

University of Salford

Postgraduate Study Guide

Applying, Courses and Finance



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Types of Postgraduate Study

Postgraduate study can be defined in one of two ways; Postgraduate Taught (PGT), and Postgraduate Research (PGR).

Taught courses are generally also called master's degrees; however, they encompass a wide range of qualifications of which masters are only one, but admittedly the largest, part.

Taught courses include:

- **PG Certificate** – usually the shortest qualification, requiring around three – four months of study, though it can take longer. A PG Cert is usually comprised of two 30-credit modules.
- **PG Diploma** – normally equal to two full time semesters, with students usually completing four 30-credit modules or equivalent.
A student whose performance on a Diploma course is of a sufficiently high standard may transfer to an appropriate master's programme and the time spent on the Diploma will be counted towards the master's award.
- **MA, MSc, MRes, MLitt, MEng, MPhys, etc** – the most common PGT qualification, the majority of full time master's courses are taught over one calendar year.
They typically feature two semesters of teaching, comprised of four 30-credit modules and an end of year dissertation or project, which is equivalent to a 60-credit double-module.
- **MBA** – A master's in Business Administration, this is a degree programme designed specifically for those in a business management capacity with at least two years of work experience looking to enhance their skills in an academic environment to later return to work and progress their career.

Many of the courses and qualifications can be taken via **Distance Learning**, allowing you to learn online and without having to relocate to Salford or your chosen institution. Not all courses are available through Distance Learning, but the list is constantly being expanded and it is worth checking to see if your course qualifies should you wish to study away from your chosen university. A full list of the University of Salford master's courses that can be studied via distance learning can be [found here](#).

Research courses are more commonly understood to be PhD or Professional Doctorate degrees, but also include the MPhil.

- **MPhil** – Not widely advertised these days, the MPhil is a less advanced qualification than the PhD and is completed over two years of study. The dissertation is normally shorter than at PhD, and the course is often inclusive in PhD study.
- **PhD** – The most common research degree and the highest level of study achievable, the PhD student completes an intense period of research in a chosen field, supported by a PhD supervisor. The degree is normally taken by those looking to forge a career in academia. PhD's usually take 3 – 4 years to complete if studying full time, and between 6 – 8 years for part time students.

- **Professional Doctorate (Prof Doc)** – the Prof Doc qualification has been around since the early 1990s, and differs from the PhD by being more attuned to pursuing professional rather than academic careers, lasting between 2-5 years of full-time study.



Should you do a Postgraduate Course?

Whether a PGT or PGR degree, any postgraduate undertaking is a lengthy, intense period of highly specialised study that can be very taxing on an individual. Before you apply for any course, it's worth considering your reasons for doing one in the first place.

You may love your subject or think PG study will give you the competitive edge, but will it help you get closer to your career goals?

- **Is the course required for your profession?**
If you're interested in academia or research then a PhD is likely to be required. Perhaps you're looking to develop yourself outside of the academic sphere and a PG degree will give you the skills you otherwise wouldn't have, through a programme like an MBA or any professionally accredited masters.
- **Does it give you specialist knowledge – or the opportunity to pursue specialist knowledge – that could not be gained at UG or PGT?**
You may love study for the pursuit of knowledge alone, and if so does your chosen PG degree give you the chance to explore areas that you only briefly touched on at a previous level, but nevertheless found fascinating, or perhaps never had the chance to study at all. Maybe there's a particular area of your subject that you feel is underexplored or underrepresented, or a facet of it that you feel is deserving of more attention in an attempt to widen the accepted canon of your field.
- **Does it come with a professional accreditation in your chosen subject area?**
Many people choose to study for a PG degree because it gives them something professional alongside their academic achievement. Certain courses come with certain accreditations that may be necessary for particular professions. However, it's also worth noting that some courses do not contain the necessary qualifications to practice certain professions; For example, Salford's Midwifery MSc. does not enable you to become a midwife, it is designed to increase the knowledge of current Midwives.
- **Can you afford the course? Can you look at part-time options?**
Fees, funding, and finance are arguably the biggest barriers to PG study – can you afford to study for the course as well as support your living arrangements? It's worth looking at part-time study options if you feel the cost may be too much to bear initially, allowing you to pick up a part time job or explore the possibility of reducing your current work hours. Naturally, this will mean that the course length will be extended, from 1 to 2 years in the majority of PGT cases, and 3 to 6 years for PGR, but is this in fact a more attractive option itself, allowing you to split the length of your study to help alleviate deadline pressures around your life. The introduction of the postgraduate loan schemes has alleviated this worry for a range of students.
- **Could you study overseas?**
Does your chosen degree scheme give you the opportunity to study overseas if needed? Your PhD might benefit from some important research being done in Europe, Asia, or America, and is there the option to get out to these locations as part of your research? If so, is there full or partial funding available to help you? There is a fantastic community of postgraduate students all around the globe, helping each other develop their research at conferences, in publications, and in the research they're doing themselves. Do you have the option to get out there and meet and talk to people about their experiences?

