

APPLICATIONS GUIDE

APPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY



Introduction to applications for further study

What is the purpose of further study applications?

Like applications for a job, you will need to undertake research about the course you intend to study. Find out more about what you will be studying, how you will study and what skills and knowledge the University is looking for.

You will need to explain in your application, why you have chosen that particular institution and department. The University will expect you to have found out the detail of the course content, what expertise they have and the latest research they are currently undertaking.

What to include in the personal statement for a postgraduate course

The personal statement should include why the subject you are applying for interests you. This could include aspects of the course that particularly appeal to you and your reasons why. Try to draw and make connections with your current course, any relevant work experience you may have or any other activities you may have undertaken that demonstrates your motivation. E.g. further reading, talks. Include examples of where you have shown the key skills necessary for postgraduate study such as research, independent study and time management. Explain what you hope to gain from the course and where you hope it might lead in the future.

Use the STAR/CARE technique as detailed throughout this guide to provide structured examples.

Check out the Hot Tips leaflet '[Applying for Further Study: Personal Statement](#)' for further tips and [example personal statements on Prospects.ac.uk](#).

Applications for further study checklist

Initial research and reflection

- I have reflected on my next steps and considered whether postgraduate study is right for me.
- I have investigated the range of different types of postgraduate course which are available and considered which is most suitable for me.
- I have investigated funding options and established that postgraduate study is financially viable.
- I have researched the course content and the modules/study areas which will be available to me.
- I have checked the application process - How do I apply? What documents do I need to submit? When is the deadline?

Writing the application

- I have avoided using my undergraduate personal statement as a starting point.
- I have avoided starting my application with narrative/autobiographical information and instead gone straight to the point.
- I have explained the reasons why I want to study at this particular university.
- I have explained the reasons why I want to study this particular course.
- I have demonstrated enthusiasm for, and interest in, the subject of study.
- I have shown how my current studies at undergraduate level have prepared me for postgraduate study.
- I have demonstrated that I have the academic skills to complete the course successfully.
- I have highlighted other relevant skills and provided evidence of these.
- I have used STAR or CARE to ensure that I discuss my skills in full and provide evidence-based examples.
- I have focused on what I have learnt from my experiences, not just what I did.
- I have related the postgraduate course to my future plans and shown how it might fit in with my career aspirations.

Applications for further study FAQs

What funding is available for PG study?

The main source of funding for masters courses is the non-means tested postgraduate loan which means that the amount you receive does not depend on your financial background. Other sources of funding are scholarships and bursaries available from the University at which you want to study and many charities and trusts. For more comprehensive information, see [the Gov.uk guide to funding](#) and [further advice on Prospect.ac.uk](#).

What are the different types of PG study?

The main types of Postgraduate courses include Masters and postgraduate Diplomas, PhD, professional courses such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and [conversion courses](#) where required e.g. in Psychology.

What do I need to include in my personal statement for PG study?

It is important that you clearly demonstrate why studying the subject at that institution interests you and what you hope to gain from the course. Evidence reasons why you think makes you a good candidate for the course which could include skills and attributes gained from degree study and extra-curricular activities such as independent study or technical skills. See our Hot Tips leaflet, '[Applying for Further Study: Personal Statement](#)'.

How does studying for a Masters differ from a degree?

A taught Masters such as MA, MSc, MEng usually focuses on one subject area and consists of seminars and lectures including research methods which culminates in a dissertation. The main differences are that at Masters level study, you are likely to have much more extensive and advanced reading lists and it is much faster paced and requires much more self-directed learning.

How does PhD differ from a Masters?

A PhD is typically a 3-4 year research degree although it can take longer. It is almost completely self-led and completely unique with its research aims and contributions that are made. There are usually 2 supervisors that provide academic support but the management and progress of the work will be entirely your responsibility.

How many PG courses can I apply to at any one time?

For academic courses applications are made directly to the University and there are generally no restrictions to how many you apply to at any one time. However, bear in mind that you will need to submit separate applications and provide necessary data for each one. Vocational courses such as PGCE have a centralised system.

When are the deadlines for PG courses?

These can vary considerably for each course as some can have deadlines as early as Semester 1 and others will still accept applications later in the second semester. It is strongly recommended that you undertake thorough research as early as possible.

Are there any upfront costs involved?

Some universities will charge you a non-refundable admissions fee which means you will not get this returned if you are unsuccessful with your application or decide not to subsequently accept the offer. It is important to do your research to make sure you have all the up to date information.

How can I tailor my postgraduate application when applying from a different subject area?

Begin with undertaking research about your proposed area of study so that you are able to confidently express your motivation for wanting to explore an alternative subject area. Reflect on your experiences so far, including academic study and extra-curricular activities and identify relevant key skills and attributes you have acquired that demonstrate that you would be successful in this course of study. Remember to mention how this course of study contributes to your future plans.

What references do I need to include?

Each University will specify which references you will need to include. This will usually be academic referees. It is important that you choose referees that know you, and have had contact with you as they will then be able to comment on your academic performance and suitability for the course to which you are applying. It is courteous for you to ask your referee whether they give their consent prior to making your application and to keep them up to date with the status of your applications.