

# Applications and application forms

Here we look at applying for a place at a UK college or university. Institutions following the US system have different processes, which are usually described on their web pages.

## A

### Getting information

Read this information about preparing an application for postgraduate study.

#### What should I do first?

Do all you can to learn about the **careers**<sup>1</sup> that will be open to you after studying – and what **qualifications** you will need in order to get the job you want.

#### What qualifications do I need for postgraduate study?

A first degree is required to study at postgraduate level.

The specific **entry requirements** for each course of study are listed on the individual course pages.

If needed, **clarification**<sup>2</sup> may be sought<sup>3</sup> from the department you are applying to.

Your performance in previous schooling is very important to your application **profile**<sup>4</sup>.

#### What are the requirements for international students?

In addition to the general admission requirements, international applicants must **submit**<sup>5</sup>:

- A **transcript**<sup>6</sup> of university courses and grades, translated into English, and
- Results of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), unless you have received **English-medium**<sup>7</sup> education for at least one year.

Applicants must have a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or a TOEFL score of 580.

#### Are any grants<sup>8</sup> or scholarships<sup>9</sup> available for international students?

Visit our **International Office** pages for details.

<sup>1</sup> the job or series of jobs that you do during your working life <sup>2</sup> making something clear by giving more details or a simpler explanation <sup>3</sup> past participle of *seek*: 'to look for' <sup>4</sup> overall character of the application <sup>5</sup> give something for a decision to be made by others <sup>6</sup> official document listing courses completed and

grades received <sup>7</sup> where all the classes are taught in English <sup>8</sup> money given specially by the government to a person to enable them to study <sup>9</sup> money given by a school, college, university, etc. to pay for the studies of a person with great ability

## B

### The application process

Look at this email from Tania to Liam. Tania is applying to study at Wanstow University.

Hi Liam,

At last I've filled in my application form and sent it off. It took ages. As well as all my personal details they wanted the names of two referees<sup>1</sup>, financial guarantees<sup>2</sup>, and I had to attach a **personal statement** saying why I wanted to go to Wanstow. Anyway, the **deadline**<sup>3</sup> is next Friday, then the website said they'd take about six weeks to process<sup>4</sup> the application after they **acknowledge**<sup>5</sup> it, then I might be called for<sup>6</sup> an interview.

By that time the references have to be in. I'm just hoping that because I'm a **mature student**<sup>7</sup> I might have a good chance of being offered a place – Wanstow has a lot of mature students and they have a strong **equal opportunities policy**<sup>8</sup>. The fees<sup>9</sup> are pretty high, but I can get a **student loan**<sup>10</sup> if I get in<sup>11</sup>.

Love, Tania

<sup>1</sup> person who knows you and who is willing to describe and, usually, praise you, to support your application <sup>2</sup> formal acceptance of financial responsibility and ability to pay (e.g. proof of a bank account) <sup>3</sup> final date by which something must be done <sup>4</sup> deal with documents officially <sup>5</sup> say that they have received it, NOT accepted-it <sup>6</sup> asked to attend

<sup>7</sup> a student at a college or university who is older than the usual age <sup>8</sup> principle of treating all people the same, regardless of sex, race, religion, etc. <sup>9</sup> amount of money paid for a particular service <sup>10</sup> money which must be repaid when one has completed one's studies <sup>11</sup> (informal) if I am accepted and given a place

## Exercises

**17.1** Read the text in A and answer a potential student's questions about the university.

- 1 Is it possible to do a postgraduate degree without having been to university before?
- 2 Where can I get more information about what qualifications I need for a specific course?
- 3 Will they want to know about my university grades?
- 4 When is an IELTS or TOEFL score not needed?
- 5 What IELTS score should applicants have?

