Experience in the room:

In groups of 2/3, discuss the following statements:

- your motivations for considering a masters
- the potential differences between undergraduate and masters-level study
UCL CAREERS ESSENTIALS

CONSIDERING A MASTERS

DAVE CARTER

UCL Careers Consultant
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Make the most of the UCL Careers fairs - How to connect with employers</td>
<td>09-Nov-2017</td>
<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Interview Success</td>
<td>13-Nov-2017</td>
<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers essentials: Mock Assessment Centre</td>
<td>13-Nov-2017</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Better PhD applications</td>
<td>14-Nov-2017</td>
<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Mock Assessment centre</td>
<td>14-Nov-2017</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Improve your CV</td>
<td>16-Nov-2017</td>
<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Essentials: Linkedin - Sourcing opportunities and raising your profile</td>
<td>16-Nov-2017</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What we’ll look at today

- What is a masters?
- Motivation for considering postgrad study
- Choosing a course
  - Costs and funding
- Effective applications
- Key information sources and further support
Search ‘UCL Careers Essentials’
> Talks and workshop slides, resources and recordings
Experience in the room:

In groups of 2/3, discuss the following statements:

- your motivations for considering a masters
- the potential differences between undergraduate and masters-level study
Where are you now? Masters decision scaler

- Still not sure if right for me
- Strongly motivated but yet to apply
- Beginning to apply
- Applied (and offers)
What is a Masters?

**length:** Full-time 1 to 2 years (Part-time 2 to 4)/ Autumn or Spring start

**compared to Undergraduate:**
- focused on particular area of a wider subject
- more flexible modules, study options and smaller classes
- intensive, advanced and faster-paced

**research v taught:**

**Master of Research (MRes):**
- research courses with roughly 2/3rds time on a research project (some taught)
- excellent preparation for PhD
- roughly 800 courses on offer in UK

**Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Science (MSc) degrees/ Other (eg LLM)**
- taught courses (roughly 1/3rd time spent on a research project)
- PhD entry still possible
- roughly 10,000 courses on offer in UK
Sounds AMAZING!!!

“World class…”

“Students love studying here…”

“Incredible facilities…”

“Academic excellence…”

“Knowledgeable tutors…”

“Unbeatable career prospects…”

“A reputation that precedes us…”
Is a Masters right for you?

Compare and contrast the case studies and highlight positive and negative motivators

- what are some of the issues the case studies raise?
- how do the themes involved relate (if at all) to your situation?
Case study 1 – Fatima: Interest in MSc Finance

I’m in the final year of my maths degree and am starting to panic about what to do on leaving my course. I’ve applied (along with most of my friends) to a number of prestigious grad schemes in areas such as consulting, finance and banking.

In reality, I have little knowledge of what the work in these sectors entails and no substantive commercial work experience that seems to be so important to employers given how competitive these roles are. I’m also struggling with the online aptitude tests and initial interviews. I’m considering applying for an MSc Finance to boost my knowledge and give me a more vocational background/ transferrable skills so that I can apply with more confidence and a stronger CV in the future. By applying for postgrad study, it will also allow me to concentrate for the remainder of the year on my exams as at the moment my results indicate I’m on for a 2.2. In many ways it delays having to make a decision about jobs which I’m finding really quite daunting…. 
Case study 1 – Fatima: Interest in MSc Finance

I’m in the final year of my maths degree and am starting to panic about what to do on leaving my course. I’ve applied (along with most of my friends) to a number of prestigious grad schemes in areas such consulting, finance and banking.

In reality, I have little knowledge of what the work in these sectors entails and no substantiative commercial work experience that seems to be so important to employers given how competitive these roles are. I’m also struggling with the online aptitude tests and initial interviews. I’m considering applying for an MSc Finance to boost my knowledge and give me a more vocational background/ transferrable skills so that I can apply with more confidence and a stronger CV in the future. By applying for postgrad study, it will also allow me to concentrate for the remainder of the year on my exams as at the moment my results indicate I’m on for a 2.2. In many ways it delays having to make a decision about jobs which I’m finding really quite daunting….
Some home truths………. 