These are just five of the important questions you should be asking yourself when thinking about PG study, and of course you may have more of your own too. It's ok not to know the answer to these questions and more, but over time you should start to formulate an idea of where you want to be, and how you want to get there, and answering these questions can certainly help.

If you would like a little more guidance about your PG options, or just want to talk it through with someone at the university, get in touch with the Recruitment Support Team via enquiries@salford.ac.uk or on 0161 295 4545. If you know that you're interest in postgraduate study, attending a dedicated Open Day could give you a broader idea of what a postgraduate qualification could do for you. All the details on the University of Salford's Open Days can be found [here](#).

Benefits of a Postgraduate Course

Undertaking a postgraduate course is a big commitment, but it does offer you a range of benefits, both in the short term and throughout your professional career. Not only does studying your chosen field in more depth allow you to develop a wide range of skills and a fuller knowledge of your subject, it also increases your future potential.

The newly released Graduate Labour Market Statistics report confirms again that professionals looking to increase their opportunities really benefit from the skills and contacts a postgraduate education can offer. The 2018 survey highlighted the following key points:

Working Age (16 – 64 year olds) Employment Statistics

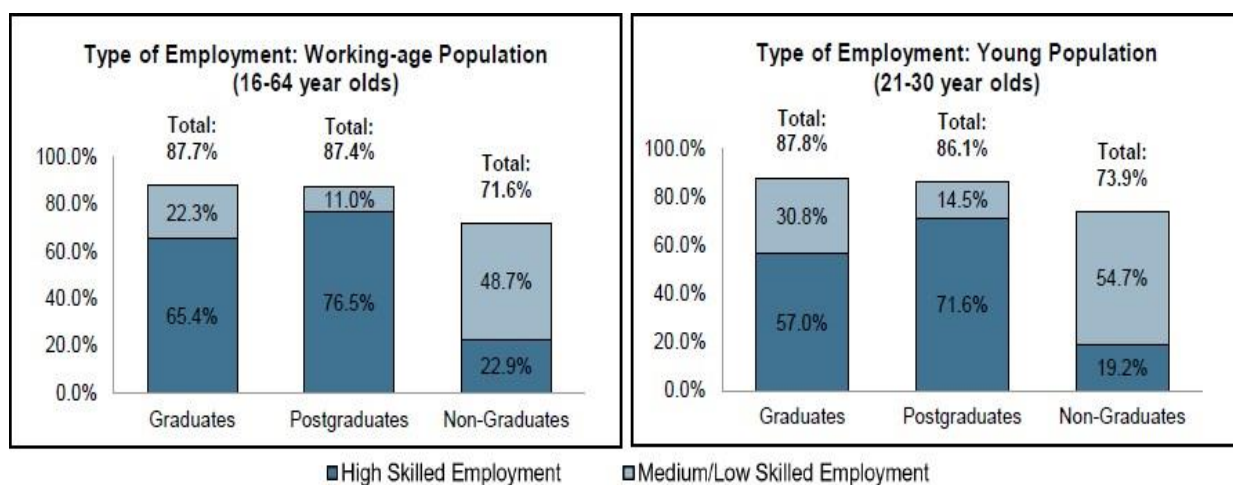
- Higher Level of employment
 - **76.5%** of working age PG students in high skilled jobs, compared with 65.4% for graduates and 22.9% for non-graduates
- Higher pay
 - Working age PG Students earn on average **£6,000 p/a more than graduates** with an average salary of **£40,000 p/a**.

