Postgraduate Study & Funding

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints
Postgraduate study & funding

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 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 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 see our work and study overseas section www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/findingwork/overseas

The following websites will also give you more information.

- [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/abroad](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/abroad)
- [www.studyoverseas.com](http://www.studyoverseas.com)

**Rankings for institutions and courses.**

University rankings look at: graduate employability, research rankings, entry standards and student satisfaction.

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.

You may wish to find out more about rankings that look at graduate employability. Graduate employability data is collected from all UK HE institutions via a student survey 6 months after graduation (known as DLHE - the Destination of leavers of Higher Education).

It measures what graduates are doing at that moment in time and includes salary data. It can give an indication of what people have gone on to do after your course. However, many graduates do work experience or travel after their degree so the statistics can be a little unreliable especially if the course has a small intake, which many PG courses do.

**UK**

- Unistats - search by university and course, undergraduate and postgraduate. [http://unistats.direct.gov.uk](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk)
- What do graduates do – search by broad subject groups [www.prospects.ac.uk/what_do_graduates_do.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/what_do_graduates_do.htm)
- Guardian university guide – combines a variety of rankings [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide)
- Guardian – Postgraduate subject tables [www.guardian.co.uk/education/series/postgraduate-subject-tables-2013](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/series/postgraduate-subject-tables-2013)

**Global and overseas**
The Times Higher Educational Supplement, World University Rankings
www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings

Institute of Higher Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Academic Ranking of World Universities by Broad Subject Fields:
www.arwu.org

The Times Higher Educational Supplement, World University Rankings:
www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings

The Financial Times Global Executive MBA survey:
http://rankings.ft.com/rankings/emba/rankings.html

Reviews a limited number of US graduate programmes.
www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings.aspx

Published rankings of US graduate schools.
http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools

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.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/events/postgraduatetudyfair

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
- Braintrack University Index:
  Provides links to over 10,000 institutions in 194 countries.
  www.braintrack.com
- Universities worldwide:
  http://univ.cc/world.php
  Links to 8314 Universities in 201 countries.
- International Graduate
  Search for courses according to subject area and region. www.internationalgraduate.net
- Educations.com browse through courses in countries worldwide
  www.educations.com
- 4 International Colleges & Universities international higher education directory featuring reviews and web rankings of 10,200 Universities and Colleges in 200 countries
  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 few or 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.

In some countries (especially the US) applicants are required to write a statement of purpose. 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.

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.

For advice on applications see:
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/applicationsinterviews/studyapplication

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.

It is likely that fees in the UK will increase and 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.)

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**

**Masters courses**

There is little funding available for Masters level courses. Ask your prospective university if institutional or Research Council funding is available.

Also contact the course admissions tutor and enquire if any specific funding awards are available. They should be able to outline how students who completed the course have funded their studies.

**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.

**Where does funding come from?**

Research Councils, societies, universities, charities, foundations, trusts, professional bodies and overseas governments offer funding awards. Competition for awards is fierce - in some cases organisations receive several thousand applications for a single award. Generally, the number of funding awards for science subjects far outweighs that for the arts and social sciences.

To maximise your chance of getting an award you should apply to as many sources of funding as possible.

**Eligibility**

Eligibility criteria for a funding award are determined by the organisation that offers the award. Funding bodies usually set out several different criteria for each award. Common criteria include: academic merit, age, experience, ethnicity, financial need, subject/research area.

Certain conditions may also be attached to a funding award. For example overseas students may be required to work in their home country for a set period of time after graduation.

**The Research Councils**

The main source of funding for UK and EU students comes from the Research Councils. In total there are 7 Research Councils.
Grants of money are usually called ‘studentships’. Money can be used for fees, living expenses or both. Studentships are allocated in two different ways:

- The Research Councils allocate a number of studentships to university departments who then advertise for candidates. This is how the majority of science courses are funded. or
- A joint application is made to the research council by the candidate and their institution. This applies to arts, economic and social science programmes. Competition for this type of funding is very high.

Students do not apply directly to the Research Council - applications are handled by the university.

Learned Societies

Sometimes learned societies offer funding for postgraduate or postdoctoral research. Societies include:

- **British Academy** For humanities and Social Sciences - post doctorate only  
  [www.britac.ac.uk](http://www.britac.ac.uk)
- **Royal Academy of Engineering** funding for engineering programs  
  [www.raeng.org.uk](http://www.raeng.org.uk)
- **Royal Society** Funding for science post doctorates only  
  [http://royalsociety.org](http://royalsociety.org)

Institutional scholarships

Most institutions set aside money so they can offer a small number of scholarships to students who are accepted on a course at their university.
Most universities also offer scholarships which have been funded by external sources (e.g. an individual may established a scholarship ‘in memory’ of a former student or member of staff). 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**

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 students bank account, so they can use it to pay for any university related expense they choose or the university may automatically deducted it from the tuition fees. Some bursaries are given on the condition that they are used to pay for specific costs such as childcare.

**For study overseas:**

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.

There are thousands of trust funds and charities though most have target groups, e.g. you can only apply if you are studying at a specific institution. The Fulbright Commission has a list, and more information is contained in the Grants Register available in the Careers Service.

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.

**Funding search websites:**

For the University of Manchester
[www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/search](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/search)

General:

- Prospects website – UK study:
  [www.prospects.ac.uk/search_funding_bodies.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/search_funding_bodies.htm)
- Hotcourses Scholarship search
  www.scholarship-search.org.uk/pls/mon/hc_edufin.page_pls_user_studmoney?x=16180339&y=&a=220707
- Postgraduate studentships
  www.postgraduestudentships.co.uk
- Information about funding for students with disabilities
  www.skill.org.uk

Overseas study

- Prospects website - overview of sources of funding and links to country profiles.
  www.prospects.ac.uk/study_abroad_funding.htm
- Links in the work and study abroad section of our website:
  www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/findingwork/overseas

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 available 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 are funding. They are available for reference in the Careers Centre.

- The Grants Register: the complete guide to funding worldwide, *Palgrave Macmillan*.
- Prospects Postgraduate Funding Guide (limited takeaway copies may be available)
- University Scholarships and Awards, *Heap*

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 16 hours / week.

Part-time jobs are advertised on the Careers Service website:
www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink
Find out more about looking for part-time work pick up the guide from the Careers Resource Centre or check out: [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/findingwork/parttimejobs](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/findingwork/parttimejobs)

**Professional Career Development Loans**

A Professional Career Development Loan is a deferred repayment bank loan and is a popular option with postgraduate students. However, as it is limited to those on vocational courses so not all postgraduates are eligible to apply.

Give careful thought to taking out a PCDL and adding to any undergraduate debt. You will have to start repayment immediately after your course – so ensure you have funds in place.

- PCDLs are currently available through two High St Banks: Barclays and The Co-operative
- The loan can be from £300 - £10,000 and can be used to cover tuition fees and all other related expenses.

Further information on Professional Career Development Loans [www.gov.uk/career-development-loans/overview](http://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans/overview)

**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. You could also send your CV to other universities as they may be looking for part-time staff. The Open University also employs part time associate lecturers throughout the UK.

Posts are advertised throughout the year on [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://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.

**Employer funded study**

If you are a science graduate then it may be possible to apply for a PhD Studentship sponsored by an organisation involved in research such as AstraZeneca.

**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.ktponline.org.uk](http://www.ktponline.org.uk) or call Tel: 0300 321 4357.
Find us
The Atrium, 1st Floor, University Place
Open all year round
For opening times see website
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers
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