- Many applicants **wrongly believe** that a Masters will automatically enhance career and earnings:
  - professional exams may take precedence (issue of study fatigue)
  - likely to only benefit from a Masters if complemented by **relevant work experience**
    - Is there the opportunity for in-course placements?
    - would you be better off using the time to build workplace experience?
- Majority of grad scheme employers do **not** require a Masters and it will **not** compensate for a 2.2
- A Masters is an expensive way of buying time and being in a familiar environment:
  - what will you do to ensure you won’t be in this same position the following year?

**To Consider:** Are your careers goals clear?
- better to spend time in the workplace or research your options in a gap year?
- Is the course accreditation the industry standard (eg BPS for psychologists)/ is qualification internationally transferrable?
- will the qualification definitely improve your career prospects?
  - is it a requirement for jobs you’re interested in?
  - what are course employment rates and calibre of outcomes.
Sample UK Graduate scheme vacancy numbers 2017/18

Source: GET Directory/ Times Top 100 – 2017/18

TeachFirst 1,750
pwc 1,200
Deloitte 900
Civil Service Fast Stream 1,000
J.P. Morgan 400+
ATKINS 250
BT 250+
Linklaters 110
Shell 70+

Source: THE TIMES TOP 100 GRADUATE EMPLOYERS
The definitive guide to the leading employers recruiting graduates during 2016-2017.
Prospects.ac.uk – Browse job profiles
https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles

Book a 1to1 appointment to discuss potential options
Job research: Working backwards

Looking forwards
• 1 step at a time

Working backwards:
• research ideas for what you’d like to be doing beyond a Masters course
• what are the typical routes in? Academic qualifications Vs work experience
• is a relevant masters required at entry level or for future progression?
Case study 2 – HAKOB: Interest in MSc African Studies with Health at UCL

Having studied a BA History, I am currently on a gap year including working in administrative office-based roles to help fund some future travel. I’m considering applying for an MSc course because of my interest in Africa - I believe that business development is likely to be a key driver of economic prosperity so I want to learn more about the continent both professionally and personally.

I have a long-term ambition to either start my own or join a large, international NGO or political organisation focused on the already bright future of Africa. Having spoken to alumni and other contacts who have worked in the region, it’s clear a Masters course would be considered an essential requirement to enter the sector. I’m particularly interested in a global health module and further research possibilities that I hope will allow me to research how politics, economics and urban studies affect health challenges from a business development perspective.
Case study 2 – HAKOB: Interest in MSc African Studies with Health at UCL

Having studied a BA History, I am currently on a gap year including working in administrative office-based roles to help fund some future travel. I’m considering applying for an MSc course because of my interest in Africa - I believe that business development is likely to be a key driver of economic prosperity so I want to learn more about the continent both professionally and personally.

I have a long-term ambition to either start my own or join a large, international NGO or political organisation focused on the already bright future of Africa. Having spoken to alumni and other contacts who have worked in the region, it’s clear a Masters course would be considered an essential requirement to enter the sector. I’m particularly interested in a global health module and further research possibilities that I hope will allow me to research how politics, economics and urban studies affect health challenges from a business development perspective.
UCL Alumni careers mentoring

Welcome to The UCL Alumni Online Community

Connect
Find classmates, make new friends and expand your professional network.

Support
Share your knowledge by offering to be a mentor or by giving professional advice to UCL students and alumni.

Network
Use your international UCL network and get introduced to people you should know.

Jobs
Find and post jobs exclusively within your alumni community.

JOIN NOW
Connect with
LinkedIn
Facebook
Email

Why is it safe to register with LinkedIn / Facebook?
Hi Neil,

I see you did the MBA at LBS. I am interested in taking the course myself. Could I possibly have a chat with you about it?

Thanks,
Timing

- Often beneficial to have time away from education to reflect on whether:
  - Postgrad study really is the right decision
  - Which programme to pursue
- 58% of postgrads are 25+ when enter study
  - Highest proportion of postgrads enter after a break of 3+ years*
  - Employers may well sponsor and give study-release for experienced staff who want to develop their career

To consider:
- Is a masters course right for me right now - do I need more time to reflect?