These benefits are not just in place to help you in the later part of your career, they can be seen right away.

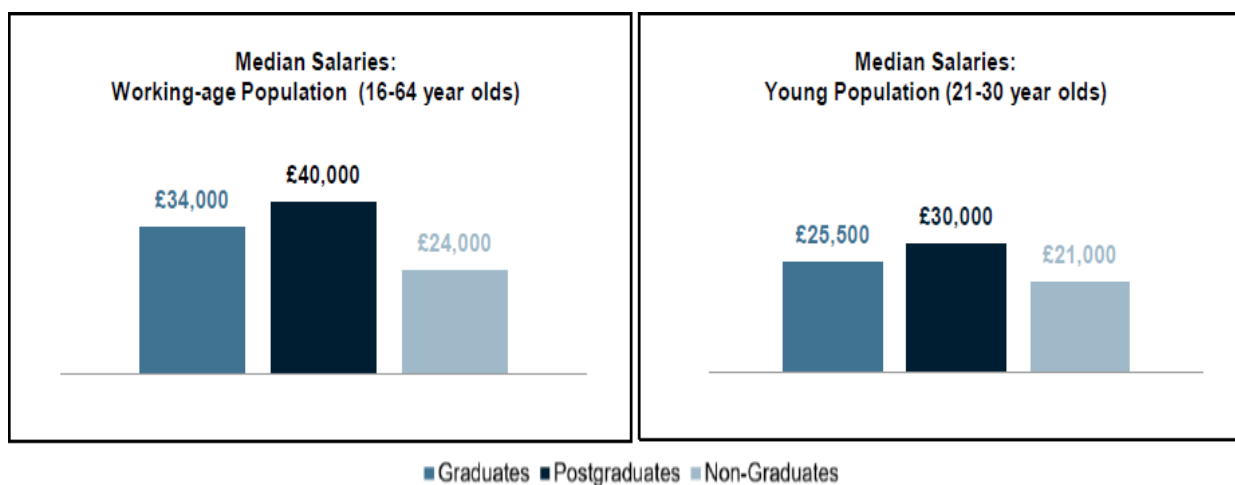
Young Population (21-30 year olds) Employment Statistics

- Higher Level of employment
 - **71.6%** of young population PG students are in high skilled jobs, compared with 57.0% for graduates and 19.2% for non-graduates
- Higher pay
 - Young population PG Students earn on average **£4,500 p/a more than graduates** with an average salary of **£30,000 p/a**.

Employment percentages and level by age and qualifications



Salary averages by age and qualifications



At Salford we want to ensure that all students, regardless of the level they study, feel like they are part of the university. Whilst the way you study your course means you may not be on campus as much as when you were an undergraduate student, you will still be a part of a growing postgraduate community of over 3,500 students. As a postgraduate student, you will be able to access all the [support](#) and [facilities](#) you need to ensure you get the best degree possible.

Library Access

As a postgraduate student, you will need to spend a good amount of time researching, and access to a range of university libraries can really benefit you. The University of Salford's [Library](#) is a member of the [SCONUL scheme](#), a library sharing programme granting a student that studies at a member university the opportunity to access a university library closer to them. With over 130 universities signed up, it offers students studying around the country the chance to access the facilities they need.

Change Your Path

If you are looking to diversify your skills, increase your employability or start a new career then a postgraduate qualification is a fantastic place to start. Most universities will have opportunities for students holding a good honours undergraduate qualification, regardless of the subject you previously studied. At the University of Salford, we have almost 50 postgraduate courses available for students holding a good honours degree, which can include a range of academic opportunities, placements and professional accreditations. A full list can be [found here](#).

Choosing Your Course

The quality, cost, and teaching style of each course will vary across institutions. Some universities may have specialisms in areas that others do not, while some courses may only be available at particular establishments.

