

APPLYING FOR POST-GRADUATE TAUGHT COURSES: USEFUL CAREERS RESOURCES



Please note this leaflet is about applying for postgraduate taught courses only, if you are interested in PhDs please see our separate leaflet: *Applying for a PhD: Useful Careers Resources* available on Surrey Pathfinder.

Should you do a Postgraduate Taught Course?

You may love your subject or wish to specialise further and these are good reasons for considering postgraduate study, but before you go ahead and apply it is worth asking yourself some questions about where you hope it will lead you:

- ▶ Is the course required for your chosen career?
- ▶ Will it help your career by enabling you to specialise?
- ▶ Would you be better off using the time to get relevant work experience?
- ▶ Will it enable you to convert to a new career area e.g. Law or Psychology?
- ▶ Are you interested in doing a PhD and working in academia or other research? In some subjects, you may be more likely to get funding with an excellent masters. For more information see our separate leaflet 'Applying for a PhD: Useful Careers Resources'
- ▶ What sort of jobs do graduates go into at the end and do employers value the course?
- ▶ What sort of funding options are there?
- ▶ Is it a course which an employer would pay for as part of your training?
- ▶ Could you study the course part-time while you are working?

Many students decide to study for a masters because they don't know what else they can do. If this describes you, or you don't know the answers to the questions above you may wish to do some research on career options using the Prospects website.

- ▶ An idea of some of the career options for most degree courses available [here](#). However, keep in mind that many UK employers do not recruit from a specific degree and are open to applicants from any course.
- ▶ A database of job profiles is available [here](#). The job profiles listed will indicate whether postgraduate study is necessary.
- ▶ Two career matching tools to help you decide what career might suit you available [here](#).

You might want to make an appointment with a Careers Adviser to discuss your career objectives, you can book online on [Surrey Pathfinder](#).

Finding postgraduate courses

The following websites list opportunities:

- ▶ www.findamasters.com
- ▶ <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-courses>
- ▶ Courses at the University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/postgraduate
- ▶ International courses: www.mastersportal.com
- ▶ [USA courses and scholarships](#)

How to choose a course

Postgraduate taught courses include:

- ▶ Masters (MA, MSc, MRes, MPhil) - Usually 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time, the dissertation is a key element. Some vocational courses are 2 years full-time e.g. Social Work, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy.
- ▶ Diploma/Certificate – 1 year or less, often vocational, this may be a step towards a Masters.
- ▶ Specialist vocational postgraduate courses e.g. PGCE for teaching, Graduate Diploma in Law

The cost and quality of courses vary so when investigating courses it is good to research:

- ▶ What other graduates have gone on to do. Ask the department you are applying to for details. A note of caution; they are likely to include the details of graduates who went back to a previous employer, so it may not be the masters that got them the job.
- ▶ Whether the course is accredited by a professional body and if you need this to meet your career objective. See the course description on the university's website.
- ▶ Whether you want to study overseas. See www.prospects.ac.uk. The fees in some countries are cheaper than the UK, but if you are seeking accreditation from a UK professional body, you need to check the course meets the requirements.
- ▶ [Guardian postgraduate league tables](#)
- ▶ [The Complete University Guide](#)
- ▶ [Postgraduate Open Days](#) are an excellent opportunity to find out more about courses which interest you.

How to apply

There is no central admissions system for most postgraduate programmes, usually candidates apply directly to the universities of their choice and for as many courses as they wish (although some institutions do charge an application fee). For some courses you can use the UCAS centralised postgraduate applications service www.ucas.com/ucas/postgraduate. There are however some subject based centralised application systems e.g. Social Work and Teaching courses are through UCAS.

- ▶ In most cases there are no official closing dates but there are exceptions such as: Teaching, Law, Dentistry, Medicine and Clinical Psychology. Popular courses will get filled early on a first come first served basis. There may also be deadlines for funding or scholarships which require you to have applied for the course in advance.
- ▶ When completing the application form you may be required to write a personal statement, for guidance please see our separate leaflet: [Writing a Personal Statement for a Postgraduate Application](#) (available on Surrey Pathfinder). You can make an appointment with a [Careers Adviser](#) to have your statement checked.
- ▶ If you are applying for teacher training you will find more information on the [‘Get into Teaching’](#) website and [TargetJobs](#).
- ▶ Admissions departments will usually request that you send other supporting documents such as a copy of your degree transcript and references. As these can hold up your application, make sure you ask your referees and request your progress report or HEAR from your academic HIVE as soon as possible.

Funding

- ▶ Postgraduate study can be expensive and fees vary greatly between courses and institutions, so always check the exact amount before you apply. Some universities such as Surrey offer a discount in fees to their alumni (correct at time of writing).
- ▶ Masters Loans are available across the UK if you meet the eligibility criteria, which includes aspects such as residency status and not having already studied a Masters. There are other forms of UK postgraduate funding including: institutional scholarships, research council funding and Professional Career Development Loans (read the small print about interest rates and repayments). There is also funding for international students and Erasmus Masters Loans to study abroad in Europe.
- ▶ For more information about funding a postgraduate course, visit www.findamasters.com

Some postgraduate students work part-time and study part-time in order to help fund their studies. Sometimes it may be possible to access alternative forms of partial funding such as from charities. Publications such as ‘The Grants Register’ by Palgrave Macmillan lists funding awards worldwide for specific categories of students studying specific subjects. There are separate streams of funding available for PhDs see our separate leaflet: [Applying for a PhD: Useful Careers Resources](#) and [find a PhD](#)