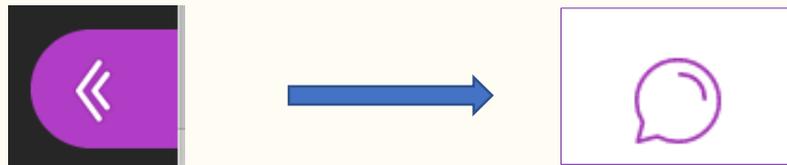


# Career Essentials: Considering a Masters

Nicole Estwick  
Careers Consultant

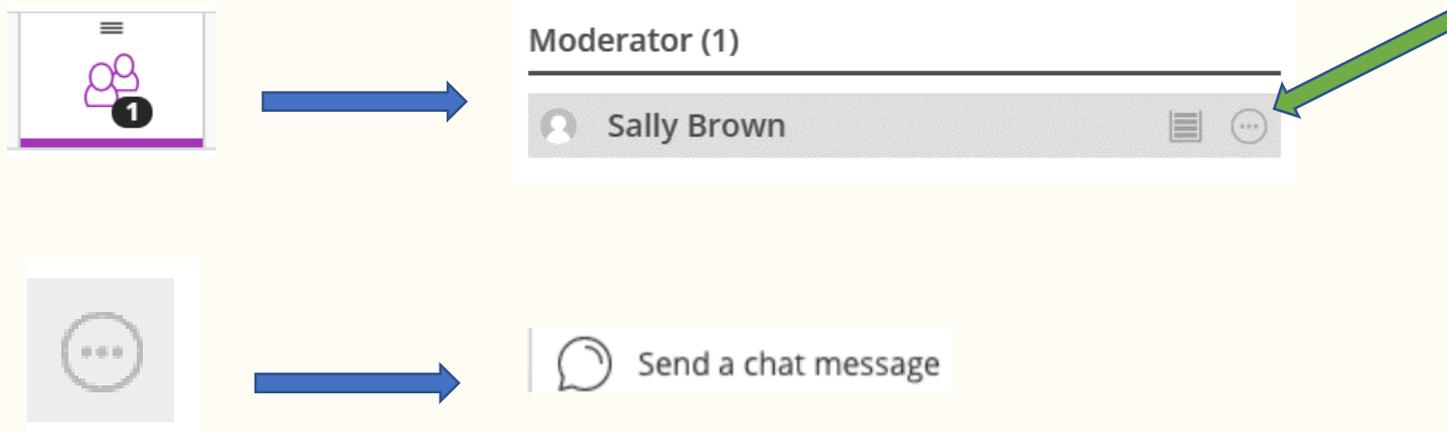
# Welcome

Please introduce yourself in the chat box, using the student name you are registered with (for the register).



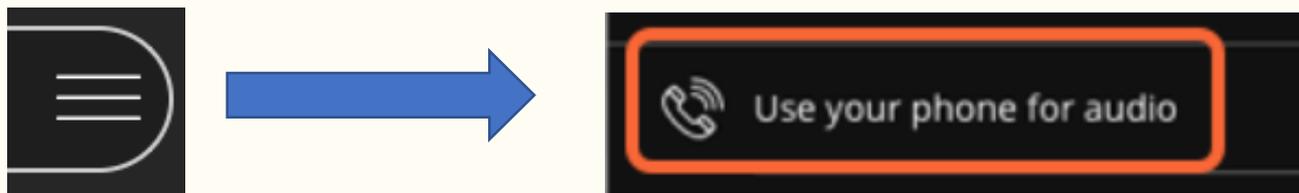
# Issues?

Please send one of the moderators a **private message** if you either cannot hear me or you have not received the session materials.



