Postgraduate Study & Funding
Postgraduate study has the potential to enhance your career prospects and may be essential for some career choices. Further study is a commitment in terms of time and money, so it is important that you research your options before starting your applications.

**Why further study?**

There are a variety of reasons why you may consider further study, including an interest in the subject, to improve your career prospects, or because it is necessary in a particular occupation. Before you decide to apply for a postgraduate course, you should clarify your motives and what it is you want to achieve. This will help you to research all your options and choose the right course and funding routes for you.

**Types of Postgraduate Study**

**Taught courses**

- **Master of arts (MA) or Master of science (MSc)**
  - *One to two years full time / two to three years part time*
  
  Includes seminars, lectures, tutorials, project work, oral work, some research, a thesis/dissertation and exams. You may also have the option of leaving out the dissertation/thesis and gaining a Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) which may be of interest if you want to specialise in a certain area.

**Research degrees**

- **Doctorates (PhDs)**
  - *Three to four years full time / Five to six years part time*
  
  PhDs can be started immediately after your first degree or a masters course. They involve research into a chosen topic under the supervision of an experienced academic. Includes a thesis of around 100,000 words and usually an oral presentation.

- **Masters programmes by research (including MSc, MPhil, MRes)**
  - *One to two years full time / Two to four years part time*
  
  Private research, supervised by an experienced academic, as opposed to a taught programme. Similar in structure to a doctorate, includes the production of a thesis and usually an oral presentation.

**Choosing a postgraduate course**

The UK offers a wide range of taught postgraduate programmes or postgraduate research programmes. With so many postgraduate study courses available in the UK and abroad, it is important that you research the various courses and modes of study that are available to you. The websites listed below provide detailed information to help you to make the right choice for you:

- **Postgraduate Study in the UK** [prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study](prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study)
  
  Weigh up the benefits of further study, learn about the different types of postgraduate courses available and decide if you want to study in the UK or abroad.

- **TARGETcourses** [targetpostgrad.com](targetpostgrad.com)
  
  Provides a database of postgraduate courses and a funding database for thousands of different funding awards.
Explore the Funding Options

**Masters Loans**
Post graduate loans were introduced to help to support students with their tuition fees and living expenses. These are repayable and operate in a similar way to student loans for undergraduates. From the 2017/18 academic year, you will be able to borrow any amount up to a maximum of £10,280.

Whilst the majority of masters courses are eligible for this loan there are notable exceptions. For further details go to prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/masters-loans

**PhD Loans**
Loans worth up to £25,000 are now also available to help Doctoral students cover their tuition fees and living expenses. For further details go to prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/phd-loans

It is important to research the fees and funding options available as these can vary widely between subjects and institutions. The Prospects Funding Guide outlines the various sources of available funding, from Research Councils to bank loans and employer sponsorship, and provides an A-Z of institutions and charities: prospects.ac.uk/prospects-publications

If you choose to continue studying at Manchester Met, you may be eligible for a variety of loyalty discounts, scholarships and awards. Learn more about Postgraduate funding and the financial support available to Manchester Met students here: mmu.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/fees/.

**PhD Studentships**
Funding can be obtained on a partial or fully funded basis through a PhD studentship which may involve focusing on a pre-determined PhD project. These are highly competitive to obtain. https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/phd-studentships
Making Applications

For most postgraduate courses there is no central admissions system, you will apply directly to the University and can apply for as many courses as you like. For most courses there is no official closing date, but popular courses do fill up quickly.

Courses which have their own central admissions system are:

- PGCE-Teaching via UCAS
- Social Work via UCAS
- LPC/GDL via Central Applications Board
- Nursing via UCAS

Personal Statements

For postgraduate applications, you are likely to be asked to write a personal statement. You may be given a very clear indication of what you should write or a general subject outline, where you will provide detail of your research interests.

Tailoring your application

Tailor each application to the institution and course you are applying for. Each statement will need a slightly different emphasis, depending on the university you are applying to. Investigate the university and course / research area. Find out what sets your choice apart from other universities.

Give your statement a logical structure with an introduction, a main body and a conclusion.

Areas you might include in your statement

Introduction:

- **Why this course?** Admissions tutors want to know that you are genuinely interested in this course. How can you prove this? Try to convey your enthusiasm and motivation for this study/research. Is the programme noted for a particular emphasis or specialism? 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?
- **Why this university?** Be as specific as possible. Are there particular academic staff you want to do research or study with? What is it about the structure of the course, or the choice of modules, that appeals to you?

Main body of statement:

- **What academic skills have you got to offer?** Admissions tutors need to know that you are academically capable of succeeding in this course. What is the relevance of your first degree to this study? Emphasise academic achievement or explain any “dips” in grades/performance. Mention relevant skills, e.g. computing, knowledge of relevant scientific techniques etc.
- **What personal skills can you offer?** e.g. ability to work in a team, with little supervision. Demonstrate that you've done your homework about the course/research and that you’ve seriously considered your strengths and weaknesses for postgraduate study or research. If you have done vacation jobs, what skills have you learned? Demonstrate that you are a great fit for this course.

Conclusion:

- **What are your career aims?** You need to show that you can see where this course might lead
you and that you are following a focused path, even if you are not 100% sure what career most appeals yet.

**Academic CVs and Research Proposals**

For research courses, you will usually need to complete an institution application form and submit an academic CV and research proposal.

**Academic CV**

Read our ‘CVs for Postgraduates & Researchers’ guide for information on what to include and how to structure your CV in our guides section: [www2.mmu.ac.uk/careers/](http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/careers/)

**Research Proposal**

Findaphd.com provides a guide on how to write a research proposal here: [findaphd.com/advice/finding/writing-phd-research-proposal.aspx](http://findaphd.com/advice/finding/writing-phd-research-proposal.aspx) It is also a good idea to discuss your research proposal with your course tutors to seek their advice and help.

**Job search after Postgraduate Study**

- [jobs.ac.uk](http://jobs.ac.uk) advertise vacancies for academic and research careers in UK universities.
- [indapostdoc.com](http://indapostdoc.com) advertises academic jobs for post-doctoral researchers worldwide.
- [chronicle.com](http://chronicle.com) (the US equivalent of the Times Higher Education supplement) is a useful site to help you to search for academic career opportunities in the USA.
- [mbajobs.net](http://mbajobs.net) advertises vacancies for those with an MBA and allows you to register your details.

**Other Useful Postgraduate Sites**

- [vitae.ac.uk/](http://vitae.ac.uk/): This new researcher’s portal gives information for PhD students, supervisors and researchers.
- [manchester.ac.uk/academiccareer](http://manchester.ac.uk/academiccareer): Designed to help all levels of students, alumni and researchers who might be considering a career in academia.

**Careers & Employability Support**

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **Detailed careers guides:** Our full range of careers guides are available on our website.
- **Careers Consultant Appointments:** Book a 30 minute appointment with a Careers & Employability Consultant. Whether you need help finding the right course for you, writing your personal statement or exploring the available funding options, our Careers Consultants are here to help you.

For more information visit [mmu.ac.uk/careers](http://mmu.ac.uk/careers)