University websites are almost certainly going to be your first port of call, and you can often find a wealth of information on them about any courses you may be interested in. Often the names of some of the academics who teach or supervise those degrees will be included here, and it's perfectly ok to email them and strike up a conversation about the course in a bit more detail.

As well as the university websites, there are many third-party websites that can also help with narrowing down your choice. Those listed below can be excellent resources when embarking on your search:

- [FindAMasters](#)
- [FindAPhD](#)
- [Universities Worldwide](#)
- [TARGETPostgrad](#)
- [Prospects](#)

For both PGT and PGR it's important to see if the tutors and supervisors are available for your chosen year of entry. Many universities will publish a list of all the PGT courses and modules they offer, but due to staff research and sabbaticals they may not run all the time. Equally, whilst some university professors may be ideally situated to help supervise your PhD, ensure that they are not on research leave for your year of entry.

One of the best resources for evaluating a course is to speak to current students on that course. Students are often available at [PG Open Days](#) to speak to people about their own experiences on the course. Additionally, feel free to email the tutors on the course to speak to them in more detail about specific modules, or to find out more about their key areas of research. Portals such as Salford's [SEEK](#) can also provide some illuminating information on this.

Consider who else may be teaching on the course; is it also taught by industry professionals? Many of Salford's PG degrees come with the opportunity to undertake a placement to gain further practical skills in relation to your academic ones, allowing you to gain academic knowledge from your tutors and professional expertise from those already working in the field. This can be invaluable when it comes to employment but will also help you decide if you prefer a more theoretical or practical approach to your subject.

When thinking about professional qualifications gained as a part of your degree it's also worth bearing in mind where that qualification allows you to practice if you're thinking about moving overseas. Professional bodies themselves can often provide this information, so it's worth exploring if you know your course comes with accreditation and you want to take it overseas upon graduating.

What are the employment rates like upon completing the course? This may be more prevalent for those not looking at PGR degrees, but websites like [Prospects](#) can give a good indication on what graduates do after their postgraduate study.

Fees, Funding, and Finance

Cost is often the biggest barrier to PG study, but now there are a wealth of funding options available that can help alleviate the financial burden. Whilst this section won't deal with all options exhaustively, it will highlight some of the main funding avenues available and provide pointers on where to get the best funding information.

Fees

Home/EU Students

The cost of a postgraduate degree can vary across institutions, and from degree to degree. Fees at Salford currently range from £6,252 - £10,590 for postgraduate taught courses, with the MBA rising to £17,550 (2019/20 entry). Those undertaking their degree part-time would pay between £1,230 - £2,385 per 30 credits or module. Full details of specific course fees can be found on the individual degree webpage through [Coursefinder](#).

Postgraduate Research fees display a greater range based on a number of different factors. The varying costs for entry into the different research schemes are available on our [Research Fees page](#).

Thankfully, there are options to help alleviate the cost of your degree:

University of Salford Loyalty Discount

The Salford Loyalty Discount entitles students who have previously completed a full undergraduate degree at Salford to a 20% reduction on course fees at Master's level (PG Cert and PG Dip qualifications are not eligible for this reduction). Students who are applying for Doctoral study at Salford are also eligible for a 20% reduction in their fees if they have completed either a full UG or Master's degree at the University. For further details or to check your availability please contact enquiries@salford.ac.uk.

External Funding Resources

[Postgraduate Funding](#)
[Research Councils UK](#)
[Postgraduate Studentships](#)
[FindAMasters](#)
[FindA PhD](#)

There are many bodies that provide external funding, and many websites that can help you find it. These are just a handful of those out there so be sure to dig around.

For more information...

Check out our website where you can find even more pointers to help you fund your degree.

[Taught Courses](#)
[Research Courses](#)

These aren't the only options available to you, and you may wish to explore other funding avenues to help with your finances. Most PhD students will be expected to teach as part of their research, and this will come with its own remuneration. Equally, you may wish to pick up a part-time job, but it's important to remain realistic about how much you can do, especially if you choose to do your research full-time.

For those considering a PhD in a science or business field, many employers will look to sponsor research into specific areas, and it's worth investigating if your research may be eligible for employer funded study.