# Still can't hear me?

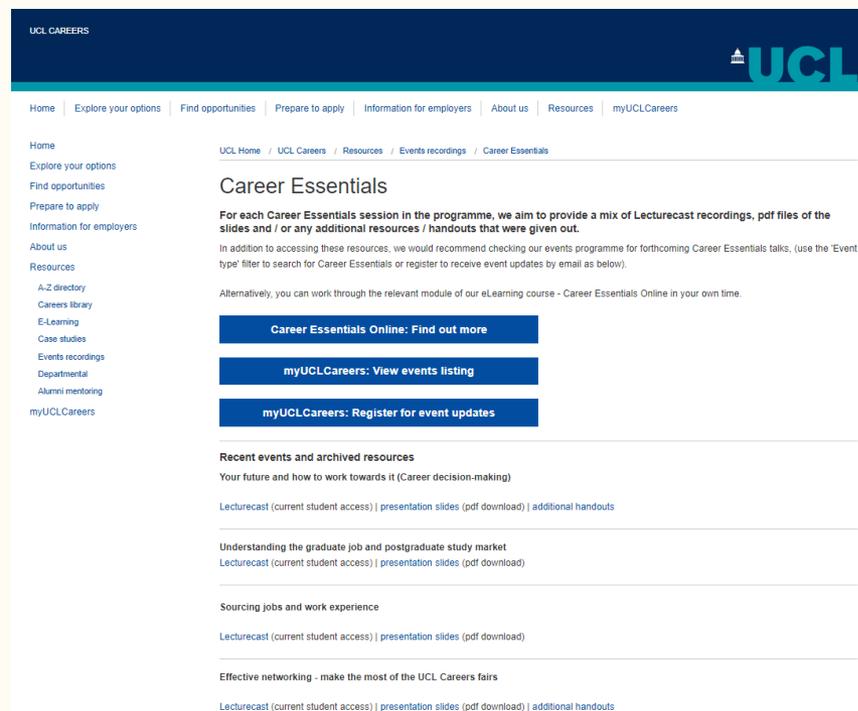
1. Check your sound settings on your device
2. Try leaving the session and re-joining
3. Use the menu tool (top left) and select "use your phone for audio"



# Slides and recordings

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/resources/slides/career-essentials>

Search 'UCL Career Essentials'



The screenshot shows the UCL Careers website page for 'Career Essentials'. The page has a dark blue header with the UCL logo and navigation links. A left sidebar contains a list of menu items. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail, a title 'Career Essentials', and introductory text about the resources. Below this, there are three prominent blue buttons: 'Career Essentials Online: Find out more', 'myUCLCareers: View events listing', and 'myUCLCareers: Register for event updates'. The page also lists 'Recent events and archived resources' with links to various lecture recordings and presentations.

UCL CAREERS

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Case studies

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Departmental

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## Career Essentials

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### Recent events and archived resources

Your future and how to work towards it (Career decision-making)

[Lecturecast \(current student access\)](#) | [presentation slides \(pdf download\)](#) | [additional handouts](#)

Understanding the graduate job and postgraduate study market

[Lecturecast \(current student access\)](#) | [presentation slides \(pdf download\)](#)

Sourcing jobs and work experience

[Lecturecast \(current student access\)](#) | [presentation slides \(pdf download\)](#)

Effective networking - make the most of the UCL Careers fairs

[Lecturecast \(current student access\)](#) | [presentation slides \(pdf download\)](#) | [additional handouts](#)

# Career Essentials Summer 2020

- Mix of online talks and workshops
- **Small Group Work sessions (CV)**
- 6 module e-learning course

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/resources/elearning>

# Talks May 2020

Interview success: in person and online	21 <sup>st</sup>
Improve your CV	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Connecting with Employers Remotely	26 <sup>th</sup>
Sourcing Jobs & Work Experience	27 <sup>th</sup>
Considering a Masters	28 <sup>th</sup>
CVs – small groupwork	29 <sup>th</sup>

# Talks June 2020

Your Future and Working Towards It	
How to Build Your Skills & Experience Without an Internship	
CVs – small groupwork	
Linkedin	

# What we'll look at today

- What is a masters?
- Motivation for considering postgraduate study
- Choosing a course
- Costs and funding
- Professional Qualifications
- Key information sources and further support

# Where are you now? Masters decision scaler



Type into the chat box which stage you're at:

- Not sure
- Motivated
- Applying

# Sharing thoughts (1)



Why might you (or anyone) want to do a Masters?

