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Thinking of  
Postgraduate Study?

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# Why do postgraduate study?

- ✓ Develop your subject knowledge/ specialise
- ✓ Personal development and improvement
- ✓ Passion for subject
- ✓ Improve career prospects/necessary for a certain career
- ✓ Make original contribution to knowledge in your field
- ✓ become an expert in your chosen area
- ✗ Fear of change
- ✗ Peer pressure
- ✗ Fulfilling others' ambitions
- ✗ Escaping a job you're not enjoying
- ✗ Beating the recession
- ✗ Keeping your visa

# What's in it for me...??

- **11% of 26-60 year-olds in the workforce now holds a postgraduate qualification, up from 4% in 1996**
- **Masters graduates earn on average £5,500 more a year (over £200,000 more in a life time)**
  - **Source: *The Postgraduate Premium*, Sutton Trust research, 2013**
- **'We value the skills that a student develops while doing a postgraduate degree. Studying any subject in more detail enables students to work on key strengths and shows the work ethic and dedication which they will need to have on our graduate programme'**
  - **Naomi Brown, Graduate Recruitment Officer, Ernst & Young**
- **'The advanced knowledge and capability of postgraduates are highly prized by businesses and the public sector. The skills of postgraduates, especially researchers, are critical for tackling major business challenges and driving innovation and growth'**
  - **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills**

# Types of postgraduate degree (1): Taught Masters

- Usually MA, MSc, MEd, MBA
- Usually one year full-time (often two years part-time)
- Structured similarly to undergraduate studies; mainly based around taught modules
- Often a dissertation or research project over summer
- Help develop your subject knowledge and identify your specialist areas

# Taught Masters ‘conversion’ courses

- Some taught Masters degrees require no previous qualification in that subject
- Can be used as a ‘conversion’ to change career path
- Conversion from many disciplines (e.g. MSc Computer Science; MSc Marketing; Law for Graduates LLB)
- Conversion from a ‘relevant discipline’ (e.g. Physiotherapy (pre-registration) MSc, Graduate Entry Medicine)

# Types of postgraduate degree (2): Combined (taught and research) Courses

- Usually MRes at Masters level, or Professional Doctorates (e.g. DPharm, ClinPsyD, EdD)
- Some taught modules, then an extended research thesis or an extensive project within a research group
- MRes can be a good foundation to progress to PhD
- MRes sometimes offered as the first year of a '1+3' programme (e.g. Biomedical Research – Molecular and Cellular Medicine MRes)

# Types of postgraduate degree (3): Research

- Usually MSc by Research (one year full-time) or PhD (3-4 years full-time)
- Research-based qualifications involving a research project leading to production of a thesis that is worthy of publication
- Self-directed research under the guidance of a supervisor/ principal investigator

# Finding courses and opportunities: Masters

- Order and consult prospectuses
- Course database sites (findamasters.com, hotcourses.com, prospects.ac.uk)
- <http://www.masterscompare.co.uk/> :search for masters courses and compare different courses from different universities
- Ask academics in your department
- Attend open days and study fairs/ job fairs



# Finding courses and opportunities: PhD

## Formulate your own project

- Popular in arts, humanities and social sciences
- You produce a research proposal
- Identify supervisor(s): search departmental websites; Google your research interests; ask current tutors
- Approach academics with a clear idea of your research project
- Contact enquiry services e.g. [dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk)


## Find an advertised project

- Popular in science and technology; sometimes in psychology and social sciences
- Search sites such as: [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk), [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) and [www.findaphd.com](http://www.findaphd.com)
- Birmingham has its own: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/dr](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/dr)
- Check departmental websites
- Apply for projects which closely match your own interests and experience
- Show commitment to your research area!

