



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?

Further study can help you develop specialist knowledge, gain advanced skills and may advance your career prospects. Before applying, consider why you want to continue your studies and how a postgraduate qualification will support your future plans.

Which type of course is right for you?

1

Master's degree

You can study one of two ways:

- Taught course: lectures, seminars and assessments, similar to an undergraduate degree.
- Research: an independent research project supervised by an academic, often providing a pathway to PhD study.

2

PhD

The highest academic qualification awarded by universities. Typically takes 3-4 years full-time and involves conducting original research and writing a thesis under academic supervision.

3

Conversion Courses

Designed for graduates who want to move into a new profession, such as law, medicine or social work, without studying a second undergraduate degree.

4

PGCE/PGDE

Postgraduate teaching qualifications combining university study with school placements. These can lead to a career in teaching and, where applicable, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

5

Professional Qualifications

Some careers require professional accreditation to practice, while in other fields professional qualifications are not essential but can still be highly valued by employers. Professional bodies often offer qualifications in areas such as accountancy, HR, marketing and project management.

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 a wide range of postgraduate study opportunities, and as a Lincoln graduate you may be eligible for an alumni scholarship. However, it is important to explore a range of providers before making your decision.

When comparing universities, look beyond rankings and reputation. Consider factors such as course content, teaching methods, facilities, research strengths, placement opportunities, costs and location. The best course for you is one that aligns with your interests, learning preferences and career goals.

1

Online Research

Start by researching courses and universities online. Compare module content, assessment methods, entry requirements and opportunities for practical experience or research.

Remember that courses with the same title can vary considerably between institutions, so take time to review course information carefully.

Useful resources include:

[Prospects](#) and [Find a masters](#)

You may also wish to explore professional bodies and industry associations related to your chosen field, as many provide course recommendations, accreditation information and career insights.

2

Consider How You'll Study

Think about which mode of study best suits your circumstances and learning style. Many providers offer:

- Full-time or part-time study
- On-campus, online or hybrid learning
- Taught, research-focused or placement-based courses

Consider how each option fits around your personal commitments, finances and career plans.

3

Open Days and Events

Many universities offer postgraduate open days, campus visits and virtual events. Attending an event can help you decide whether the course and institution are the right fit for you.

These provide an excellent opportunity to:

- Meet academic staff and current students
- Learn more about course content and assessment
- Explore facilities and support services
- Ask questions about careers, placements and research opportunities.

4

Student Support

The level of support available can make a significant difference to your postgraduate experience. Consider what support services are available to postgraduate students, such as:

- Academic skills support
- Careers & Employability services
- Wellbeing and disability support
- Financial guidance
- International student support

5

International Opportunities

Studying abroad can help you develop cultural awareness, expand your professional network and gain a global perspective on your subject.

To explore international study opportunities, [visit the website here](#).

Top Tip: Create a shortlist of providers and compare them based on the factors that matter most to you, such as course content, teaching style, costs, location and career outcomes.

Researching Courses and Providers

Funding your study

There are several ways to fund postgraduate study, although the options available will depend on the type of course you choose and your individual circumstances. It is important to research funding opportunities early, as some schemes have application deadlines well before your course starts.

- 1** **Loans**
Postgraduate loans are available for many master's and doctoral courses and can help cover both tuition fees and living costs. Eligibility and funding arrangements vary depending on the course, so check the latest information on the relevant student finance website.
- 2** **Scholarships and bursaries**
Funding offered by universities, charities, professional bodies and other organisations, often based on academic achievement, subject area or personal circumstances. These do not usually need to be repaid.
- 3** **Studentships and Research Grants**
Primarily for research degrees such as PhDs and some master's by Research courses. These may cover tuition fees, living costs and research expenses. Competition can be high, and applications often require a detailed research proposal.
- 4** **Employer Sponsorship**
Your employer may be willing to fund your studies if they support your professional development or benefit the organisation. Speak to your manager or HR department to find out what support is available.
- 5** **Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)**
Additional funding for eligible students with disabilities, long-term health conditions, mental health conditions or specific learning differences to help with study-related costs.
- 6** **Part-time study and Employment**
Studying part-time while working can help spread tuition fee costs and allow you to continue earning an income throughout your studies

You can read more about funding options on Prospects:

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

Making an Application

For most postgraduate courses, you will apply directly to the university or training provider through their online application system.