Type your thoughts into the chat box.

## Sharing thoughts (2)



How might masters-level study be different from undergraduate study?

Type your thoughts into the chat box.

# What is a Masters?

## Length:

- 1-2 years full-time, 2-4 years part time

## Compared with undergraduate:

- Focused on particular area of a wider subject
- More flexible modules, study options and smaller classes
- Intensive, advanced and faster-paced

# Research or Taught?

## Taught (MSc, MA)

- taught courses approx. 1/3 time on research project
- PhD entry possible
- roughly 10,000 courses on offer in UK

## Research (MRes)

- research masters approx. 2/3 time on research project
- excellent preparation for PhD
- roughly 800 courses on offer in UK

# Range of Degrees

- BCL - Bachelor of Civil Law (Oxford)<sup>[9][19]</sup>
- BPhil - Bachelor of Philosophy (Oxford)<sup>[9][20]</sup>
- EMBS - European Master in Business Sciences<sup>[21]</sup>
- LLM - Master of Laws<sup>[8]</sup> (Master of Law at Cambridge<sup>[22]</sup>)
  - LLM(Res) Master of Laws (Research)<sup>[21]</sup>
- MA - Master of Arts<sup>[4]</sup>
- MArch - Master of Architecture<sup>[23]</sup>
- MAST - Master of Advanced Study<sup>[24]</sup>
- MBA - Master of Business Administration<sup>[4]</sup>
- MBL - Master of Business and Law<sup>[21]</sup>
- MCD - Master of Civic Design<sup>[25]</sup>
- MCh - Master of Surgery<sup>[9]</sup>
- MCL - Master of Corporate Law<sup>[22]</sup>
- MClinDent - Master of Clinical Dentistry<sup>[11]</sup>
- MDes - Master of Design<sup>[4]</sup>
- MEd - Master of Education<sup>[26]</sup>
- MEng - Master of Engineering<sup>[12]</sup>
  - MEng(Eur) - Master of Engineering (European)<sup>[12]</sup>
- MEP - Master of Educational Practice<sup>[11]</sup>
- MFA - Master of Fine Art<sup>[9]</sup>
- HMHW - Higher Master in Health and Wellbeing
- MJur - Master of Jurisprudence<sup>[8]</sup> (Law) (*Magister Juris* at Oxford)<sup>[27]</sup>
- MLib - Master of Librarianship<sup>[21]</sup>
- MLit - Master of Literature<sup>[5]</sup>
- MLitt - Master of Letters<sup>[8]</sup>
- MMin - Master of Ministry<sup>[21]</sup>

There are a number of [Degree abbreviations](#)

- MMus - Master of Music<sup>[8]</sup>
- MPA - Master of Public Administration<sup>[11]</sup>
- MPH - Master of Public Health<sup>[26]</sup>
- MPhil - Master of Philosophy<sup>[4]</sup> (under the Framework, the MPhil is "normally reserved" for longer master's courses with a significant research element, or for PhD candidates who do not reach sufficient level for the award of a doctorate<sup>[1]</sup>)
- MPP - Master of Public Policy<sup>[9]</sup>
- MProf - Master of Professional Studies<sup>[28]</sup> or Master of Professional Practice<sup>[8]</sup>
- MRes - Master in Research<sup>[8]</sup>
  - MbyRes - Master by Research
- MSc - Master of Science<sup>[4]</sup>
  - MSc(Eur) - Master of Science (European)<sup>[12]</sup>
  - MScEcon - Master of Science in Economic and Social Studies<sup>[11]</sup>
  - MScD - Master of Science in Dental Science<sup>[11]</sup>
  - MSchW - Master of Science in Health and Wellbeing
- MST - Master of Studies<sup>[9]</sup>
- MSW - Master of Social Work<sup>[8]</sup>
- MTL - Master of Teaching and Learning<sup>[8]</sup>
- MTh - Master of Theology<sup>[9]</sup>
- MTheol - Master of Theology<sup>[8]</sup>
- MUniv - Master of the University (the MUniv is only ever an honorary degree)<sup>[29]</sup>
- MusM - Master of Music<sup>[30]</sup>

# Sounds Amazing!

“World class...”