# Using Doctoral ReSEARCHer ([www.birmingham.ac.uk/dr](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/dr))

Doctoral ReSEARCHer Database (Powered by Findaphd.com)

**PhD Opportunities Search**

 Reset






School/Dept/Faculty:

Funding Status:

Supervisor:   Keywords:

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**School of Metallurgy & Materials**

 <b>C</b>	Application Deadline: Accepted anytime Supervisor(s): Prof H Evans, Prof I Jones <a href="#">β-alumina, α-alumina and the underlying microstructure: the genesis of protective oxide films</a>	[PhD Research Project]
 <b>C</b>	Application Deadline: Accepted anytime Supervisor(s): Dr M Jenkins <a href="#">Dynamic mechanical properties of polymer blends – vibration control</a>	[PhD Research Project]
 <b>C</b>	Application Deadline: Accepted anytime Supervisor(s): Prof N Green <a href="#">Enhance fatigue life of cast aluminium alloys – optimisation of surface integrity</a>	[PhD Research Project]
 <b>C</b>	Application Deadline: Accepted anytime Supervisor(s): Dr A Stamboulis <a href="#">Hybrid polymer scaffolds for tissue engineering</a>	[PhD Research Project]
 <b>C</b>	Application Deadline: Accepted anytime Supervisor(s): Dr B Griffiths <a href="#">Lost foam casting of Al alloys</a>	[PhD Research Project]

# Fees and funding: an introduction

The cost of specific courses can vary: for Birmingham, check our all up-to-date fees at [www.birmingham.ac.uk/pgfees](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/pgfees)

## Funding options

- ❑ Loans (Careers Development Loan)
  - [www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl)
- ❑ Research council grants: [www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)
- ❑ Scholarships and bursaries
- ❑ Employer sponsorship
- ❑ Charities
- ❑ Part-time work
- ❑ Self funding
- ❑ To find out what else might be available, ask your current lecturers or visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/pgfunding](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/pgfunding)

# Funding: a little more detail

## Research Council Scholarships

- Require a strong academic record/ references
- There are 7 UK research councils offering awards for different subject areas
- Funding for combined masters and PhD programmes ('1+3') or just PhDs
- Awards cover tuition fees and a maintenance grant (usually UK/EU students only )
- Birmingham has a number of 'Doctoral Training Centres', agreements and consortiums through which research council funding is available
- Application procedures may vary across institutions: usually through self-nomination (i.e. You do not apply directly to the research council)
- Apply as soon as possible since scholarships often carry their own deadlines.

# Funding: a little more detail

## □ School/ College/ Faculty Scholarships

- Full or part-award scholarships offered at School or departmental level
- Awarded on academic merit
- **Look carefully and ask around as scholarship opportunities can be well hidden!!**

## □ Charities and trusts

- Research charities, foundations and trusts who may be interested in supporting your PG study
- A good resource is the *Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding*

## □ Teaching Assistantships

- Pay fees and a maintenance grant, earned through carrying out a specified amount of departmental teaching

## □ General Note

- **Always check your eligibility!**

# Funding: a little more detail

## Self - funding

- In the UK around...
  - 65% of full-time taught PGs
  - 56% of part-time taught PGs
  - 17% of full-time research PGs
  - 65% of part-time research PGs
  
- ...pay their own fees rather than having their fees paid by a grant, scholarship or bursary.
  
- **Part-time work:** Steward at Aston Villa football club – Childminder – Lifeguard – Belly dancer – Fruit-picker – Model -TV/film extra – Lab technician – Teaching assistant/ home tutor – Freelance journalist - Dog walker – Karate instructor ... (!!)
  
- **Portfolio funding:** combine p/t work; money from trusts/charities; teaching in your department; small grants and bursaries.

# Next steps

- 'Cafe Masters' – learn more about what it's like to do a Masters degree, 4pm, Cafe Aroma
- Postgraduate Study web chat – tomorrow 11am
- Further study drop-in with Careers Network, tomorrow, 2pm – 4pm, iLounge
- Any questions? Email our enquiry service:  
[dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:dr@contacts.bham.ac.uk) or Tel 0121 414 5005