



## Postgraduate study: reaching higher and higher

Once you've hired an academic gown, tossed your mortar board into the air and added BSc or BA to your name.....what comes next?

That is the question that faces every successful graduate. With bank overdrafts and student loans to pay off, further study may look like an unaffordable luxury. In fact an increasing number of graduates are turning to postgraduate courses as their best route. In a period of global recession clocking up further skills and qualifications, along with the acquisition of employer-friendly skills and experience, could be a good idea.

### What are postgraduate courses and what are they used for?

There are four main types of postgraduate qualification:

- Postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas. These may be academic or vocational qualifications and are often linked to a specific profession. They may lead on to further study, such as a masters degree.
- Masters degrees, these can be taught courses, research based or a mixture of both, and require at least 12 months of full-time study to complete. They include academic qualifications such as MA (master of arts), MSc (master of science) and MPhil (master of philosophy) or be linked to a particular career or profession such as MBA (master of business administration), LLM (master of law) and MEd (master of education).
- Doctorate qualifications (PhD or Dphil) require you to independently plan and undertake an original piece of research with guidance from a supervisor. They usually take at least three years of full-time study to complete.

Whichever you choose, the ultimate goal will be to acquire more specific skills and knowledge, and to move from the broad areas of a first degree to focus on a more specific detail or application. This may be within your current department, or at another university or in conjunction with employment or an Internship. (For more information on internships download the learning opportunities leaflet:

['Internships'](#)

### Where is the information on specific courses?

Currently there are more than 58,000 postgraduate courses in the UK delivered through full time, part time, block and distance learning. The new postgraduate website, where you can search and apply for courses, is UKPASS (UK Postgraduate Application and Statistical Service).

[www.ukpass.ac.uk](http://www.ukpass.ac.uk)

There are several other useful websites to help you with finding the postgraduate course you are looking for and inform you about funding options

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

[www.hotcourses.com](http://www.hotcourses.com)

[www.3.open.ac.uk/study/postgraduate](http://www.3.open.ac.uk/study/postgraduate)

[www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk)

[www.masterscompare.co.uk](http://www.masterscompare.co.uk)

[www.direct.gov.uk/HigherEducation/ChoicesAfterYouGraduate](http://www.direct.gov.uk/HigherEducation/ChoicesAfterYouGraduate)

Some professions have their own specific application site for postgraduate courses. These include:

The graduate teacher training registry for teaching:

[www.gttr.ac.uk](http://www.gttr.ac.uk)

The Conservatoires UK Admissions Service (CUKAS) for music performance:

[www.cukas.ac.uk](http://www.cukas.ac.uk)

Clinical psychology:

[www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp)

Other professions have their own website with information about postgraduate courses and careers but you register with UKPASS to apply for courses online. These include:

The British psychological society - for psychology related careers:

[www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

The Children's Workforce development council - for careers in social work:

[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

### **How is postgraduate study funded?**

Unlike undergraduate study there are no government student loans or routine bursaries. However bursaries do exist and the best place to ask is often the office of the academic department to which you are applying.

Many students divide their life between working part time and studying part time, this may be a formal internship or an informal arrangement. The following websites provide general information about 'Funding postgraduate study':

[www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk)

[www.prospects.ac.uk/funding](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/funding)

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

The direct.gov site has information on Professional and Career Development Loans:

[www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl) or Telephone 0800 585 505

Each year the seven UK Research Councils (RCUK) invest a total of around £2.8 billion in research, covering the full spectrum of academic disciplines from the medical and biological sciences to astronomy, physics, chemistry and engineering, social sciences, economics, environmental sciences and the arts and humanities. Their website has information about postgraduate and post doctoral research grants at:

[www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk) and also links to the seven separate research council websites:

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for research funding and training in economic and social sciences:

[www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk) or

[www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk)

Arts and Humanities Research Council:

[www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

Medical Research Council:

[www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)

Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council

[www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk)

Science and Technology Facilities Council

[www.stfc.ac.uk](http://www.stfc.ac.uk)

Natural Environment Research Council

[www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)

Engineering & Physical Sciences Research council

[www.epsrc.ac.uk](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk)

See also the Learning Opportunities sections on financial help:

[www.learning-opportunities.org.uk/financial-help](http://www.learning-opportunities.org.uk/financial-help) and

Childcare while you study:

[www.learning-opportunities.org.uk/financial-help/childcare-while-you-study](http://www.learning-opportunities.org.uk/financial-help/childcare-while-you-study)