“Students love studying here...”

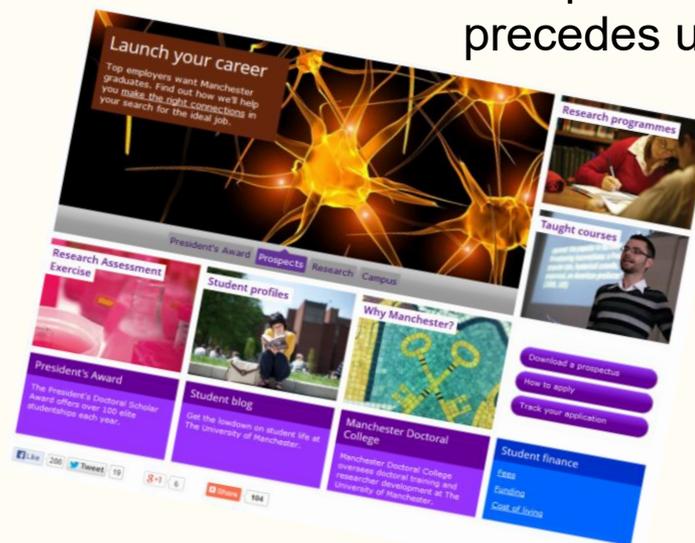
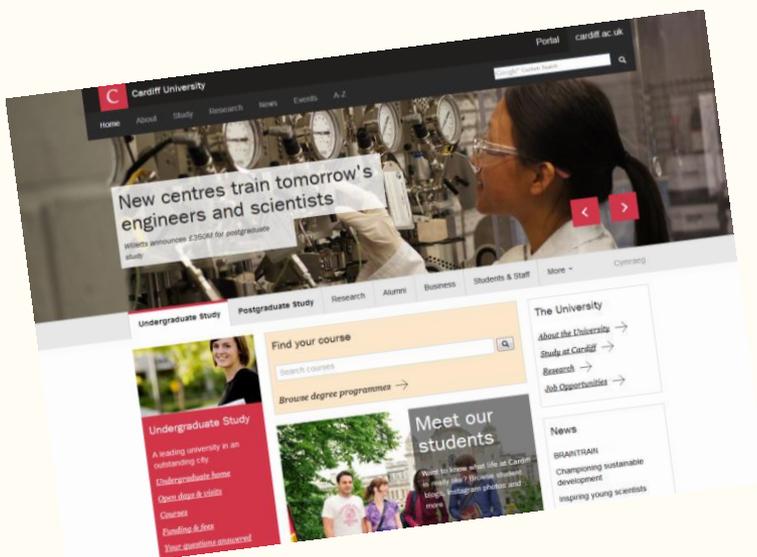
“Academic excellence...”

“Knowledgeable tutors...”

“Unbeatable career prospects...”

“Incredible facilities...”

“A reputation that precedes us...”



# Is a Masters right for you?

## Case studies

- What are the positive and negative motivators?
- What are some of the issues raised?
- 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. Like most of my friends, I've applied to a number of prestigious graduate schemes in areas such consulting, finance and banking.

In reality, I don't know much about what the work in these sectors involves and I don't have the 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 in Finance to boost my knowledge and give me more transferable skills so that I can apply with more confidence and a stronger CV in the future. Applying for postgrad study will also allow me to concentrate 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....

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# Analysis: Case Study 1

- Professional exams may take precedence (issue of study fatigue)
- More likely to benefit from a Masters if complemented by relevant work experience
- Is there the opportunity for in-course placements?
- Majority of grad scheme employers **do not** require a Masters and it will **not** compensate for a 2.2
- A Masters can be 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?

