

## The postgraduate student check list: Choosing postgraduate taught masters programmes

Choosing postgraduate taught masters programmes can be daunting. The check list asks critical questions and will help students determine which opportunities best match their needs.

### PROGRAMME TYPE

What type of programme? Some add depth to existing subject knowledge, while conversion courses introduce students to new areas of study or provide preparation for a career.

#### Programme credibility and future opportunities

- Does the institution have a good reputation for the chosen discipline: does it have national/international profile?
- Are staff renowned and active in their research areas?
- Check quality assessments of teaching and research: how well do results compare with programmes at other institutions?
- Is the qualification transferable? Will it be credible and valued in other countries should you wish to work abroad?
- Will work experience and placements connect you with reputable companies that could offer employment opportunities on graduation?
- Have programme alumni been successful? Check employment rates and success stories.
- Do pathways exist from your current postgraduate programme to further studies (for a doctorate, for example)?

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION

- Note that each institution will have its own application process for postgraduate programmes.
- Do you meet programme requirements? What information will you need to complete the application?
- Will the application process include an interview or enable you to meet/correspond with staff and current students?

### LIVING COSTS AND FUNDING

- If you are prepared to stay at your undergraduate institution, are there "loyalty" fees or discounts for graduates applying for further study?
- Check out programmes that are bundled with scholarships, grants or bursaries.
- One year programmes will mean lower living costs than programmes lasting two years.
- Do opportunities exist for part time work while you study?

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

- What are the advantages/disadvantages of different study locations (costs, accessibility, nearness to family and friends)?
- Will you be able to study, learn and live with a diverse mix of students: will you meet people from around the world and from varied academic, cultural or social backgrounds?
- Does dedicated graduate accommodation/social space exist?

### RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Are study facilities, library and IT services and support available 24/7?
- Are graduates' needs catered for by a dedicated administrative centre or graduate school?
- Are teaching facilities well equipped for your discipline? Does the institution use virtual learning technologies or innovative approaches to interactive teaching?
- How many contact hours will you have with staff? Check exactly the return on your fee in terms of support and guidance available from teaching staff.

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ROSEMARY STAMP | DIRECTOR | STAMP CONSULTING

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- Make sure that your favourite academic is available during your programme: check they haven't left or are away on sabbatical.
- How large is the cohort on your programme?  
Will you study in a group, with others?

What support services and "extras" exist for postgraduate students? For example, specialist careers advice, languages, personal skills development or entrepreneurship modules for those setting up businesses on graduation.

Rosemary Stamp is Director of Stamp Consulting. She provides specialist management, marketing, skills development and strategic planning support to a wide range of organisations.

Her consulting portfolio includes international marketing strategies; competitive brand development; location brand strategy; nation branding; business, foresight and policy response planning; competitor analysis plus digital and online strategies.

Rosemary has advised a wide range of institutions striving to achieve a successful competitive positioning. During the last three years she has led twelve brand development strategies for organisations in the public and education sectors. Rosemary facilitates decision-making seminars, competitive briefings and strategic planning programmes for senior management teams throughout Europe.

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[rosemary.stamp@stampconsulting.co.uk](mailto:rosemary.stamp@stampconsulting.co.uk)

[www.stampconsulting.co.uk](http://www.stampconsulting.co.uk)

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