**17.2** Match the first half of the word combination on the left with the second half on the right.

personal	financial	seek	student
equal	mature	application	first
minimum	tough		

opportunities	score	student	degree
form	competition	guarantee	
statement	clarification	loan	

**17.3** Why does the university want each of these things? Answer in full sentences using, where possible, some of the vocabulary from the opposite page.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 the names of two referees | 4 a transcript of courses taken and grades |
| 2 financial guarantees      | 5 a minimum TOEFL or IELTS score           |
| 3 a personal statement      |  |

**17.4** Number the actions to show the order in which they usually happen for a prospective student.

- ..... wait for the application to be processed
- ..... find an appropriate course
- ..... attend an interview
- ..... attach a personal statement to the form
- ..... decide on what career they would like to do
- ..... be offered a place
- ..... be called for an interview
- ..... ask referees if it is all right to put their names on the application form
- ..... check that they fulfil the necessary entry requirements
- ..... fill in an application form

**17.5** Complete the missing words in this email with words from the opposite page. The first letter of each word is given to help you.

Hi Miles,

I'd love a c..... as an international lawyer and am really hoping I can g..... in to Wanstow University to do a p..... g..... course in law there. I've f..... in all the necessary forms and just hope that my academic p..... will be good enough for them. I think I fulfil all their e..... r..... but who knows! It took me ages to get the t..... of my college g....., etc. translated but I managed to get everything in by the d.....

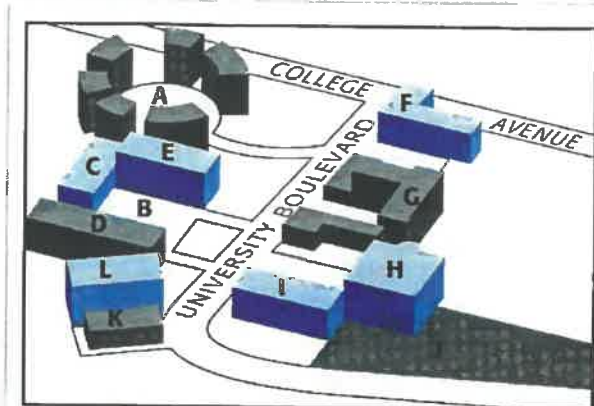
So now I just have to wait to see if they c..... me for an interview or not. Fingers crossed!

Lucia

**FOLLOW UP**

Look at the website of any English-speaking university that interests you. What information do they provide about applying to that university? Make a note of any other useful vocabulary you find there.

## A Places



## Key

A Halls of residence<sup>1</sup>  
 B University Square,  
 staff car park  
 C Administration<sup>2</sup> Building  
 D Arts Faculty<sup>3</sup> Building  
 E Great Hall<sup>4</sup>  
 F University Health Centre

G University Bookshop,  
 Cafeteria and visitors'  
 car park  
 H University Library  
 I Student Union<sup>5</sup>  
 J Sports grounds  
 K School<sup>6</sup> of Engineering  
 L Arts Lecture Theatre<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> a college building where students live <sup>2</sup> the main offices of the university, often shortened to 'admin' <sup>3</sup> a group of departments or schools (see 6) in a college which specialise in a particular group of subjects <sup>4</sup> a large hall where graduation ceremonies and other important events are held <sup>5</sup> a building

specially used by students to meet socially; the term also refers to the organisation of students which arranges social events and offers other services <sup>6</sup> part of a college or university specialising in a particular subject or group of subjects <sup>7</sup> a large hall with rows of seats, where lectures are held

## B People, structures and activities

Dr Ward, Adviser to International Students, is giving an introductory session for new international postgraduate students in the Department of English Language at Wanstow.

Dr Ward: Let me tell you about the staff. The Head of Department is Professor<sup>1</sup> Bradley. He will be giving some of the postgraduate seminars<sup>2</sup> as well as giving some of the first-semester lectures<sup>3</sup>. Then there are two Senior Lecturers<sup>4</sup>. They'll be handling lectures and tutorials<sup>5</sup>. Then there are six lecturers<sup>6</sup> – they're all listed in your information pack. You'll also meet our Research Assistant, Angela Gorski, and there are four research students doing PhDs. Each of you will be given a personal tutor<sup>7</sup>, who will be one of us. If you want to talk to any of us, our office hours are on the noticeboard and on the web page. Any questions?

