



# Careers Service

## Moving on to Postgraduate Study. International Students.

Many students are attracted to a postgraduate (PG) course after their first degree. This leaflet outlines key issues and directs you to more comprehensive and detailed information about PG study in the UK and outside the UK.

If you are thinking of continuing your studies at the University of Sheffield further details of taught and research programmes can be found at: [www.shef.ac.uk/postgraduate](http://www.shef.ac.uk/postgraduate)

You should also talk to the departments concerned.

These key websites have information on postgraduate study:

- The Council for International Education - [www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk)  
A comprehensive site for international students
- PROSPECTS the UK national graduate website - [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) coverage of all aspects of PG study in the UK
- Careers Service - [www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/) - our website - check the Further Study information and our Events programme
- [www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/infotree](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/infotree) for weblinks to regions and countries
- Also - pick up our Briefing Sheet - Further Study - and the AGCAS booklets Careers and Further Study for International Students and Postgraduate Study and Research from the Postgraduate Study section in the Careers Information Centre.

As you are already studying here you may be familiar with some of the issues and sources suggested.

## Why do a Postgraduate Course?

People's reasons vary but try to ensure that you have a good reason to continue. Some students wish to pursue their subject in more detail, others see a PG degree as the way to a better job or find that it is required for their chosen career - law or teaching for example. Others may wish to convert to a new academic or vocational area.

Occasionally students see a PG course as a way to buy time, avoid making career decisions or just to prolong their student years; needless to say these are not good reasons!

## What are the Career Implications?

For most students a PG course has career implications; you should assess the value of further study:

- Check the requirements or preferences expected within your chosen occupational area or by the professional association and potential employers
- If the qualification is a statutory requirement check that the course you are considering is recognised
- Will the course make you more employable? Does it provide the extra skills, knowledge and experience expected in your chosen field of employment?
- If the qualification is optional, what are the alternatives?
- What level of qualification is appropriate? Doctorate? Masters? Diploma? Certificate?
- Is a period of relevant work experience expected before the course?
- Does the course have links with the profession or the industry? Does it include work placements?
- What happens to international graduates from the courses you are interested in? Institutions or departments may be able to offer anecdotal information - formal records of international PG destinations are not widely available

## What Kind of Course are You Looking For?

The PROSPECTS website and the AGCAS booklet 'Postgraduate Study and Research' offer detailed descriptions of the different types of course available but this brief summary may help:

- Taught Programmes - often a Masters course (MA or MSc) over 12 months or a PG Diploma or Certificate over nine months, many can be studied part-time. Courses may be

purely academic or vocational. Certificates and Diplomas usually share the taught elements of the Masters course but do not include a dissertation

- Research Programmes - the PhD or DPhil lasting three to four years are the best known but shorter research based Masters programmes (MSc or MA) are available. Masters of Research (MRes) blend research and taught courses in research methods

## Funding PG Study

Check the fee charged by the institution for the courses you are considering. Fees vary depending on the course, the institution and whether you are a home or international student. Establish your fee status; home or international. Most international students do not meet the three year UK residency requirement for UK public funding to qualify as a home student as residence here as a student is not taken into account.

Detailed guidance on fee status can be found at

[www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/tukwis.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/tukwis.shtml)

The British Council's website has information about funding for international students: [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-funding-your-studies.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-funding-your-studies.htm) as does the UKCOSA site (see above). Explore possible sources of funding from your own country.

The institution you are applying to may be able to suggest sources used by previous international applicants.

Funding is a major issue for most PG students and one you should investigate well in advance of applying for a course. About half of the PG students in the UK self-finance.

As you have already lived in the UK you will know how much you need to budget for living expenses but remember that some parts of the country, London for example, are more expensive than others.

## Extending Your Stay in the UK for Further Study

If you are already studying here, you can apply to extend your stay as a student. You will need to complete an application form.

Applications will not be valid unless they are made on the appropriate application form. You can get more information and copies of the application form from the Student Services Information Desk (SSiD) in the Union Building:

[www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/international](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/international)

The completed form and payment fee must be returned before your current permission to stay ends.

## Postgraduate Study Outside the UK

Opportunities for international study are increasing as more universities tap into the growing international market. There are now thousands of universities around the world offering a bewildering array of short courses, taught Masters and research degrees. Information has become more widely available through the web and although this has made finding out about further study easier, careful planning and preparation are still essential. Planning should begin at least a year, preferably two years ahead. Every country has different regulations about entry and institutions' requirements also differ so allow time to work through the possibilities to establish realistic objectives:

- Explore courses in other countries by using the PROSPECTS website which has detailed information on 50 countries outlining application procedures, eligibility, fees, language and visa requirements
- The Careers Service has appropriate resources in the Study and Employment Abroad and Postgraduate Study sections. Our Briefing Sheet 'Further Study' and the AGCAS booklets 'Careers and Further Study for International Students and Postgraduate Study and Research' may help

This leaflet is only designed to be a starting point for further investigation and reflection. There is much more for you to think about but the sources mentioned will help you develop a fuller understanding of the main areas you need to consider. Advisers and information staff are available if you need to discuss your options or are struggling to find the information you need.

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Open: Semesters - 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday,  
11.00am Tuesdays  
Vacation - times may vary slightly, please check  
[www.shef.ac.uk/careers](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers)