



APPLY

Considering Further Study

Course & University Research

Making an Application

Postgraduate Interviews

Offers & Rejection





Starting Further Study

Enhance your career

If you choose to enhance your career with further study, this booklet will guide you through the various stages of the application process.

In this guide:

- Researching courses and providers
- Making an application
- Postgraduate interviews
- Offers and rejection

Researching Courses and Providers

Is further study for you?

Deciding to move onto further study can allow you to enhance your qualification with specialist skills, increase your knowledge of a subject you are passionate about, expand your network and qualifications. Further study may not be for you if your only motivation is to delay entering the workforce.

Which type of course is right for you?

1

Masters course

You can earn a Masters degree in one of two ways:

- Taught course: these follow a structure much like an undergraduate degree
- Research: You will have a supervisor, but will otherwise work independently to prepare a thesis. Masters by Research degrees can help you progress to a PhD.

2

PhD

This is the highest level of study you can earn. It will usually take three years to complete, and will earn you the title of 'Doctor'. Similar to a Masters by Research, you will work independently on a thesis with the support of a supervisor.

3

Conversion Courses

These courses allow you to change vocation on a 'fast track' basis. These courses are necessary to change into roles that require specialist skills such as IT, Law or Medicine.

4

PGCE/PGDip/PGC

These are specific conversion courses that will help you start a career in teaching. Read more in our teacher training guide:

www.uolcareers.co.uk/help-and-advice/teacher-training

5

Professional Courses

Some careers require specialist qualifications. Many careers that don't require these qualifications will often still look favourably on candidates that have them. Many professional associations that are associated with your industry of interest will offer courses for these qualifications.

Why not try the 'Quiz -Thinking of Postgraduate Study?' available on page 15 to help you decide if postgraduate study is right for you

Researching Courses and Providers

Choosing a provider

The University of Lincoln offers many opportunities to continue your studies. You may even be eligible for an alumni scholarship (read more on the University of Lincoln's main website: www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/studyatlincoln/scholarships/alumnischolarshipforpostgraduatestudy/)

It is important, however, to carry out research. Different providers carry different reputations - many of which vary depending on which course you are hoping to undertake - and some may have different specialties.

1

Online research

Search engines are of course helpful when you wish to look for who provides a course of your interest. Be sure to look into news-specific searches to see what you can find out about others who have completed the course you are interested in at various universities. Prospects and Target Postgrad also have resources to help you investigate higher education providers offering your courses:

www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-courses
targetpostgrad.com

You may also wish to search for professional associations in your field of interest and look into what courses they offer to their members.

2

On-site research

Many education providers - universities especially - will hold open days, some specifically for those seeking postgraduate/further education. This is a good time to meet faculty members and ask specific questions about the course - as well as see if the location is one you will enjoy studying in.

3

International options

There are many programs to help you study overseas. Look at the following places for more information:

www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/studying-working-abroad
<https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/global-opportunities/>

Researching Courses and Providers

Funding your study

There are several options you can consider to fund your study - though availability will depend on the kind of course you wish to undertake, and in many cases on your personal circumstances.

- 1** **Loans**
These are provided in a similar manner to undergraduate loans, however they are only available to some courses. Contact providers to find out if the course you are interested in has loans available.
- 2** **Scholarships and bursaries**
These are usually offered by universities, charities or government bodies. These kinds of funding are usually granted on the basis of merit or special circumstances (eg. regional students, alumni, etc).
- 3** **Grants**
Similar to scholarships and bursaries, grants are awarded to those undertaking research in particular fields. You will need to make a detailed application for these.
- 4** **Sponsorship**
Your employer may fund your study to improve your skills for their business. You can ask them what their options for professional development are.
- 5** **Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)**
This will not cover tuition, instead it will assist with course-related expenses for students who meet government-defined definitions of disability.
- 6** **Part-time study**
If you are unable to self-fund full-time study, consider finding a part-time version of your course that you can complete alongside full-time employment.