Student: Is the personal tutor the same as our dissertation supervisor<sup>8</sup>?

Dr Ward: No. You'll be given a supervisor when you choose your dissertation topic. He or she'll supervise you during the spring semester<sup>9</sup> and the summer vacation<sup>10</sup>. Your personal tutor looks after your general academic welfare. You can also talk to a student counsellor<sup>11</sup> if you have any personal problems, and there's also a postgrad rep<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>1, 4</sup> and <sup>6</sup> professor is the most senior academic title; senior lecturers are below professors in academic rank, and lecturers are below senior lecturers <sup>2, 3</sup> and <sup>5</sup> seminars consist of a teacher and a group of students meeting to study and discuss something; lectures are more formal events where larger groups of students listen and take notes; tutorials are usually smaller groups where students discuss their work with a teacher <sup>7</sup> teacher who works with one student or a small group <sup>8</sup> teacher with responsibility for a particular student

<sup>9</sup> the university teaching year is normally divided into two semesters; the word term is also often used for the periods when students are in residence at a university <sup>10</sup> period when universities or colleges are closed; the word holiday is also used by students <sup>11</sup> someone trained to listen to students and give them advice about their problems <sup>12</sup> (informal) short form of *postgraduate representative* (someone who acts officially for that group of students)



## Exercises

**18.1** Look at A. Which building must students go to if they want to:

- 1 speak to a lecturer in the history department?
- 2 find information about student clubs?
- 3 visit someone who is living in the student accommodation?
- 4 enquire about payment of fees?
- 5 attend a graduation ceremony?
- 6 listen to a talk about English literature?
- 7 see a doctor?
- 8 borrow a book?

**18.2** Read the text in B and answer the questions.

- 1 Are there likely to be more people in a seminar or a tutorial?
- 2 Who is the academic who guides a postgraduate student through their dissertation?
- 3 What word is used for the holiday period between university terms or semesters?
- 4 What is the difference between a personal tutor and a student counsellor?
- 5 What is the difference between a postgrad rep and a student counsellor?

**18.3** Fill in the missing words in this email with words from the opposite page.

Hi Mum,

I've settled in well here at Wanstow. I like my room in this hall of ..... I went to my first ..... this morning – it was on research methodology – and there were hundreds of students there. The ..... was very good – it was Professor Jones, our head of ..... Tomorrow I'll have my first ..... – that'll be just me and one other student. We'll be discussing what we have to get done by the end of the ..... I need to try to think some more about the topic for my ..... When that is finalised I'll be assigned a ..... I'll be expected to see him or her at least once a week during their office ..... I hope I'll like him or her. You hear some awful stories!

Daisy

**18.4** Put the words in the box into the correct category.

cafeteria	counsellor	lecture	lecturer
librarian	library	postgrad rep	professor
research assistant	research student	seminar	sports centre
sports grounds	tutor	tutorial	lecture theatre

people	place	event

**FOLLOW UP**

Are universities/colleges in your country roughly based on a similar system to the UK one, or are there important differences? Make sure you can describe the main features in English. If your country's universities/colleges are more similar to the US system, study Unit 19.

# Systems compared: the US and the UK

In US universities, many of the words for people and places are the same as those used in the UK (see Unit 18), but there are some differences.

