the relevant government or the country's embassy website for details.

Some businesses offer funds but they are usually channeled through university departments or organisations such as the Fulbright Commission. If you are currently working, your employer may sponsor you (you would need to demonstrate how it would benefit their organisation).

You may be able to work while you study, check the student visa regulations - you are not entitled to work as a student in all countries. There may also be limits on the amount of hours or type of work you can do. E.g. you may be able to work on campus but not in the town.

Associations, professional bodies, charities, foundations and trusts

There are hundreds of organisations that offer partial funding for postgraduate study. Some may offer several hundred awards per year and others only one. The types of funding include scholarships, bursaries, maintenance allowance funds, grants, studentships and competitions. Most awards will not cover the entire cost of living and tuition fees.

The majority of awards have very specific criteria for eligibility such as the type of subject being studied or the nationality of the applicant. The following books list sources of funding. They are available for reference in the Careers Service.

- Guide to Educational Grants, Directory of Social Change.
- The Grants Register: the complete guide to funding worldwide, *Palgrave Macmillan*.

Overseas study funding websites

- Overview of funding
www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/studentships/1740/funding-postgraduate-study-abroad
- Erasmus+ programme .The Erasmus loans are only available to nationals of an Erasmus programme country to study a complete Masters abroad in another Erasmus programme country.
www.findamasters.com/funding/guides/erasmus-loans.aspx

- Detailed information on funding for international students is provided in each country profile.
Find a Masters www.findamasters.com/study-abroad/
Find a PhD www.findaphd.com/study-abroad/
- Research professional
Grants for postgraduate study worldwide, fieldwork, travel costs, studentships, fellowships etc. Access via on campus computers only.
www.researchprofessional.com

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