You can read more about funding options on Prospects:

www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study

Making an Application

In most cases, you should make your application directly to the further study provider you are hoping to study with. There are some exceptions (such as with teaching and law) where you will need to apply through UCAS, similar to the application for your undergraduate degree - ensure you carefully read all instructions for application guidelines to meet all requirements.

There are often no closing dates to apply for many courses, however places for yearly intakes may fill quickly and you will want to have time to explore your funding options. There are no limits to the amount of applications you can make, but you will also want to take the time to tailor your applications.

Filling out a further study application form

These forms will usually ask you some standard questions about your personal details, as well as information about your undergraduate course. Be sure to emphasise modules you have undertaken which are especially relevant to the study you wish to go into. After filling out these details, you will usually be asked to complete a personal statement that outlines your desires and suitability for the course.

On the following pages we have created a suggested list of considerations for you as well as an example personal statement for a Masters degree, which you can adjust for your needs.

Hoping to study law or teaching?

For teacher training courses you are required to create a Personal Statement as part of the application. Apply through the Government website: www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training

For law apply through CAB (Centralised Applications System) to take a GDL(Graduate Diploma in Law)/LPC (Legal Practice Course) or SQE (Solicitors Qualifying Examination)

Making an Application

Your personal statement

Throughout your statement remain positive, avoiding words with a negative impact, such as 'despite' and 'although'. Always follow any statement requirements given by the course provider, such as word limits and specific points to include. Below is a suggested structure for a Masters degree statement. It is important to write what best suits you and your application needs.

1

Your interest in the course or research

Discuss your academic interests and passions - demonstrate knowledge, self awareness of your career goals and how they will be served by this particular course.

2

Your interest in the provider

Show you have done your research into the reputation of the institution, and know why you are choosing to do the course there instead of elsewhere.

3

Your academic preparation

Show how your undergraduate work and any other experience you have may have prepared you for this course. You may like to mention any independent work you have done as part of your studies and special topics of interest for you - tying in any particular modules from your undergraduate course.

4

Your ideas

This section is relevant to courses that include a dissertation or thesis. Most providers will be interested to hear what you hope to research and write about. These can be specific or general ideas.

5

Your skills

List transferable skills that will help you in study, group work or other activities and tasks that will be required of you to complete the course. Evidence these skills with examples from work, extra-curricular activities or studies.

6

Your goals

What will the course help you achieve? What will you be able to do for the university and its reputation with what you get out of this course?

Your lecturers will have been through this process before and are great sources of feedback for your application

1

I am in the process of completing my final year of BA (Hons) Business and Finance and would like to continue my studies in MSc Marketing here at the University of Lincoln. In the first year I took a core Principles of Marketing module. I was fascinated by how the markets operate and the ways in which people consume information. Over the past two years I have therefore embraced every opportunity to partake in further modules that relate to marketing.

2

The University of Lincoln MSc offers modules concerning finance and accounting, which will allow me to take other principles I have learned in my undergraduate course and apply them to my specific area of interest. I hope to continue into postgraduate study at the University of Lincoln as my experiences with its lecturers has been constructive and positive. Through speaking with them I have grown my network and gained insight into the industry. Additionally, I have received support from The Careers & Employability team who have assisted me in applying for an internship, which has built up my professional experience and solidified my interest in the marketing industry.

3

My undergraduate Business and Finance course has covered the basics of many marketing principles. I have become especially interested in marketing communications and exploring the strengths and weaknesses of different media channels. I am also interested in undertaking the MSc's Group Consultancy Project module. I took the Consultancy Project module in my undergraduate course and through this completed an internship with Dejuner Accounting. This developed my teamwork skills and gave me an insight into marketing for the finance and accounting industry as the company was developing its new global business model. I achieved 85% for this module.

4

For the dissertation core module, I am especially interested in exploring marketing communications within social media. More specifically, how effective marketing messages are when tapping into online community trends. Reviewing case studies such as Lord & Taylor's breach of US Federal Trade Commission guidelines in 2015 and studies such as "An Analysis and Recommendations of the Use of Social Media within the Cooperative Extension System: Opportunities, Risks, and Barriers (Fuess, 2011)" will form a solid basis for this module.