## Case study 2 – Hakob: Interest in MSc African Studies with Health

Having studied a BA History, I am currently on a gap year which includes 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 research into how politics, economics and urban studies affect health challenges from a business development perspective.

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# For consideration...

- How clear are your careers goals?
- Better to spend time in the workplace or research your options in a gap year?
- Is the course accreditation the industry standard (e.g. BPS for psychologists)
- Is the qualification internationally transferable?
- Will the qualification improve your career prospects?
- Is it a requirement for jobs you're interested in?
- What are course employment rates and calibre of outcomes?

# Looking forwards or working backwards

## Looking forwards:

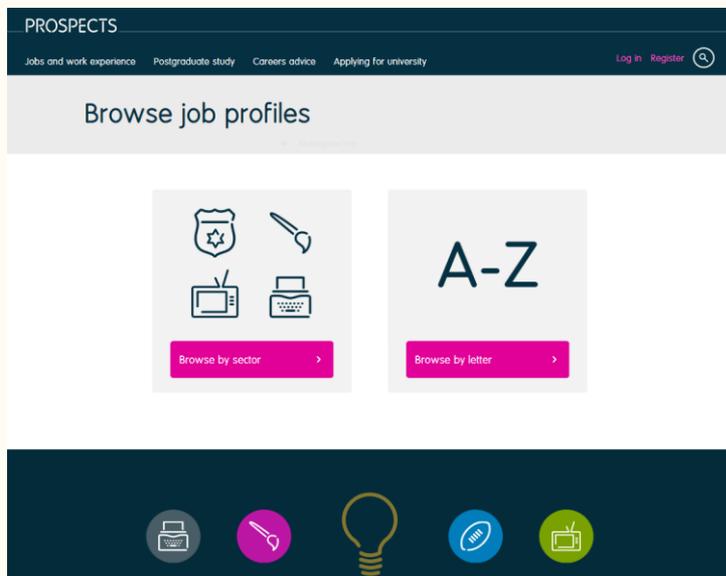
- Choosing a Masters for interest, specialisation
- What can I do with this Masters?



## 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?

# Researching Job Profiles



[Prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk)



[icould.com](https://www.icould.com)

# UCL Alumni Online Community

Welcome to  
The UCL Alumni  
Online Community

GET STARTED

**Connect**

Find class mates, make new friends and expand your professional network.

**Support**

Search for or become a mentor, to help share knowledge and professional advice across UCL alumni and current students.

**Network**

Use your international UCL network and hear about the latest events to get introduced to people you should know.

[www.uclalumnicommunity.org](http://www.uclalumnicommunity.org)

# LinkedIn

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Neil Appleton, Head of Web Strategy at Elsevier. A 'Send Message' dialog box is open, showing the following details:

- To:** Neil Appleton
- Subject:** MBA
- Message Body:**

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
- Buttons:** Send Message, Cancel

The background profile includes a profile picture, name, title, location (Amsterdam), and a 'Connected' status dated 8/17/2007. A 'People Similar to Neil' section is also visible on the right side of the profile.

# UCL Careers Resources

## Case Studies

- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/resources/case-studies>

## Themed week resources

- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/resources/case-studies>

# Alternative Options (1) PhD

It is becoming more common to do a Masters before going on to do a PhD but not everyone does a Masters first

More attractive / credible to potential supervisors

Useful if:

- unsure about areas of specialist interest
- lack research experience
- MRes vs MA / MSc vs other research experience

PhD entry without a Masters is still possible:

- contact potential supervisors
- check what is typical for your field

# Alternative Options (2) PGDip/Cert

Do you need / want a Masters?

## Post Graduate Diploma

- Same level as masters (level 7) but without the research/thesis element. Shorter, less credits (2/3 masters)

## Post Graduate Certificate

- Same level as masters, shorter, less credits (1/3 masters)

For both usually study alongside masters students. Useful if you don't wish to do the research element in a masters.