## A

### Terms with different meanings in US and UK university systems

US example	meaning/comment	UK example	meaning/comment
Are you <b>faculty</b> or student?	If you are <i>faculty</i> , you are a member of the academic staff.	The <b>faculty</b> will have to come to a decision on this.	<i>Faculty</i> refers to a group of departments (see Unit 18) with similar interests.
The grading <b>rubric</b> for term papers has been revised.	A <i>rubric</i> is a set of criteria or guidelines which tells how an assignment will be graded or scored.	Some students misread the exam <b>rubric</b> and didn't answer enough questions.	Instructions on an exam paper or in a textbook as to <i>how</i> a task must be done.
I went to <b>college</b> in St Louis. I attended Washington <b>University</b> . I took some fascinating courses at <b>college</b> .	The word <i>college</i> in American English refers broadly to the undergraduate experience, whether it is at a two-year community college, a four-year college, or a large state university in the US. A specific institution can be a college (granting undergraduate degrees only) or a university (granting undergraduate and graduate degrees).	She went to <b>university</b> in Scotland. She graduated from <b>university</b> in 1996.	In British English, <i>university</i> refers to the undergraduate experience. In both American and British English, no article is used before <i>college</i> or <i>university</i> in these examples.
Her brother went to <b>school</b> at Harvard.	<i>School</i> is often used to mean <i>university</i> . A common question is 'Where did you go to school?' meaning 'Where did you go to college?'	I went to <b>school</b> in London, then I went to university in Bristol.	Refers to primary or secondary education; <i>school</i> can also refer to a university department which covers several different teaching areas (e.g. School of English and Journalism).

## B

### Different US terms

I wonder who should be on my PhD committee<sup>1</sup>. My advisor<sup>2</sup> suggested Dr Fry and Dr Roe. I have a lot of studying to do. I have my comps<sup>3</sup> in two weeks. Let's meet in Harley Commons<sup>4</sup> at 7.30 pm, and we can study for tomorrow's quiz<sup>5</sup>, OK? It was tough being a freshman<sup>6</sup> because I wasn't used to such difficult finals<sup>7</sup>, but life got a bit easier when I became a sophomore<sup>8</sup>. It was easy enough as a junior<sup>9</sup>, but then it got tough again when I was a senior<sup>10</sup>.

As a graduate student<sup>11</sup>, I get to attend seminars with some of the top people in my field. The fraternity<sup>12</sup> and sorority<sup>13</sup> houses are all round the edge of the campus.

<sup>1</sup> a group of teachers who advise a PhD student <sup>2</sup> equivalent of the UK *supervisor* (see Unit 18) <sup>3</sup> short for *comprehensive examinations*, subject-area tests required of graduate students in some areas of studies <sup>4</sup> area where students can meet socially and eat in dining halls <sup>5</sup> short test on areas which have been taught <sup>6</sup> new, first-year undergraduate (also used in the UK) <sup>7</sup> final examinations at the end of the semester <sup>8</sup> second-year student, from the Greek *sophos*, wise, and *moros*, dull <sup>9</sup> third-year student <sup>10</sup> fourth-year student <sup>11</sup> student with a bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) who is enrolled in a master's degree programme, equivalent of *postgraduate* student in the UK <sup>12</sup> a social organisation for male students <sup>13</sup> a social organisation for female students

## Exercises

**19.1** Look at A. Who is more likely to be speaking – a British person or an American? Why?

1 Only faculty can eat here.

2 All professors use the same rubric for grading term papers.

3 I went to school at Millintown, where I got my masters and PhD.

4 My department is within the Faculty of Engineering.

5 The rubric required students to answer all three questions on the exam paper.

**19.2** Put these levels of student in an American university in order of seniority, starting with the first-year student. Explain what kind of student each term refers to.

graduate student    junior    freshman    senior    sophomore

**19.3** Are the following statements true or false? If false, explain why they are incorrect.

- 1 An advisor is someone who helps American students with their emotional problems.
- 2 Women usually join a fraternity.
- 3 Finals means a student's last semester at university or college.
- 4 A PhD committee is a group of graduate students.

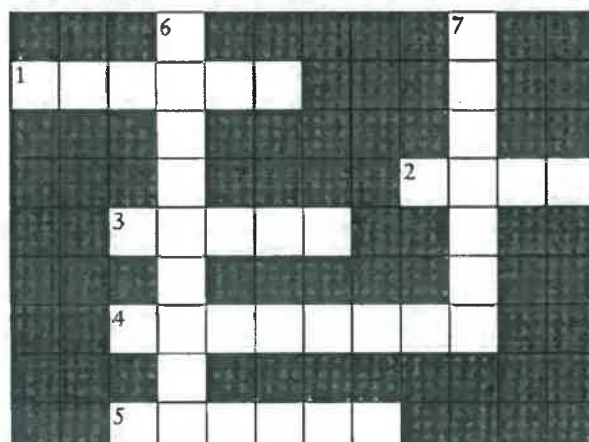
**19.4** Use the clues to complete the crossword.