5

My Events Officer role in the university Business and Finance Society has developed my marketing knowledge along with writing, creative problem-solving and presentation skills. Additionally, working in a fast-paced retail outlet has greatly developed my time-management, teamwork and communication skills. This skillset will support me through Masters studies activities and study loads.

6

My ongoing aim is to find a career with a globally minded, large finance/accounting company and work with challenging marketing briefs. I want to find new ways to reach wide audiences and communicate big ideas. I am enthusiastic about this next step and believe that completing the MSc at Lincoln will help me achieve my career goals.

Equality, Diversity, and Job-Seeking

The Equality Act 2010 states that the following nine characteristics are protected within the law: age, disability, gender reassignment/identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex or sexual orientation. This means jobseekers and employees who belong to one or more of the protected characteristics should not be discriminated against.

To find out more information about disclosure and your rights visit-

- TARGET jobs equality and diversity - www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/equality-and-diversity/668665-equality-and-diversity-issues-and-your-graduate-job-hunt
- University of Lincoln Careers and Employability - www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/equality-diversity/

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms

When you apply for a job, you may be asked to complete an equal opportunities form, which is separate to the rest of your application. This is not seen by the recruitment panel and will not have an impact on the rest of your application. Once an appointment is made, the data will be used solely by HR to make appropriate changes to the recruitment process to try to ensure more applications from underrepresented groups are received in the future.

Disclosure and Discrimination in the Application Process

The Equality Act 2010 provides the right to not be directly or indirectly discriminated against. You are not legally required to disclose your protected characteristics to an employer. If you feel you have been discriminated against during the recruitment process the following websites might be of help:

- University of Lincoln Students' Union - www.lincolnsu.com/advice/welfare
- Citizens Advice - www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) - www.acas.org.uk

Careers Support

The Careers & Employability service aims to support individual queries regarding equality and diversity. Whilst this page gives general advice it may not answer your specific concerns. If you have any concerns or questions about the impact your protected characteristics may have on your job applications or employment then please book a careers guidance appointment.

Postgraduate Interviews

Make an impression

Postgraduate interviews are typically less formal than job interviews, however you will still need to ensure you have done your research and have a sound understanding of what is involved in the course you have applied for. Just as in a job interview, you should also treat a postgraduate interview as an opportunity to ask questions and fully assess if the course is really for you or not. Not all courses will require you to have an interview. Take initiative - tour the department and ask questions of staff members over email if there is no interview. Ask interviewers if they want to know things you think they should know. Be enthusiastic and positive.

Preparation checklist

- ☐ **Research**
Have you researched the course and its contents thoroughly? What do you know about the university/provider and its reputation?
- ☐ **Location and Time**
Check the time and location carefully - some campuses may be difficult to navigate. Plan your route in advance, allowing extra time for delays.
- ☐ **Transport**
Unlike with some job interviews, universities are unlikely to reimburse you for travel costs. Ensure you have planned and budgeted transport arrangements.
- ☐ **Appropriate dress**
Dress smartly as you might for a job interview.
- ☐ **Luggage**
If you have travelled overnight, ensure you have a plan regarding your luggage. If you need to have it with you, check with the university if you can store it somewhere.
- ☐ **Body language**
Practice your body language including a firm introductory handshake. Practice sitting without fidgeting if it is an issue for you. Be sure you know how to appear open and confident.

Postgraduate Interviews

Sample questions

It's important that you answer all questions thoroughly and honestly. Ensure you have listened closely to exactly what is asked, and clarify if you are unsure.

1

Why do you want to do this course?

This is a chance to show your enthusiasm and depth of research. Show you are prepared for the level of commitment the course will require of you and how it fits into your long-term goals.

Sample Answer:

I feel like my undergraduate course only scraped the surface of what there is to learn in this subject area. I found myself sailing through much of the workload, and hope to gain a broader understanding of my passion while being challenged.

2

What are your weaknesses?

When faced with questions like this, interviewers are hoping to hear that you are self aware enough to work through issues. To remain positive, identify how you are working through your weaknesses while acknowledging they exist.