* Source: HEFCE
Will a Masters help with my career?

Masters degrees in the UK highly regarded by employers

- 90% of 41K leavers in 2014/5 in work or further study 6 months after graduating
  - 86% of those in work professional or managerial role
- Full-time employed young graduates under 30:
  - **Highly skilled employment:** 74% postgrad Vs 56% undergrad
  - **Median salary:** £28,000 postgrad Vs £24,000 undergrad

- some roles a Masters is an essential or highly desirable requirement
  - eg. International development, environmental, cultural heritage
- can accelerate career progression or facilitate career change

*Source: DLHE Survey/ Grad labour market statistics 2015/16*
But what if I’m not interested in largely COMMERCIAL graduate schemes?

Sectors

International Development
- Media and broadcasting
- Publishing and journalism
- Creative Arts and Design

Cultural heritage
- Government and Policy

Environment
- Performing Arts

Roles

Policy
- Editing

Marketing
- Campaigning
- Research

Project management
- Sales
- Producing

Planning
Case study 3: Robert – MSc Biomedical Engineering

I’m currently in my final year of a Biomedical Engineering degree, on course for a 2.1 and have a goal to pursue a PhD leading to a career in academia. My research skills have been honed through multiple lab-based projects along with substantive summer experience both in academic and industry in research labs. Friends have told me that pursuing a PhD is highly competitive and will be difficult without a Masters so even though I’m worried about incurring additional debt, I’m considering applying to a range of relevant Masters courses.
Masters Vs PhD

- increasingly, a Masters is becoming the norm in terms of those who go on to pursue a PhD
  - more attractive/credible to potential supervisors
- useful if:
  - unsure about areas of specialist interest
  - lack research experience
    - MRes v MA/ MSc v other research experience
- PhD entry without a Masters is still possible:
  - contact potential supervisors
  - apply for both Masters and PhD positions and see how applications progress
FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN CHOOSING A COURSE
Subject

- What specific subject areas interest you?
  - consider modules (confirm all modules will be available)
  - teaching-styles, research areas
- Are you:
  - prepared for the *intensity* of Masters Vs undergrad study
  - excited by opportunity to write (another, even longer) dissertation?
- If you’re changing subject:
  - are you really interested in this new area – why?
  - do you really know what it is?
  - research hard and investigate niches
Masters course search websites

www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-courses

www.findamasters.com/
### Postgraduate Subject Tables (Guardian)

**Biosciences**

Click on any header to rank scores in order. Expenditure per student is ranked out of 10 and is based on full-time equivalent (FTE) study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Number of Full-time students</th>
<th>Number of Part-time students</th>
<th>% Students from outside UK</th>
<th>Expenditure per student (£/10)</th>
<th>Student:staff ratio</th>
<th>FT Completion Rate</th>
<th>PT Completion Rate</th>
<th>Tuition Fees: Home/EU students</th>
<th>Tuition Fees: Overseas students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberystwyth</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>£4,500</td>
<td>£11,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangor</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>£4,500</td>
<td>£12,800-£17,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Too big? Too small?

New ideas? International contacts?

Communication/cultural challenges?

How much attention will you get?

If low, why?

Can you afford it?
Postgraduate open day

The Department participates in the University’s postgraduate open day each year. Open days provide the opportunity to:

- see the Department
- meet the admissions officer
- see the campus
- attend presentations
- find out information about what it’s like to be a postgraduate student
- find out information about ways to fund postgraduate study.

We would be delighted to meet you at the open day and talk to you about our postgraduate courses, research opportunities and funding for postgraduate study here at Nottingham. Of course, you don’t have to wait for an open day if you have a question. Simply get in contact with us. We’re looking forward to hearing from you.

Did you miss the last open day?

