

Postgraduate Study and Funding

Careers & Employability Service

www.mmu.ac.uk/careers



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

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Information for PhD & Research Students and those considering Postgraduate Study

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INFORMATION FOR THOSE CONSIDERING POST GRADUATE STUDY

Some different types of postgraduate study

Post-graduate diploma/certificate – around 9 months if full-time

- Often provide a professional qualification needed for a particular career e.g. journalism
- May allow you to carry on to full Masters course

Master of Science/Master of Arts (MSc/MA's) – One year if full time

Can be either:

- Taught
- By research (some taught elements, some research)
- Research – no formal taught component

Master of Research (MRes) – One year if full time

- At least 60% of content must be individual project work

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) – Two years if full-time

- Entirely project-based/research based

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – Three years if full-time

- Entirely research based
- Opportunity to develop your own original, cutting edge, ideas

It is unusual to get straight onto a PhD without first having completed one of the other qualifications listed above.

Many post-grad courses are now also offered part-time and some by distance learning. Nearly 60% of all taught Postgraduate students now study part-time, often combining this with part-time work to help fund their studies.

For most research degrees a 2:1 or first is essential.

Most MSc's/MA's are either an extension of a student's current area of study or a conversion course.

The following specialist handouts are available to take away in MMU Careers Library: "Applying for a PGCE"; "Information for MBA's". There are also specific handouts for those looking at postgraduate study connected to law.

To help you to decide if postgraduate study is for you refer to www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pgstudy

How are study opportunities advertised?

Look on individual universities' websites/prospectuses. Funded opportunities are often also advertised in the local/national press. Look out for Postgraduate study fairs and events.

You could also find potential courses via:

www.prospects.ac.uk/pg
<http://targetcourses.co.uk>
www.postgrad.com.
www.FindAMasters.com
www.phdjobs.com
www.FindAPhD.com
www.jobs.ac.uk
www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk

The Times Higher Education Supplement advertises opportunities – www.thes.co.uk.

The Prospects Postgraduate Directory is an official guide to postgraduate study in the UK. This directory is available for reference from the Careers & Employability Service.

Making applications for further study

How you apply depends on the course you are applying for. Courses with their own clearing house:

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

For MA, MSc, MBA, MRes contact the institution you wish to apply to, normally you will complete a University application form.

For research courses (MPhil, PhD) you will usually complete an institution application form and need to send an academic CV and a research proposal

www.prospects.ac.uk/Links/CVwriting - shows some sample academic CV's.

www.findaphd.com/student/study/study-3.asp - a guide on how to write a research proposal. There are many other examples on the internet and it is a good idea to discuss your research proposal with your tutors to seek their advice and help.

Funding Postgraduate Study

The average fee for home/EU Students for a one year Masters is around £3,000 - £4,000 but fees can vary widely and you must check exact figures with the institution you are applying to.

Finding funding for postgrad study is often more difficult than getting a place on a course. Mandatory funding covers a small minority of subjects including teaching, social work and nursing. Most local education authorities now only provide post-grad funding for PGCE (teaching) students.

The likelihood is that you will have to support yourself or put together a funding package that draws from savings, earnings from part-time or full-time work, small grants and bursaries and loans.

If you are interested in a particular course, contact the department and ask about possible sources of funding. How have past students financed the course?

Make sure you investigate every possible funding source and that you are aware of dates, deadlines and eligibility criteria.

1. Funding Councils

There are 7 different funding councils. They provide the main source of funding for PhD, MPhil and taught Masters courses in the UK. Awards are available to cover university fees and a maintenance grant. Applications should usually be made through the university department offering the course or research place as these awards are normally linked to particular courses/areas of research – this does vary, however, and each funding council lists on its website details of funded courses/research and the method of application.

Application deadlines for Research Council awards are usually late April/early May. Competition for Research Council awards is intense.

The most common types of funding provided by Research Councils are:

- Advanced Course Studentships – for taught Masters courses usually lasting one year. These awards are generally allocated through a quota system. Research Councils give quotas of studentships to departments for approved programmes. Individual departments select candidates they feel are most deserving.
- Research Masters (MRes) training awards and standard research studentships – for PhD or MPhil students on programmes of up to 3 years full time or 5 years part time.

Funding Council details:

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

www.ahrc.ac.uk

Covers the following course areas: English and American Studies, Media/Communication Studies, other Language, Literature, Linguistics, Visual and Performing Arts, History of Art/Architecture, History, Philosophy, Theology, Archaeology, Classics, Law, Art and Design, Practice-based Drama, Interpreting and Translating, Film and Television Studies, Archive Administration, Librarianship and Information Science, Creative Writing, Musical Performance.

Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

www.bbsrc.ac.uk

Covers the following course areas: Biomolecular Sciences, Biochemistry and Cell Biology, Genes and Developmental Biology, Animal Sciences, Plant and Microbial Sciences, Engineering and Biological Systems, Agri-Food.

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

www.esrc.ac.uk

Covers the following course areas: Economic and Social History, Economics, Education, Human Geography, Interdisciplinary Studies in Science, Technology and Innovation, Linguistics, Management and Business Studies, Planning, Environmental and Housing Studies, Political Science, International Relations, Psychology, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Social Work and Health Studies, Social Statistics, Research Methods and Computing, Socio-Legal Studies, Sociology.

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

www.epsrc.ac.uk

Covers the following course areas: Chemistry, Engineering, IT and Computer Sciences, Materials, Maths, Physics, Innovative Manufacturing, Life Sciences.

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

www.nerc.ac.uk

Covers the following course areas: Earth Observation, Earth Sciences, Freshwater Sciences, Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Terrestrial Sciences.