Sample Answer:

I have had issues meeting deadlines previously - I have been using different methods such as my phone calendar and spreadsheets to keep on track.

3

What do you intend to do after completing this degree?

Show that you have clear goals that have lead you to taking this course - again, be honest about these goals.

Sample Answer:

I am taking this course with the intent to develop some specialised skills that are essential to a software developer role, however I'm also interested in learning more about where else this degree could take me and want to fully explore the subject matter instead of pigeonholing myself.

4

Do you have any questions for us?

It's always good to make sure you do have a question, but ensure it is one not covered on the provider's website or course information.

Sample Answer:

Can you please tell me more about the internship placement program associated with the course - what sort of industry links does the university have?

Offers and Rejection

Responding to offers

There are two ways you can reply to an offer (whether conditional or unconditional) that will depend on your preference. Before making a decision, it's important to consider the following:

- 1** **Your interest**
How interested and passionate are you about the subject? Will your interest sustain you for the level of commitment you will need for your studies?
- 2** **Your goals**
Is this course essential to your goals? If not, how will it help you?
- 3** **Your academic record**
It's worth noting that postgraduate study will not compensate for poor grades, and may be too large a financial burden to simply extend your time as a student to delay entering the workforce.
- 4** **Your finances and other needs**
Can you afford the course? Will you need to move? How will this affect your personal life?

Accepting an offer

Whilst you can accept multiple course offers, once you have made a final decision inform the provider you wish to study with that you would like to accept their offer.

Declining an offer

If you need to respond to decline an offer, keep your message brief, polite, and straight forward. Simply thank them for their time, and apologise that their offer is unfortunately not one you wish to take up at this time.

Offers and Rejection

How to deal with being rejected

Rejection can be a troubling and hard prospect to deal with, especially if you were passionate about the study you applied for. It is completely valid and normal to feel upset - but also important to learn from it and not let rejection defeat you.

1

Reflect

Take some time to identify exactly what went wrong. If possible, send a polite note to the provider asking for feedback. Ensure you keep this constructive and don't argue about their decision, simply see if they can assist you with future applications.

2

Plan

Using the information you have learned from your reflection and any feedback you have received, create a plan to improve and move onto your next steps. Remember that you can always visit the Careers & Employability centre or contact us to receive assistance in building a plan or figuring out what to do next.

3

Go to your support network

When you are feeling rejected, it's natural to feel like you want to isolate yourself. While difficult, it's a healthier option to work through this feeling and surround yourself with your friends, family or supportive staff members within the University (such as Careers & Employability, or Student Wellbeing). Be open about your troubles, and you will often be surprised by the support you receive.

4

Find what makes you happy

Remind yourself that this is not the end of the world. Taking a moment to be thankful for even small things you enjoy can help lift your mood, and assist in motivating you to move onto more positive thoughts and actions.

5

Do something different

While reassessing and working towards your goals, it is easy to be caught in a routine. Find a new hobby to be passionate about, or think about investigating opportunities in a different industry. A different direction can be refreshing and constructive.

6

Take purposeful breaks

While it is important to get back to work quickly after facing rejection, it is equally important to take care of your mental health. Plan breaks for yourself to relax for small and purposeful amounts of time.

Quiz -Thinking of Postgraduate Study?

Can't decide whether to continue your studies or not?

Complete this short quiz to reveal what advice we have for students in your position.

What is your motivation for pursuing postgraduate study?

- A) A passion for a particular subject
- B) To improve my chances of securing a job
- C) I need more time to decide on my career

What did you enjoy the most about your first degree?


- A) The research/learning element
- B) Assignments and project work
- C) Both learning and assignments

What influenced your decision to go to university after school?

- A) To further my knowledge in an area of interest
- B) To make myself more employable
- C) I wasn't ready to go straight into employment

How did you decide on which course to study?

- A) I chose a course based on the subject I enjoyed at school
- B) I chose one specific to my ideal profession
- C) I chose a course I thought I'd be good at




When selecting a university for your postgraduate study, what is your most important criteria?

- A) A reputation for academic excellence in my chosen field
- B) It should be rated highly among employers
- C) It should be rated highly by students

What kind of postgraduate course are you looking for?