## Alternative Options (3) Professional Qualifications

There is some form of professional qualification available in most industries in the UK.

Some well-known examples:

- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- BCS - The Chartered Institute for IT
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

## Alternative Options (4) Online learning

Some examples (not an exhaustive list)

- Coursera
- Futurelearn
- Edx

Check cost, certificate, what you get

How recognised / valued is it? (Masters/PGDip/PGCert are all level 7 qualifications and professional qualifications are well established / recognised)

# Timing

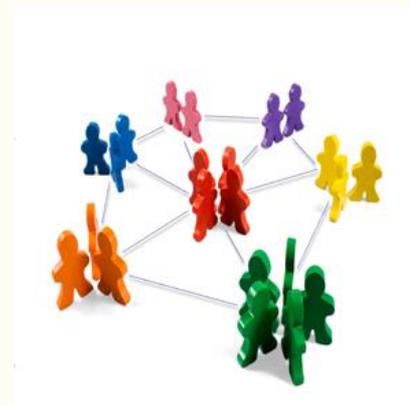
It may be beneficial to have time away from education to reflect:

- Is postgrad study really the right decision?
- Which programme to pursue?
- 61% of taught postgrads 25+y at start of study (2017/18)\*
- 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

**Is a masters course right for me right now?**

\* [HESA](#) statistics for postgraduate taught students

# Informing your decision

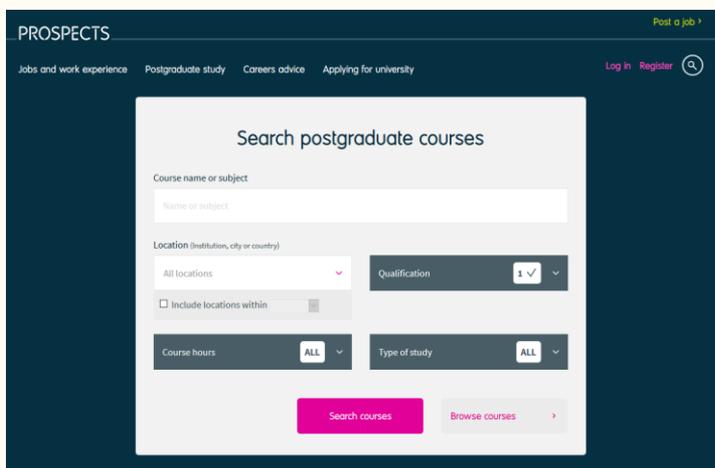


- Can you think of any information that would help you decide whether to do a masters or not?
- Type your thoughts in the chat box

# Choosing a course

- Do your homework!
- Institution subject specific strength
- Teaching quality
- Similar titles, varying content
- What are your interests?
- Optional modules, research projects
- Links with industry
- Accreditation
- Masters valued by future sector employers?
- Open days

# Masters course search websites



Search postgraduate courses on [Prospects](#) and [Find a Masters](#)

# Masters Funding

## English postgraduate loans

- Borrow up to £10,906 in 2019/20.
- UK nationals - normally live in England, in UK last 3 years
- Attend any UK university
- Separate loans if you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- Don't already have a Masters degree or higher qualification
- EU nationals & others may be eligible (check detail)
- [Government website](http://www.gov.uk) (www.gov.uk)
- Repayment @ 6% when income >monthly threshold of £1,750, concurrent with undergrad loan

# Additional funding resources

- [Erasmus+](http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-funding) (www.erasmusplus.org.uk/higher-education-funding)
- [Find A Masters](http://www.findamasters.com/funding) (www.findamasters.com/funding)
- [Scholarships](http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/funding) (www.postgraduatesearch.com/funding)
- Institution websites
- Employer sponsorship

# Applications



- Directly to Institution
- Application fee £50 - £75
- Check timings and deadlines – early closing!
- Typically need an Upper Second Class (2.1) Bachelors degree
- Personal statement

# Personal statements

The most difficult bit – allow time!

