

# Postgraduate study



## The Careers and Employability Service will support you throughout your course and after graduation

**EmployableMe:** Our innovative and fresh approach to careers and employability at the University of Huddersfield is about taking control of your own career planning – with support from your professionally qualified and experienced award winning careers team. Look out for the green EmployableME character around campus and particularly within the careers centre in Student Central.

**MyCareer:** MyCareer is the hub of everything you do within careers. From here you can access everything! Including:

- JobShop
- The Huddersfield Graduate Programme
- Careers events on campus
- Resources

You can access MyCareer through the Student Hub via the Jobs and Careers tab.

**Career Resources:** The Careers and Employability Service provides you with access to personalised career resources. You can create a CV, listen to experts discussing job interviews, explore career options and test your skills through online assessments before facing the real thing.

You will be able to find:

- CV Builder
- Interview training
- Preparation for assessment centres
- Practice psychometric tests
- Short videos to help you with applications

You can access these resources from your MyCareer platform.

**Grad Jobs Bureau:** The Careers and Employability Service is here to help you with your future; whether that be moving into a graduate job, exploring postgraduate study options or training for a particular career. We continue to support you after you have finished your course to aid your transition from final year student, to graduate of the University of Huddersfield.

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## Introduction:

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When the end of your course at the University of Huddersfield is in sight there are many options open to you and a key one for many undergraduates is that of postgraduate study.

Here are several questions that it's worth asking yourself before making a decision about postgraduate study:

- Do you want or need to enhance your employability?
- Do you want or need to gain more in-depth specialist knowledge and skills?
- Do you love the subject enough to devote more of your time to it?
- Do you need it to pursue a chosen career?
- Do you need it to convert to another career, maybe different from your course of study?

There are many reasons why this route might appeal to you and these are some legitimate reasons to consider it:

- Studying a postgraduate qualification as an opportunity to increase your employability, enhance existing skills or develop new ones.
- You might be considering a career in academia; this could include research or teaching within higher education.
- A perfectly valid reason to choose postgraduate study would be if you enjoy studying your subject area and wish to continue doing so in order to gain more in depth specialist knowledge.
- You may need a particular qualification for a certain career eg a PGCE to become a teacher.

These are some reasons which would require further exploration:

- You don't know what else to do.
- You are not ready for employment.
- You want to prolong your student life.

If this is the case then speak to a careers adviser with whom you can discuss the pros and cons of postgraduate study.

If you are to succeed at postgraduate level, you will need a keen interest in the subject area, plus a high level of determination and motivation. It is essential that you choose your course and explore funding sources carefully.

Don't think that you can only consider postgraduate study immediately after your first degree: many graduates leave education before returning for postgraduate study and there are also part time, distance learning and e-learning options available.

Changing your career direction can be a valid reason for choosing a postgraduate course so long as you are clear about the reasons behind your decision. In fact the Higher Education Funding Council for England say that around 40% of all postgraduate study is related to a change in career. There are times too when very different courses can work well; for example many subjects can make a good foundation for law and teaching studies. Combinations that sound odd can often allow you to find a niche career, for example a science degree followed by a journalism postgraduate qualification could start your career in scientific journalism.

Reading this booklet will help to ensure that you are considering postgraduate study for the right reasons, make you think about the crucial issue of finance and let you consider the longer term career implications of your choice.

Research needs to be the foundation of any decision that you make regarding postgraduate study. Do your research well in advance of any closing date for applications and consider

- Course options available
- Career options following the qualification.

A postgraduate qualification may not necessarily be essential for entry into your chosen career; it is worth investigating all possible entry routes. If you are unsure whether or not a postgraduate qualification is required for the sector or role you wish to work in then do some research to find out.

Begin your research by taking a look at the Graduate Prospects website [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk), at their occupational profiles for a wide variety of roles, including entry requirements, and by speaking to a careers adviser to talk about your plans.

In a nutshell there are taught and research courses; although there are also research courses that include taught elements. Vocational courses that lead to an entry into a specific career are generally taught.

### Examples of courses include:

Taught Postgraduate vocational programmes/professional qualifications:

Postgraduate Certificates (PgCert) and Postgraduate Diplomas (PgDip) are qualifications related to a professional body. These often last between one year full-time and two years part-time. For example, PgCert Professional Practice and Management in Architecture (RIBA part 3), the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Postgraduate Diploma in Youth and Community Work

Taught postgraduate programmes:  
These usually last between one year full-time and two years part-time

- Master of Arts (MA) for example MA History
- MBA – Master in Business Administration
- Master of Science (MSc) for example MSc Automotive Engineering

### Research programmes:

- Although they may involve some taught elements the majority of the content of these qualifications will be made up of in-depth research. Master of Research (MRes), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD/ DPhil)
- Professional/vocational Doctorate programmes such as the Doctor of Engineering (EngD) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

### Areas to focus on include:

#### 1. Place of study

This will entail you considering the same factors that led you to choose the University of Huddersfield for your undergraduate degree, such as location, campus, cost of living and entry requirements, however now you'll also have to think about:

- Funding: do some Universities offer particular bursaries or grants?
- Reputation and their academic staff
- Post graduate destinations
- Links with employers, industries and the wider academic community
- Opportunities to study abroad or elsewhere on projects and schemes linked to your course.