Many postgraduate courses accept applications throughout the year, but some courses have specific deadlines, and popular courses can fill up quickly. Applying early can improve your chances of securing a place and give you more time to arrange funding, accommodation and other practical considerations.

Unlike undergraduate applications, there is usually no limit to the number of postgraduate courses you can apply for. However, it is important to tailor each application to demonstrate your interest in the course and suitability for study.

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. If your undergraduate degree is related to the postgraduate course be sure to emphasise modules you have undertaken which are relevant. After filling out these details, you will usually be asked to complete a personal statement that outlines your desires and suitability for the course.

See the following page for a suggested framework and an example of a Masters Personal Statement

Hoping to study law or teaching?

Most teacher training applications in England are made through the Department for Education's Apply for Teacher Training service. As part of the application process, you will normally be required to submit a personal statement and may be invited to interview.

If you wish to qualify as a solicitor in England and Wales, the usual route is now through the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). Many students choose to undertake an SQE preparation course before sitting the assessments

Making an Application

Your personal statement

When writing your personal statement, focus on presenting your experiences, achievements and ambitions in a positive and confident way. Always check and follow the course provider's guidance, including any word limits or specific questions you are asked to address. The structure below is a suggested framework for a Master's application, but you should tailor your statement to reflect your own experiences, interests and goals.

- 1** Your interest in the course or research
Explain what attracted you to the subject and how your interest has developed through your studies, reading, work experience or other activities. Demonstrate how the course aligns with your academic interests and career goals.
- 2** Why this course and institution?
Show that you have researched the course and understand what makes it distinctive. Refer to specific modules, facilities, placements, research strengths or teaching approaches that make it the right fit for you.
- 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 research interests (if applicable)
If the course includes a dissertation or research project, outline any topics you would like to explore and explain why they interest you. Demonstrating engagement with current ideas and debates can help strengthen your application.
- 5** Your skills and experiences
Highlight the skills that will help you succeed on the course, such as research, critical thinking, or project management. Support these with specific examples from work experience, volunteering or extracurricular activities.
- 6** Your future goals
Explain what you hope to achieve after completing the course and how these studies fit into your longer-term academic, professional or personal ambitions.

1

My interest in marketing stems from a desire to understand how organisations influence behaviour, build trust and create meaningful connections with their audiences. While studying BA (Hons) Business and Finance, I discovered that marketing combines analytical thinking, creativity and strategic decision-making, making it the aspect of business I find most engaging. Since completing my first marketing module, I have actively pursued opportunities to develop my knowledge through academic study, industry experience and extracurricular involvement. As I approach the completion of my degree, I am excited by the prospect of furthering my studies through the MSc Marketing at the University of Lincoln and developing the expertise required for a successful career in the sector.

2

The MSc Marketing at Lincoln particularly appeals to me because of its combination of strategic marketing knowledge and practical application. The courses focus on areas such as marketing communications, consultancy and consumer engagement will enable me to build upon the commercial awareness and analytical skills developed during my undergraduate studies. Having studied at Lincoln for the past three years, I have benefited greatly from the expertise and support of academic staff, as well as the opportunities provided by the Careers & Employability team. These experiences have reinforced my desire to continue my postgraduate studies within an institution that has consistently supported my academic and professional growth.

3

My undergraduate degree has provided a strong foundation in business, finance and marketing principles. Through my studies, I have developed interests in marketing communications and the effectiveness of different media channels in influencing consumer behaviour. I am especially excited by the MSc's Group Consultancy Project module, as it aligns closely with my previous experiences. During my undergraduate Consultancy Project module, I completed an internship with Dejuner Accounting, contributing to work related to the organisation's developing global business model. This experience strengthened my teamwork, analytical and problem-solving abilities while providing valuable insight into the role of marketing within the finance and accounting sector. My commitment and contributions were reflected in an overall module mark of 85%.

4

For my postgraduate dissertation, I would be interested in exploring the impact of social media and online communities on marketing effectiveness. In particular, I am interested in how organisations utilise social trends and user-generated content to enhance consumer engagement, while balancing ethical and regulatory considerations. This area of research combines my interests in digital marketing, consumer behaviour and strategic communication, and I am keen to further develop my research skills through investigating a contemporary marketing challenge.