Postgraduate Taught Loans

These Postgraduate Loans are now available to apply for via [Student Finance England](#)

First time master's students can apply for a Postgraduate Loan of £11,222 for courses starting on or after 01 August 2020.

The loan is:

- A contribution towards the costs of study (fees, maintenance and other costs)
- Non-means tested
- Paid directly to the student

Eligibility

- The loan will be available for eligible postgraduate taught or research for full-time, part-time, and distance learning master's courses.
- Shorter postgraduate courses and postgraduate research courses beyond master's level currently do not qualify for the loan.
- These loans are only available for English and EU/EEA/Swiss students or students' resident (for non-educational purposes) in England for a minimum of 3 years prior to the start of their master's.
- Individual loan schemes are in place for [Welsh](#), [Scottish](#), and [Northern Irish](#) students.
- Students under the age of 60 will be eligible.
- Full details of the student loans, including repayment details can be found [here](#).

To apply for your loan please use the link in the box above or [click here](#).

Postgraduate Research Loans

Doctoral Loans

A postgraduate Doctoral loan is available for UK students. Students can apply for a loan of up to £26,445 for courses starting on or after 01 August 2020.

The Doctoral loan can be weighted over 3 - 8 years. The loan can be put towards overall course costs, including tuition fees, accommodation and living expenses. Both students studying on campus and via distance learning (providing they live in the UK) will be eligible for the loan.

[More Information](#)

Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria for the doctoral loan is governed by three main areas:

- Your course
- Your age – you must be under 59 on the first day of your first academic year of your course
- Your nationality or residency status

PLEASE NOTE: you won't be eligible to receive a doctoral loan if you have received or will receive a scholarship, grant, social work or NHS bursary or already have a doctoral degree. More details can be [found here](#).

Your course must:

- be a full, standalone doctoral course (not a top-up course)
- have started on or after 1 August 2018
- last between 3 to 8 academic years

It can be:

- full-time or part-time
- taught or research-based, or a combination of both

Your nationality or Residency Status

You can get the Postgraduate Doctoral Loan if all of the following apply:

- you're a UK or EU national, or have 'settled status', so there are no restrictions on how long you can stay
- you normally live in England, and didn't move there just to study
- you'll have lived in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for 3 years before starting your course

You may also be eligible if you're an [EU national](#) and all the following apply:

- you're living in England on the first day of the first year of your course
- you've normally lived in the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the past 3 years (this is also known as being 'ordinarily resident')
- you'll be studying at a university in England

You could also be eligible if you're:

- the child of a Swiss national
- the child of a Turkish worker
- a refugee or a relative of one
- an EEA or Swiss migrant worker, or a relative of one
- under humanitarian protection or a relative of someone who has been granted it
- 18 or over and have lived in the UK for at least 20 years or at least half your life

Full details on the loan and eligibility can be found on the government [Postgraduate Loan overview page](#).

International Students

Prices differ for international students compared to their Home/EU counterparts, with full-time study costing between £12,900 - £18,975 (the MBA remains the same at £17,550). Here you'll find some information about what funding is available to you, but there are a host of other options out there and remember that your own country may also offer scholarships and bursaries of their own.

University of Salford Loyalty Discount

The Salford Loyalty Discount is currently under review. In previous years this has taken the form of a 20% fee reduction for existing or previous Salford students who choose to study their PGT degree at Salford. A similar, revised scheme is expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

Salford International Excellence Award

The Salford International Excellence Award aims to support talented, inspiring and creative international students who are aiming to be future leaders in their subjects. The scholarship begins at £1000 and rise to £5000 per successful student in fee reductions.

[Application Form](#)

For more information...

Check out our website where you can find even more pointers to help you fund your degree.

[Taught Courses](#)

[Research Courses](#)

As for Home/EU students, the cost for research degrees can vary greatly depending on your chosen mode of study. Current lists of fees for each research course permutation can be found on our [research fees page](#).

Making Your Application

Unlike undergraduate study where you would apply to a limited number of institutions through UCAS, postgraduate applications are made directly to the university, almost exclusively through your chosen institution's website. You can apply for as many courses across as many universities as you like, but your choices will probably be quite similar at course level, regardless of institution.

