

## Considering Postgraduate Study

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There are many reasons for considering Postgraduate study:

- You can gain an in-depth understanding of your subject
- It is necessary for some occupations, e.g. teaching
- You can gain exemptions from professional qualifications, e.g. marketing
- A conversion course can lead to a change in career direction
- A vocational orientated course can lead more directly to employment

### What is Postgraduate Study?

There are two modes of study: Taught & Research

There are three types of qualification:

- A doctorate (PhD)
- A Master's degree (MSc)
- A Postgraduate certificate or diploma. (PgCert/PgDip)

### Which mode of study is suitable for me?

**Research** students work on a topic for an extended period of either 2 or 3 years under the supervision of an academic member of staff. It is important to be committed to your subject and be prepared to work alone much of the time. Your studies adviser may be able to help you to identify possible projects and funding that might be available.

**Taught** courses consist of modules and are assessed by examination and dissertation/project. This is similar to your degree course but at an advanced level. Many courses are offered part-time or in distance learning mode.

## How do I find out about programmes of study?

- Information on research at the Ulster University: <http://research.ulster.ac.uk>
- Information on postgraduate taught courses:  
<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/course-finder?query=&fTypeD=Postgraduate>
- Information on Queen's University Belfast: [www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk)
- Courses Rol: [www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com)
- Courses UK: [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/search\\_courses.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/search_courses.htm)

## Funding

**Research:** The Research & Impact website: <http://research.ulster.ac.uk> has information on research studentships most of which are advertised between January and March each year. Check the website for closing dates. Awards are also available to International students. In addition there are a number of Research Councils which fund doctoral level study details of which may be found on their websites

**Taught:** It is worth checking with the Course Director to see if funding is available. If applying to Ulster, once your completed taught course application form is processed the course administrators will send you details of whatever funding is available.

The Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) offers a limited number of postgraduate studentships: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study>

Students studying on Health Professions courses may not be liable to pay fees and may also be eligible to apply for an income-assessed bursary and reduced rate non-income assessed loan. Contact Student Finance NI: [www.studentfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk)

The Department of Health (DOH) provides an Incentive scheme for Northern Ireland domiciled students to study approved degree courses in social work. For details see <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/careers-social-care>.

Students who are resident in the Republic of Ireland may receive funding for full-time postgraduate courses of at least one year's duration. See: <https://gradireland.com/further-study/advice-and-funding/funding>

New postgraduate loans for courses beginning in the 2018-19 academic year are now available to students domiciled in Northern Ireland. See: <https://www.findamasters.com/funding/guides/postgraduate-loans-northern-ireland.aspx>

## **Useful Websites**

Research Councils UK: [www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC): [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) [www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk)

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC): [www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC): [www.epsrc.ac.uk](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk)

Medical Research Council (MRC): [www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC): [www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)

## **Other Organisations and Funding Bodies**

British Federation of Women Graduates: [www.bfwg.org.uk](http://www.bfwg.org.uk)

Department for the Economy: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/>

Postgraduate study in the Republic of Ireland: [www.postgrad.ie](http://www.postgrad.ie)

Postgraduate Studentships: <http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk/>

Postgraduate UK Study & Funding Guide: [www.hotcourses.com](http://www.hotcourses.com)

Prospects Postgraduate Funding Guide: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk/funding>

Student Finance, Northern Ireland: [www.studentfinancenir.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk)

Ulster Student Support: <http://uusu.org/advice/categories/finance>

A comprehensive guide to Global postgraduate funding opportunities can be referenced in the University Library on Quick Reference

*The Grants Register* (2015) Palgrave & McMillan ISBN 9781137367341

Contains funding Lists of charities / foundations / trusts / associations & professional bodies that provide postgraduate funding

## **Research**

**Degree:** DPhil/PhD.

**Length of Study:** 3 years FT / Varies PT

**Subject:** In depth study of a particular subject usually involving original research or material. You are supervised by a member of staff.

**How presented:** Thesis.

**Funding:** Department for the Economy (DfE) Research Studentships; Vice-Chancellor's Research Scholarship (VCRS); Research Councils; CAST Awards; Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) Studentships; Irish Research Councils (RcI); North/South Scholarships (First year only); External bodies/charities; Self-funded.

**Degree:** MPhil.

**Length of Study:** 2 years FT / Varies PT

**Subject:** As above. Many students progress to a DPhil/PhD from this degree.

**How presented:** Thesis.

**Funding:** As above. Funding can sometimes be extended for an extra year to progress to a DPhil/PhD.

**Degree:** MSc/MA.

**Length of Study:** 2 years FT / Varies PT

**Subject:** In some universities these can be research programmes.

**How presented:** Thesis. May have some taught modules which are examined.

**Funding:** As above.

### **Taught Courses**

**Course:** MSc/MA/MEng, Master of Science/Arts/Engineering

**Length of Study:** 1 or 2 years FT / Varies PT

**Subject:** Academic eg Irish History and Politics, Vocational eg Accountancy, Conversion eg Computing.

**How examined:** Taught modules by essays, reports, projects etc some exams, plus thesis of approx 10,000 words.

**Funding:** DAERA; Higher Education Grants Scheme (HEG) Rol; Vocational Education Committee (VEC) Rol; Research Councils; North South Scholarships; majority of students self-funded.

**Course:** Masters of Business Administration (MBA)

**Length of Study:** 1 or 2 years FT/Varies PT

**Subject:** Business/Management. Intended to be taken after some work experience.

**How examined:** As above.

**Funding:** Employer / Self-funded course: PG Diploma.

**Subject:** Academic eg English Language and Linguistics. "Add-on" or conversion courses leading to a vocational or professional qualification eg Biomedical Science/Social work.

**How examined:** Taught modules by essays, reports, projects, exams.

**Funding:** Higher Education Grants Scheme (HEG) Rol; Vocational Education Committee (VEC) Rol; DHSSPS/ELB – Social Work; Majority of students self-funded.

**Course:** PG Certificate.

**Length of Study:** 1 year FT / Usually 2 years PT

**Subject:** As above. Sometimes necessary to enable a student to gain a foundation level of knowledge if converting from a non-relevant degree.

**How examined:** As above.

For information on Teacher Training Postgraduate study:

UK <http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training>

NI <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/teaching-staff/teacher-qualifications-and-registration>

ROI <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/teacher-education/initial-teacher-education-ite.191.html>

For further advice and guidance contact the Employability and Careers Hubs located on each campus.

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