5

Alongside my academic achievements, I have developed a range of transferable skills through extracurricular activities and employment. As Events Officer for the Business and Finance Society, I have gained experience in event promotion, organisation and stakeholder engagement. In addition, my work within a fast-paced retail environment has enhanced my ability to manage competing priorities, work collaboratively and communicate effectively with a wide range of people. These experiences will support my success at postgraduate level.

6

My long-term ambition is to pursue a marketing career within a global organisation, ideally within the finance or professional services sector. I am particularly interested in developing innovative communication strategies that help organisations engage diverse audiences and build meaningful relationships with their stakeholders. I am enthusiastic about this next step and believe that completing the MSc at Lincoln will help me achieve my career goals.

AI Usage in Further Study Applications

The Pros - How AI Can Support Your Approach

- Research employers - use AI to help you do initial research into employers you want to approach
- Tailor your personal statement- use AI to provide key information to help you tailor your speculative letter, for example why you are approaching this employer
- Prepare for a follow-up conversation or interview - If the employer wants to meet you, use AI to help you prepare for a conversation or interview, for example what questions to expect. Use our mock [Interview Review Tool](#) to practice common interview questions and build confidence

The Cons - How AI Can Negatively Impact Your Approach

- Authentic voice - there is a lack authenticity, personality, passion and your own thoughts if AI is used to write your speculative letter for you
- Generic letters - Straight copy and paste from AI means employers will receive generic personal statements, many of which are immediately rejected
- Language issues - AI may generate inappropriate language or terminology for an entry-level/graduate level candidate, for example referring to management-level experience
- Competence gap - skills, experience and knowledge included in a letter written by AI may be assessed at a follow-up conversation or interview with the employer and may highlight a competency gap between what was written and what has been experienced

Top Tips If Using AI in your Further Study Application

- Review, revise and personalise - use your unique voice and your own examples
- Use clear and precise prompts - e.g. use the PART (Persona - Action- Requirements - Task) model to ensure AI is providing you with relevant and accurate information
- Check for accuracy- AI can produce incorrect facts and figures!
- Protect your data - use Copilot for data protection, data is not saved and not used to teach the AI

See our [AI and Job Applications webpage](#) for more detail on the above points to help you decide whether to use AI, and if so how to use it effectively

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](#)
- [University of Lincoln Careers and Employability](#)

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 not to 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](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [ACAS \(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service\)](#)

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

Not all postgraduate courses require an interview, but where they are used, they form an important part of the selection process. Postgraduate interviews are often less formal than job interviews and are designed to help the university assess your motivation, academic interests and suitability for the course. You should be prepared to discuss your application, demonstrate your understanding of the course and explain how it aligns with your future goals.

Before the interview, check whether it will be held in person, online or by telephone, and ensure you understand what to expect and how to access the interview if it is being conducted remotely. Remember, the interview is not just about the university assessing you; it is also your opportunity to ask questions, learn more about the course and determine whether it is the right next step for your academic and career goals.

Preparation checklist



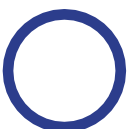
Research

Have you thoroughly researched the course, including its modules, teaching methods and assessment style? Be prepared to explain why you have chosen the course and how it aligns with your interests and future goals.



Time and Location

For face-to-face interviews, confirm the time and location in advance. Plan your journey carefully and allow extra time for potential delays.



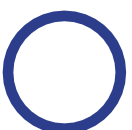
Technology Check

For online interviews, test your internet connection, camera, microphone and any software you may need. Choose a quiet, well-lit location where you are unlikely to be interrupted.



Appropriate Dress

Dress professionally, whether your interview is online or in person. Smart, comfortable clothing can help you make a positive first impression and feel more confident.



Documents and Notes

Have a copy of your application, personal statement and any supporting documents available. For online interviews, keep notes nearby, but avoid reading directly from them.



Body Language and Communication

Practice speaking clearly and confidently. Maintain good eye contact, sit attentively and avoid fidgeting. For online interviews, look into the camera when speaking and ensure your body language remains positive and engaged.

Postgraduate Interviews

Sample questions

During your interview, aim to answer questions clearly including relevant examples. Listen carefully, make sure you understand what is being asked and ask for clarification if needed. The sample questions below will help you prepare for some of the topics commonly discussed in postgraduate interviews.

1

Why do you want to do this course?

Interviewers want to understand your motivation for applying and whether you have researched the course thoroughly.

Sample Answer:

I would like to study this MSc Marketing course because it will allow me to build on the knowledge and skills I developed during my Business and Finance degree. Through studying marketing modules and completing a consultancy project, I became particularly interested in marketing communications and consumer behaviour. The course's combination of academic study and practical projects will help me develop the specialist expertise required for a career in marketing.

2

How has your undergraduate degree prepared you for postgraduate study?

Use specific examples from your degree to show how you've developed the knowledge and skills needed for postgraduate study.

Sample Answer:

My undergraduate degree has given me a strong foundation in business, finance and marketing principles. Through coursework, presentations, group projects and independent research, I have developed analytical, communication and time-management skills. My dissertation and consultancy project also strengthened my ability to work independently and critically evaluate information, which I believe will be essential at Master's level.

3

What are your future career goals?

Be prepared to explain where you would like your studies or career to take you, and how this course will help you get there.

Sample Answer:

My long-term goal is to build a career in strategic marketing within a large international organisation. I am particularly interested in marketing communications and digital marketing. Completing this master's degree will help me develop specialist knowledge, gain practical experience and strengthen my professional profile, enabling me to progress towards leadership roles within the industry.

4

Who are the key researchers in your area? How does your work compare to theirs?

You do not need to be an expert, but you should be familiar with a few influential researchers in your field and be able to explain how their work has shaped your interests or inspired your research ideas.

Sample Answer:

One researcher whose work I find particularly influential is Philip Kotler, whose contributions to modern marketing theory have shaped understanding of customer value and strategic marketing. I am also interested in Jonah Berger's research on consumer behaviour and social influence, particularly how ideas and content spread through social networks.

My own interests build on similar themes, focusing on how brands use social media to engage online communities and influence consumer behaviour. In particular, I am interested in exploring how digital marketing strategies affect consumer trust, engagement and purchasing decisions.

While my research would be more applied and focused in scope, I would draw on the theories and findings of established researchers to investigate contemporary marketing challenges and develop a deeper understanding of effective digital communication strategies.

5

What skills and qualities will help you succeed on this course?

Think about the skills and qualities that are most relevant to postgraduate study, such as research, critical thinking and communication, and be prepared to support your answers with specific examples from your studies, work experience or extracurricular activities.

Sample Answer:

I believe my strongest qualities are organisation, curiosity and resilience. Balancing my studies with part-time work has developed my time-management and prioritisation skills, while group projects have strengthened my communication and teamwork abilities. I also enjoy independent learning and research, which will help me manage the demands of postgraduate study and contribute positively to the course.

6

Do you have any questions for us?

It is always a good idea to prepare at least one question. Try to avoid asking about information that is already available on the provider's website, and instead focus on topics such as teaching, research opportunities, placements or student support.

Sample Answer:

- What opportunities are available for students to gain practical or industry-related experience during the course?
- What qualities do successful students on this course typically demonstrate?
- What extra-curricular opportunities does the course offer?

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 deciding, 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 apologize 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.

Reflect

1

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.

Plan

2

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

Go to your support network

3

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.

Find what makes you happy

4

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.

Do something different

5

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.

Take purposeful breaks

6

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 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 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

- **Job search and vacancies**

Our exclusive job board, CareerLinc is 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 here!](#)

- **CV and recruitment support**

We have a [CV and Cover Letter webpage](#) with our CV Review tool available for you. And Graduate Recruitment Advisers who you can [book an appointment](#) with to review applications, CVs and prep for interviews. You can also sign up to our [workshops available here](#).

- **Placements**

Interested in a placement year or work experience. [Find out more information on the website](#) for placement and work experience opportunities. Our Placement and Internship Advisors are here to help and [you can book an appointment with them here](#).

- **Careers Guidance**

Our Careers & Employability Advisers offer 1:1 appointments to support you exploring your Career options and planning. [Find and book your appointment here](#).

- **Lincoln Award**

Our employability award is designed to support you in developing and learning how to demonstrate your employability skills. It's an opportunity for you to gain skills, be able to communicate them to employers and get recognition on your degree transcript. [Full details can be seen here](#).

- **Global Opportunities**

We have a variety of opportunities for you to study abroad, whether that's for a semester, year or a summer opportunity with one of our partner universities. [Learn more on the website here](#). You can [book an appointment with the team here](#).