As part of your application you need the following documents:

- Two references, at least one of which is academic. It may be that one of the tutors you use for a reference may also be teaching on your course, or you may ask tutors who you have only been taught by at undergraduate level. Work references are also fine should you be returning to study after a period of employment.
- Your CV and covering letter, including your personal statement highlighting why you wish to study your course and the skills and experience you have that would make you a good student
- Transcripts or certificates demonstrating that you meet or are predicted to meet the entry requirements for your course.
- Evidence, if English is not your first language, that your command of English meets the standards required for postgraduate study (an IELTS score of 6.5, or the equivalent, is the norm)
- A copy of your passport, if you are coming to us from outside the EU and will require a student visa.
- A few select courses require further information or paperwork, such as a written synopsis, an Agency Sponsorship Form or an advanced DBS clearance.
- If you are applying for a Postgraduate Research course, you will also need your research proposal

For most universities there are no closing dates for applications, and you can apply all year round. For Salford, we have multiple entry dates that vary based on your specific course, but in general we advise to leave it no later than 6 weeks before the start date of your course.

If you would like further information on making your application, please contact enquiries@salford.ac.uk

Alternative Entry Schemes - Your Experience Counts

The majority of universities understand that experience can be as important as a qualification when it comes to studying at a postgraduate level. We know that someone with significant relevant work experience will be as well equipped to study the course as someone who has a degree in the subject area. Universities can use an Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) process to see if they are able to make you an offer for a course where you may not have the stated entry requirements.

At the University of Salford, we use two form of APL, the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and the Accreditation of Prior Learning Experience (APEL). There are no fixed rules for either scheme, and we will use the best one for each student, the admissions team will assess each student in a case by case basis. If you have any questions about APL, you can contact us on **0161 295 4545** or by email at enquiries@salford.ac.uk.

Writing a Research Proposal

The research proposal is a crucial part of your PhD or research application. You should discuss your proposal with the **Postgraduate Research Admissions Contact** of the School to which you are applying, to make sure you understand what is expected in your subject area.

When submitting an application, make sure that the specialist area you wish to study is covered by a member of staff at the University:

- Check individual staff entries on the [Research Centre sites](#) that relate to your area
- Explore [staff profiles](#) and check current research interests
- Take note of the relevant Research Administrator as you will need their details when completing your online application

There is no upper or lower limit on how long your proposal should be, but traditionally 1000-2000 words should be sufficient. It should not be too long or too short and should provide an accurate overview of your thesis. Make it clear, concise, and coherent, and, most importantly, love what you do, as this is a project you will be undertaking for at least three years, and at times can prove to be a very independent and isolating experience.

- A clear working title for your research project.
- A clear statement about what you want to work on and why it is important, interesting, relevant, and realistic.
- Some background knowledge and context of the area in which you wish to work, including key literature, key people, key research findings.
- Consideration of the methods/approach you might use.
- Indication of the strategy and timetable for your research project and any research challenges you may face.
- A list of the key references which support your research proposal.

Example Titles

The titles below indicate just how diverse a range of subjects can be explored at postgraduate level, research in particular, and also the niche and hyper-specific nature that you can take your study to. All titles listed here are real research projects that have been completed by Salford Students within the last five years.

- The Importance of Culture on Competitive Advantage of Nations
- Destination Branding: An Analytical Study Applied on Libya as a Tourism Destination
- The Power Struggles at Play During the Photographic Social Exchange
- Implementing Green Business Models in the UK Construction Industry: Opportunities and Challenges
- A Novel Technique for Measuring and Sensing Rain
- The use of Molecular Tools for Pan-Trypanosoma Analysis and Epigenetics of the Host
- Analysis of the Gut Microbiome of the Common Black Slug: In Search of Novel Lignocellulose Degrading Enzymes
- The Effects of Heel Height, Shoe Volume, and Upper Stiffness on Shoe Comfort and Plantar Pressure
- Kinematics and Kinetics of Maximal Velocity Sprinting and Specificity of Training in Elite Athletes

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