The decision to pursue postgraduate study is a big one since it involves huge effort, time and financial commitments. You may choose from different postgraduate programmes, depending on your personal, academic and career goals.

**Is Postgraduate Study Right for me?**

**My Planning Worksheet**



**Types of Programme**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic**  | **Research**  | **Professional**  |
| Both coursework and research completed in a specific discipline; thesis or dissertation typically required. Especially important for work in academic and consulting fields.  | Heavily focused on research and thesis required to complete degree. Generally needed to obtain professional position in research field.  | Might include practicum or require professional experience. Thesis not generally completion requirement. Licensing test offered at completion of some programs.  |
| * Master of Arts (M.A.)
* Master of Science (M.S.)
* Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
 | * Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)
* Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
 | * Medical Doctor (M.D.)
* Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.)
* Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)
* Master of Education (M.Ed.)
 |

**Before you decide**

**Reflect on your purpose of pursuing further studies and be open to other paths to attain your goal:**

**Ask yourself**

* Am I using further studies to postpone job seeking or cope with pressure from family/ peers ?
* Am I able to articulate my academic and professional reasons for continuing studies?
* Do I have clearly defined career goals that require an advanced degree? Can it prepare me for the job that I want?
* Does my undergraduate record reflect my ability to do graduate level work?
* Will I be able to incur the financial obligations and delay earnings that continuing my education will involve?
* Am I personally ready for additional years of academic work at a more rigorous level and requiring greater self-discipline?

**Can I realize my goal by ways other than a postgraduate study?**

* Gain professional experience and earn an income
* Seek additional training through community and university extension programmes
* Obtain a professional association certificate
* Improve your language proficiency and gain an international perspective living abroad
* Apply for internship and fellowship programmes
* Consider formally continuing your studies at a later point

**After you decided**

* Discuss with support network (faculty adviser, professional mentors, family members).
* Decide when to attend graduate school.
* Consider test preparation and register for required admission tests (GRE, GMAT, TOFEL), if required.
* Finalize list of selected schools. A suggested guideline is 3-5.
* Review the application deadlines and requirements for the schools selected and create an application schedule.
* Prepare required documents according to specific instructions of each institution. Remember to allow additional time for letters of recommendation.
* While waiting for admission decisions, continue to academically prepare and pursue related interests. Also use this time to determine a backup plan depending on the competitiveness of the schools and other alternatives.
* Evaluate offers and respond with decision.

**How to choose the right course**

**Research**

* Consider the strengths of the programme in your field more than the general reputation of the university.
* Ask professionals and faculty in the field you intend to pursue for their advice on specific programmes.
* Network and discuss your interests at academic conferences and lectures.
* Go to the library and review journals in your field. See which professors are doing research and publishing in your area of interest.
* Visit the schools that you are interested in, if possible, and talk with faculty and current graduate students for a better perspective.
* Rankings are a useful indicator; however don’t rely solely on them. Find the programme that is the best fit for your academic pursuits.

**Make a grid for comparison**

Items on the grid might include criteria that matter to you: admission requirements, total estimated annual cost (tuition, fees, and living), estimated length to complete degree, location and student environment, key faculty members, areas of expertise, degree emphasis, strengths/weaknesses of programme, application deadline, schedule possibilities (full-time/part-time, weekdays, nights).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *My Criteria* | *Programme # 1* | *Programme #2* | *Programme #3* |
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**Important points from Workshop to take home**

**Additional Resources**

*Pursuing Further Study at HKU*

Taught Postgraduate Admission

*(*[*http://www.aal.hku.hk/tpg/home*](http://www.aal.hku.hk/tpg/home) *)*

Guide to Application For Admission (MPhil and PhD Studies) at HKU

*(*[*http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/*](http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/) *)*

*Pursuing Further Study Overseas*

Study in Canada- Council of Ministers of Education

([*www.cmec.ca/en*](http://www.cmec.ca/en))

Study in the Commonwealth

([*www.acu.ac.uk*](http://www.acu.ac.uk))

Study in UK– The Complete University Guide

(<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/postgraduate/> )

Study in US – EducationUSA

([www.*educationusa.state.gov*](http://www.educationusa.state.gov))

Study in Europe – European Union

([www.*europa.eu/eu-life/education-training*](http://www.europa.eu/eu-life/education-training))

Study in Germany – DAAD

([*www.daad.de*](http://www.daad.de))

*Notes: If the country you are interested in is not available in the above websites, contact the nearest consulate about official higher education options.*