No problem. The University has compiled a number of video presentations so you can catch up on the following topics:

- Welcome to The University of Nottingham
- Campus video and virtual campus tours
- Nottingham life

Useful links
APPLICATIONS
Applications

Process and requirements:
- normally require a 2.1 at Bachelors level
  - those with lower class may be considered with relevant experience (contact department)
- what grades can you expect? – spread the risk (apply at several levels)
- apply directly to chosen institution(s)
- no limit to courses can apply to (likely 5 to 8)
- lead time on decisions - 2 weeks to 2 months

Outcomes:
- unconditional/ conditional offer/ interview/ unsuccessful

Deadlines:
- most courses accept applications continuously
- offers on a first come, first served basis
- ideally apply at least 8 months before course begins
  - especially if looking to secure funding (Jan-Mar deadlines)
- late enrolments are common however
COSTS AND FUNDING
Cost and funding

**Costs:** course fees vary upon subject and institution’s reputation:
- UK and EU £4-9K per year (STEM tend to be higher)
- International – £14K
- Overseas fees and living costs can be much cheaper
  - eg Netherlands Vs UK saving perhaps by as much as 50%

Living costs – NUS suggest accommodation and living costs outside London circa 8-12K (London closer to £13K)
- Possibility of living at home?
- 50% FT Masters students work part-time
  - 10-15 hours per week depending upon course intensity

*Source: UCAS/ NUS research*
Search: Prospects postgraduate funding guide
Funding

**Scholarships:** tuition fees/ living costs up to £3K
- Awarded for academic excellence/ potential outstanding research
- Apply after received conditional offer
- [www.scholarship-search.org.uk](http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk) and institutional websites

**Discounts:** to returning students

**Grants, foundations and trusts:** £100 to £1,000 tuition/ other costs (eg childcare)
- Apply and receive for unlimited number awards
- Stronger case: disadvantaged – lower income, disabilities, research linked to community or disadvantaged country
- Typically apply after received conditional offer

**Sources:**
- online: trustfinding.org.uk/ charitychoice.co.uk
- Grants register 2017 available in UCL Careers Library
- University/ Departmental website
Funding continued…

- **Masters loans**
  - Non-means-tested and repayable up to £10K for UK and EU students
  - Repayable at 6% of earnings over £21K
  - [https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/masters-loans](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/masters-loans)

- **Research Council Grants:**
  - Selected research Masters and new route PhDs
  - Easier for STEM than Arts and humanities
  - Definitive list available studentships on individual research council websites:
    - [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)

- **Professional and Career development loan (PCDL)**

- **Crowdfunding** eg [https://hubbub.net](https://hubbub.net)

- **Employer Sponsorship**

- **Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs)**
Personal statements

Background
- 1-2 pages of A4 (some prescriptive on wordcount)
- No two statements likely to be the same

Potential content (evidence-based)
- Why do you want to do the course/ research?
  - Why this subject?
    - Modules/ work experience opportunities
  - Why this department/ institution?
- What are your future goals and how the course will help you meet them?
- Your preparation
  - How has undergrad study prepared you?
  - research projects or independent work
- Your skills-set
  - What academic/ higher-level study skills do you have to offer?
Summary

Is Masters-level study the right option right now?
Apply early:
- Some courses are competitive
- Funding dependent upon offers
Seek support through UCL Careers
- 1to1 coaching with decisions
- 1to1 coaching with applications
1to1 coaching

Current students:
- **CV/ Application coaching** - 15 minutes (Mon – Fri) lunch/ early evening
- **Short guidance** – 15 minutes (Mon – Fri)
- **Long guidance** – 60 minutes on referral from short guidance
- **Interview coaching** – 60 minutes *(on condition ‘real’ employer interview)*

Recent leavers:
- **Graduates appointment** – 30 minutes (Mon – Thu) inc. lunchtime/ early evening/ phone/ skype *(recommended use especially if 1st Graduates coaching session)*
- **CV/ Application coaching** – 15 minutes – same service as for current students
- **Interview coaching** – 60 minutes *(on condition of ‘real’ employer interview)*

Booking
- Online: up to 7 days in advance: MyUCLCareers
  - [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers)
  - By phone: (call 020 3549 5900 after 9.30am)/ in person
Questions?
Presentation slides available now

Search ‘UCL Careers Essentials’
Talks and workshop slides, resources and recordings