- Typically 500 words / 1 side A4
- Tailor it to the course
- Reasons for applying - why the university / department, interests, career goals
- Preparation – how has undergrad prepared you
- Why you – skillset
- [Prospects](#) and [Find a Masters](#) offer useful advice
- Get it reviewed at UCL Careers!

# Personal statements resources



YouTube: UCL Careers TV

## Cover letters and personal statements

A cover letter is your opportunity to make a positive first impression. Just as important as your CV, it's where you can explain your skills, ability and motivation for the role.

The aim of a cover letter is to convince the recruiter of your suitability for the job and to put you through to the next stage of the selection process. To do this effectively your cover letter should provide evidence that you meet the requirements in the person specification.

It is also where you can explain your motivations and understanding of the role and organisation that you are applying to. These principles also apply to

### Structure and content

Remember your cover letter is an example of your written communication, so write in a clear, succinct and professional manner. To make it easy for the recruiter to read, follow a structure and keep to one side of A4. The following gives an outline of a suggested structure, although the sections could be used in a different order and some may require two paragraphs.

UCL Careers Digital Library

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/resources/information>

# UCL Careers 1 to 1 Support

- Applications advice (20 minutes)
- Short guidance (20 minutes)
- Practice Interview (60 minutes, on condition of real employer interview)
- Book online in advance using myUCLCareers



# Find us online

[www.ucl.ac.uk/careers](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers)

[careers@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:careers@ucl.ac.uk)

Mon - Fri 9:30 - 17:00



# Follow us



UCL Careers



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[Blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-careers](https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-careers)



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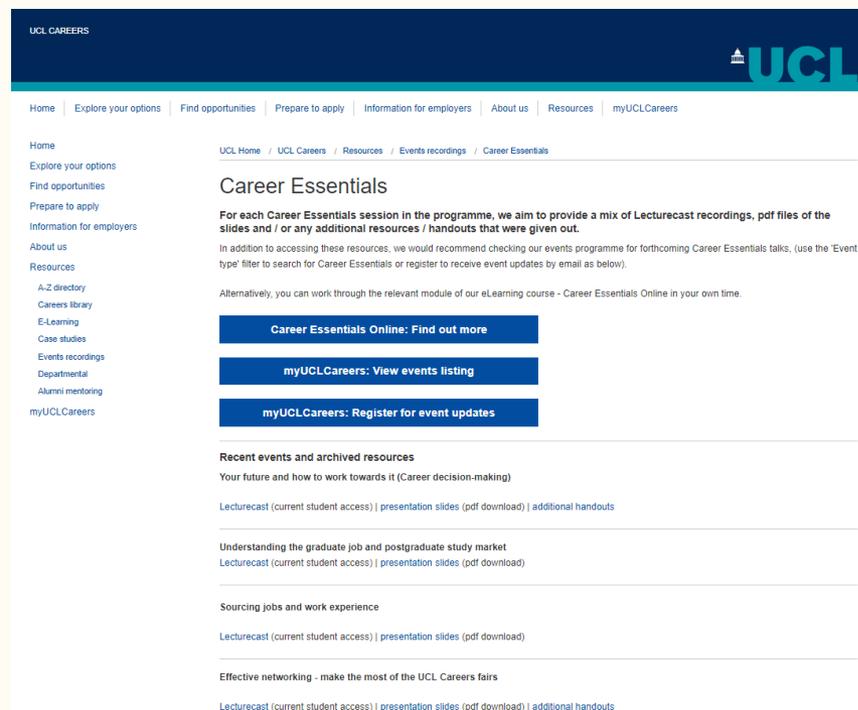
**Careers Coronavirus FAQs**

[ucl.ac.uk/careers](https://ucl.ac.uk/careers)

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**UCL CAREERS**

Home | Explore your options | Find opportunities | Prepare to apply | Information for employers | About us | Resources | myUCLCareers

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myUCLCareers

# Any Questions?