Medical Research Council (MRC)

www.mrc.ac.uk

Biomedical subject areas.

Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

www.scitech.ac.uk

Covering a range of science subjects including Astronomy, Biology and Medicine, Computational Science and Environment.

2. European Social Fund Awards

The European Social Fund supports a number of postgraduate vocational courses in the UK. Departments receiving this funding pass on a small training allowance to their

students. This is by no means a comprehensive form of funding and it is subject to change year on year. It is always worth asking the department to which you are applying whether the course is likely to attract ESF funding.

3. University Studentships/Bursaries

Each year most universities offer their own studentships. These opportunities are often few in number though. They would be advertised in the national press and on institutions' websites. Universities may also be channels of funding from industry to support specific pieces of research – often in the fields of science or technology.

4. Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantships

Postgraduate teaching and research assistants can receive payment or the waiver of their course fees (or both) in return for teaching, research and other academic duties.

Assistantships are usually offered to students doing research rather than those on taught courses. The Open University also employs part-time associate lecturers throughout the UK.

5. University Loyalty Discount Schemes

This is a scheme which most universities run, offering a fee discount to graduates of their own university choosing to stay on to undertake a postgraduate course.

For example, at MMU, the standard loyalty discount is 10% for eligible full-time Home/EU students who pay the full tuition fees and £1,000 for full-time students who pay the full Overseas tuition fee; it will be applied pro rata for part-time students. Further information, including courses not covered by the scheme, is available at www.mmu.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/fees/loyalty-discount.php

6. Charitable Trusts

Trusts are sometimes able to offer support to specific students. Some trusts will offer many awards per year and others only one. Most awards will not cover the full cost of living and tuition fees. Many will only be offered when other avenues have been exhausted. Applications often need to be made well in advance. Most foundations have specific eligibility criteria such as residency, age or nationality.

Every scholarship is different so you must approach each application and/or interview differently. The more you know about an organisation, the better your chance of success.

Available on the MMU Careers & Employability Service computers in the Careers & Employability Service Library is the **Funderfinder program** which will search the databases of charitable organisations for you to identify potential sources of funding.

The following publications are available in the Careers & Employability Service Library:

A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need

Directory of Grant Making Trusts

The Grants Register

The Educational Grants Directory

The majority of the awards made by the smaller bodies amount to a few hundred pounds a year and are provided to cover expenses such as travel and fieldwork. Sometimes awards are made solely for the relief of financial hardship.

7. Access Funds

These funds are administered by universities to provide awards to students in financial hardship. Postgrad students who are eligible for a Career Development Loan must have taken one out before they can apply to the Access fund. Students must demonstrate that they can meet the cost of tuition fees (via a loan) and have made reasonable provision to support themselves for the duration of the course. You may only apply to the fund if you are a home student. If you are a part-time student you have to be studying for at least 50% of the equivalent full-time course. For more information about MMU Access to Learning Fund look at www.mmu.ac.uk/studentfinance

8. Professional and Career Development Loans

If you are unable to secure any other funding, you could consider a professional and career development loan. These are overseen by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) for study which is vocational in nature and will assist you to obtain work – many post grads are not eligible for them. Offered by a number of national banks: ring the helpline on 0800 585 505 to find out more. The YPLA pays the interest bill for the duration of the course, but you must begin to pay it back one month after course completion. Mode of attendance can be full time, part-time, open or distance learning. Loans of between £300- £10,000 normally cover up to 80% of course fee plus other allowable expenses such as books, materials and, if the course is full-time, living expenses, including travel, child care and disability costs.

The course must not attract a mandatory LEA award and may be for up to 2 years (up to 3 years if there is a year of work experience) www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl

9. Part-time work

If your applications for funding are unsuccessful and you do not want to take out a loan, it is worth considering part-time work whilst you are studying. Many universities make provision for students to pay their fees in installments and also offer courses which run part-time and by distance learning, allowing students to fit paid work in around their studies. See the MMU handout "Looking for Part Time or Temporary Work" at www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides

10. Disability-related support

If you are a UK student on a postgraduate course you may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance. Part-time students must be studying for at least 50% of the full-time equivalent course. The course must last for a minimum of one year full time. There is one allowance for all costs. The allowance is assessed by your local authority.

Look at www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport for further info or use the Skill website (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities) – www.skill.org.uk

Look at our handout 'Useful Websites for Disabled Students' for information on funding bursaries for disabled people www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides

11. Funding for non-UK Students

EU students – may be eligible to apply to the Funding Councils, but generally the awards will only cover tuition fees.

Non-EU Overseas Students -The British Council offers an award scheme to key professionals in fields which the Council considers important to the relevant country's development. 900 awards made annually see www.britishcouncil.org and British Chevening Scholarships -www.chevening.com.

Further information on funding:

www.mmu.ac.uk/studentfinance/student/postgrad.php
www.prospects.ac.uk/links/fundstudy

Funded places can be advertised several of the websites detailed above including www.jobs.ac.uk and www.findaphd.com

Job search after Postgraduate Study

www.phdjobs.com advertises employment opportunities for which a postgraduate qualification may be a requirement.

www.jobs.ac.uk and www.thes.co.uk carry vacancies for academic and research careers in UK universities.

www.findapostdoc.com advertises academic jobs for post-doctoral researchers worldwide.

<http://www.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

www.mbajobs.net advertises vacancies for those with an MBA and allows you to register your details.

Other Useful Postgraduate Sites

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/> - new researcher's portal gives information for Phd students, supervisors and researchers.