You can also consider studying outside the UK. Although the chance to gain language skills can be a strong reason to study abroad there are many institutions particularly in Europe that teach postgraduate courses in English. There is the chance too that courses may be cheaper elsewhere than in the UK and there may be particular subject related reasons to favour overseas universities for example if you are keen to develop knowledge of a country or culture.

### 2. The course detail

Explore how the course will be taught and what it will entail. Speak to tutors teaching the courses and think about issues such as

- Your academic skill set
- Whether it will interest and motivate you
- Discuss research ideas/options with tutors teaching the course
- When to apply and how to apply
- The course's assessment methods
- Ask what support is given to postgraduates at the institution

### 3. Whether it will enhance your job prospects

Perceptions of postgraduate qualifications will vary amongst employers. Your future job prospects may be influenced by the following factors:

- Your subject area studied.
- Availability of opportunities following your course.
- Competition from others, both undergraduates and postgraduates.
- Your personal skills and qualities.
- Possession of relevant work experience.
- How you market yourself, your qualifications, skills and experience to employers.

It is essential to market yourself effectively when applying for courses at postgraduate level. Applications may require any of/ or more than one of the following:

- CV emphasising your academic record
- Covering letter
- Application form including a personal statement
- Details of a previous dissertation
- Samples of your work, particularly common in the form of a portfolio/website for the more creative courses such as MA Textiles Design, MSc Multimedia and MA Art
- Proposed research ideas in the format of a research proposal if you are considering a postgraduate research qualification.

Start considering what you want to study early on in your final year and confirm the preferred method of application and any closing dates; please note that these may vary for each institution.

Applications for postgraduate study are usually made directly to departments rather than via a central clearing house although there are a few exceptions to this. Contact the institution that you are applying to for clear instructions on the process.

Some departments will want an application form; others will require a CV with details of your academic record. Ensure that you send whichever is requested.

### The personal statement

There may be rules around how many lines you're allowed to use. The personal statement is a key part of an application form as it allows you to present a logical reason outlining your suitability for a course. There are several careers such as teaching where it can be the deciding factor on whether your application progresses or not.

#### A good personal statement will contain:

- Your passion for the course – for your subject area and for any research you want to undertake.
- Evidence of your experiences eg for teaching, include what you have observed and done in the classroom and what you have learnt from it.
- Your long term career plans.
- If you are applying for just one course – say why you think this is the most suitable qualification for you.
- Think about the skills that the course might demand. Which of these skills do you have? How have you developed them? Provide evidence too that you have learned from the development of your skills.

### Interviews

If you are asked to attend an interview to gain entry onto a course then questions are likely to focus on

- Why have you chosen the course?
- What interests you about the course?
- What are your career aspirations?
- What makes you suitable for the course?

Vocational courses will almost certainly address your suitability for a particular profession. Questions and interviews vary according to the career for example if you are called to a teaching interview there may be questions relating to your experience in educational settings, work experience, your background knowledge about current educational issues and then you could also face an assessment centre.

Academic interviews for PhDs/Masters by research can include all the above questions plus a mini presentation about your proposed area of research and questions about this in some detail.

## Funding issues

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The funding arrangements for postgraduate courses are complex and fees can vary according to course and institution. Investigate funding sources early, during your second year or at the start of your final year and apply as soon as possible for any funding available.

Potential sources of funding can include:

- Bursaries and scholarships: these may be linked to a specific course or institution. They may be means tested or they might be conditional on the class of your degree.
- Employers sometimes offer to fund postgraduate training for their employees; they may even allow study time for you to achieve qualifications on a part time basis.
- Career development loans such as Professional Career Development Loans provided by Barclays and the Co-operative Banks.
- Research councils: publically funded bodies tend to provide grants direct through university academic departments. See the Research Councils UK site (RCUK) for more information <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/>
- Charities: there are normally rigid requirements of applicants for their funding and there can be specific subject areas that you'll need to study.

To find out about possible sources of funding for your chosen course you can:

- Ask course admissions staff at the institution you are applying to for further details about bursaries, research council funding and employer sponsorships.
  - See the Student Finance Dept. in the University
  - Read the Postgraduate Study section on the Prospects website [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)
  - Read The Prospects Postgraduate Funding Guide available from the Careers and Employability Service.
  - Search for funded PhDs on the <http://www.findaphd.com/> site and for Masters on the <http://www.findamasters.com/>
  - Also worth using are [www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk) and <http://targetpostgrad.com/>
- [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)



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