- A) One that will allow me to research my chosen topic with more depth
- B) One that will prepare me with the skills and knowledge required in working life
- C) One that explores a wide variety of topics within my chosen subject

What element of your uni life did you enjoy the most?

- A) The learning aspect and being in an academic environment
 - B) Joining and getting involved in university clubs and societies
 - C) I enjoyed the whole experience
- 

RESULTS

Amount of A tick boxes out of seven

Amount of B tick boxes out of seven

Amount of C tick boxes out of seven

Mostly As

It sounds as though you're really passionate about your subject area. Your desire to learn more and venture further into your chosen subject will allow you to apply yourself and really make the most of a postgraduate course. Do bear in mind that future employers will expect you to demonstrate what skills you have gained that are transferable to the workplace. When choosing a course, ask yourself: "Does this course prepare me with the skills I need for my ideal job?" If you're unsure, we recommend seeing a Careers & Employability Adviser for a career guidance appointment.

Mostly Bs

You appear to be motivated by your career with an end goal on your horizon. Now is a great time to check on the entry requirements for your chosen career - use the A-Z job profiles on www.prospects.ac.uk to look for required qualifications, skills and experience and also check for any required accreditations in your chosen field. Postgraduate study can be a great opportunity to change your career path via a conversion or vocational course if you don't have an undergraduate degree which is directly relevant.

Mostly Cs

There is a good chance you are undecided about your next move; but there's no need to panic. You'll be relieved to know that you are in the same boat as most of your peers, and there is still time to plan ahead. You might be thinking that a postgraduate qualification could give you an advantage over other jobseekers, or perhaps you are just not ready to enter employment. Whatever your reasons, be aware that further study is very hard work; it demands a lot of time and effort, as well as being a significant financial commitment. Think about what your main aims and objectives are for undertaking postgraduate study - you may find a career guidance appointment with a Careers & Employability Adviser useful for exploring these.



Checklist and Action Plan

I am confident in making a well-informed decision about why I am choosing postgraduate study

I've sought advice from people I trust or a Careers & Employability Adviser

I've researched courses of interest

I've researched the funding arrangements for postgraduate study

I have considered my living arrangements

What I need to do next:

If you need more advice or information please speak to one of our Advisers.



Get support from your Careers & Employability Service

What we offer

- **Careers Clinic**
Our Skills Advisers are available to support you with your job search or the recruitment process for any role; part-time, placement, work experience or graduate.
Careers Clinic runs Monday - Friday, 1pm - 4pm.
- **Careers Guidance**
Our Careers & Employability Advisers offer 1:1 appointments to support you in exploring your career options and planning.
- **Career Events**
We have daily events running to provide information and support your development; some are run by our expert Adviser team and others by employers. All events are advertised here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/events
- **Lincoln Award**
Our employability award is designed to support you in developing and learning how to demonstrate your employability skills. At the end of the award you get the chance to put your learning to the test in our Assessment Centre Experience! Each one is partnered with an employer and students find the opportunity to practise and the feedback they receive invaluable. Full details can be seen here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/lincolnaward
- **Vacancy Postings**
CareerLinc is our online portal where all vacancies are advertised; part-time, placement, work experience and graduate roles. All students are already set up on the system so simply use your University log-in to get started! www.careers.lincoln.ac.uk
- **Campus Jobs**
Our student Employment Agency which advertises all jobs for the University on campus from admin to retail, one off roles to ongoing part-time jobs, find out more here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/jobs-employment-options/campus-jobs/
- **Online Resources**
We have our own Careers & Employability online learning pathways on LinkedIn Learning. We also provide many other online careers resources. More information can be seen here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/online-resources-and-learning/

WHAT WE OFFER



The Lincoln Award



Careers Clinic



Careers + Employability Workshops



Careers Guidance



International



Campus Jobs



Graduate Jobs



CareerLinc



Careers Information

The Careers Centre is open
09:00 - 16:30, Monday - Friday

Telephone: 01522 837828
Email: careers@lincoln.ac.uk
www.uolcareers.co.uk