

## **Choosing a Postgraduate Course**

---

### **What is Postgraduate Study?**

Postgraduate study is usually taken after completing your Honours Bachelor Degree and is offered as a Taught course or on a Research basis.

**Taught Postgraduate Courses** follow a similar structure to an undergraduate degree and are usually delivered over one year full-time or 2 years part-time. Taught postgraduate courses can be a continuation of your area of study or a conversion into a new area – conversion courses are increasing in popularity and availability.

A **Research Postgraduate Course** is where you will work independently, under the guidance of a supervisor. Typically a research course lasts longer than one year. **Your choice of supervisor is crucial.** It is important to choose someone who not only has the necessary expertise in the subject but who will be committed to supporting your research and who you feel you will get on well with.

Common Postgraduate titles include:

HDip	Higher Diploma
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
MA	Master of Arts (used for a broad range of Humanities subjects)
MSc	Master of Science
MEng	Master of Engineering
MBA	Master of Business Administration
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy

See [www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com) for a list of many taught postgraduate courses.

### **Why choose Postgraduate study?**

- To further your knowledge in a given area and enhance and improve your academic skills.
- As a career move – conversion courses are relevant here if you wish to change your career direction.
- To enhance your chances of securing better employment (don't lose sight of how important work experience is in addition to further study. A good combination of academia and employment is the best balance).
- To carry on being a student! Don't use postgraduate studies to avoid going into the real world looking for work. Postgraduate courses take up a lot of time, dedication and money! Always speak to the relevant department in which you wish to pursue your postgraduate studies.

**Please note:** Every effort is made to ensure details are correct at time of going to print. Please check all details at source before making decisions/applications

### **What grades do I need?**

A good 2:1 (Merit 1) is usually expected, however 2:2 (Merit 2) graduates have previously been accepted onto postgraduate courses. The higher your results, the better your chances are of securing a place.

### **Where will I study?**

You have unlimited options as to where you decide to study. There are many advantages to staying in your own Institute;

- You know the teaching staff.
- You know the college / you know the area.
- You have friends there.
- You have accommodation.
- You may have the opportunity to do tutorials or teach undergraduates where your work is known to academic staff (in the case of a Research Masters).

Alternatively, you could aim for the challenge of a completely new environment or you may be limited as your course of interest may only be on offer in specific institutes and universities. To check out opportunities for studying abroad please see;

<http://postgradireland.com//studying-overseas/default.aspx>

### **Applications**

For postgraduate applications please see; [www.pac.ie](http://www.pac.ie) or [www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com)

For some courses you may have to apply directly to the institute or university.

### **Application Forms & Personal Statements**

Demonstrate that you have put time and effort into your application. Aim to include the points below in your application form. Support your application with examples.

#### **Subject and College**

- Be clear about the reasons for your choice of postgraduate course.
- What is it about the course that appeals to you?
- Why are you choosing this institute or university, and what do you know about it?
- Be specific about the structure of the course, the modules, the way it is taught or the supervisor you wish to work with.

#### **Skills and Strengths (both academic and personal)**

- What skills can you offer? (Academic skills, Research skills, IT Skills, Communication Skills, Presentation Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Time Management Skills, etc...)
- Mention any relevant work experience especially if it relates to the postgraduate course.
- What are your strengths? (Play off your skills when answering this question.)

#### **Career Aims**

- What is your career aim? You may not have a full, clear idea of this now but you should have some idea of what you want to do after you complete your postgraduate studies.
- Be positive, enthusiastic, clear and concise. Use good English and read/re-read to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors. Stay within the prescribed word limit (usually between 250-500 words).

**Please note:** Every effort is made to ensure details are correct at time of going to print. Please check all details at source before making decisions/applications

For tips on **Personal Statements** see: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/postgradmenu.htm>

For tips on **Interviews** see: [http://postgradireland.com/choosing/articleview-3a\\_17.aspx](http://postgradireland.com/choosing/articleview-3a_17.aspx)  
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/postgradmenu.htm>

For a **Checklist** before applying see: [http://postgradireland.com/choosing/articleview-3a\\_14.aspx](http://postgradireland.com/choosing/articleview-3a_14.aspx)

**Please note:** Every effort is made to ensure details are correct at time of going to print. Please check all details at source before making decisions/applications