Across

- 1 Sometimes used to refer to college or university in the US
- 2 A short test of material that has been taught
- 3 Test to assess whether a student knows subject material required for a graduate degree
- 4 A social organisation for female students
- 5 A fourth-year student in the US

Down

- 6 A second-year student
- 7 A general word meaning academic staff in the US





# Academic courses

## A

## Course descriptions

Look at this extract from a UK university's web pages. American websites may use different terms.

### Diploma/MA in English Language and Culture

- \* **Qualification:** **Diploma**<sup>1</sup> or MA. **Duration:** One year full-time or two years part-time.  
The course is a 180-credit<sup>2</sup> course, consisting of 120 credits of **core**<sup>3</sup> and **elective**<sup>4</sup> **modules**<sup>5</sup> plus a 60-credit dissertation module. Core modules are **obligatory**. **Candidates** not wishing to **proceed** to the MA may **opt for**<sup>6</sup> the Diploma (120 credits without dissertation).
- \* **Course description:** The course covers all the major aspects of present-day English language and culture. Topics include grammar, vocabulary, language in society, literature in English (for a full list, see the **list of modules**). Elective modules only run if a minimum of ten students **enrol**<sup>7</sup>. The modules consist of a mixture of **lectures**, **seminars**, **workshops** and **tutorials**<sup>8</sup>.
- \* **Assessment**<sup>9</sup>: A 3,000-word **assignment**<sup>10</sup> must be submitted for each core module. Elective modules are assessed through **essays**, **projects** and **portfolios**<sup>11</sup>. The **word limit** for the dissertation is 12,000 to 15,000 words.  
Candidates must achieve a pass grade in all four core modules (20 credits each), plus 40 credits in elective modules (minimum of 30 credits in the English department plus 10 **optional** credits from modules offered by other departments), and, for MA, must pass the dissertation module (60 credits).  
Candidates who achieve a grade average of 70% or more over all modules may be **eligible**<sup>12</sup> for a **distinction**<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> a qualification between a bachelor's degree and a master's degree <sup>2</sup> unit which represents a successfully completed part of a course  
<sup>3</sup> most important parts of a course of study, that all students must do <sup>4</sup> which are chosen  
<sup>5</sup> one of the units which together make a complete course taught especially at a college or university <sup>6</sup> choose <sup>7</sup> put one's name on an official list of course members <sup>8</sup> see Unit

18 for the meaning of these; a workshop is a meeting to discuss and/or perform practical work in a subject <sup>9</sup> judgements of the quality of students' work <sup>10</sup> a piece of written work  
<sup>11</sup> a collection of documents that represent a person's work <sup>12</sup> having the necessary qualities or fulfilling the necessary conditions <sup>13</sup> a special mark given to students who produce work of an excellent standard

## B

## Other aspects of courses

Dr Ward is holding a question-and-answer session for new MA students.

Reza: Can we defer<sup>1</sup> the dissertation if we can't stay here during the summer?

Dr Ward: Yes, you can defer for a year, but don't forget, if you do go home, you won't be able to have face-to-face supervisions<sup>2</sup>.

Simon: Are the in-session<sup>3</sup> language courses compulsory?

Dr Ward: No. Most of you did the pre-session<sup>3</sup>, which is the most important. But there are good in-session<sup>3</sup> courses you can sign up for, especially the EAP<sup>4</sup> writing course.

Angela: If we get the MA, can we go on to do a PhD immediately?

Dr Ward: Not automatically. You have to show you can do PhD standard work first anyway, and then upgrade<sup>5</sup> to the PhD programme after a year or so.

<sup>1</sup> delay until a later time <sup>2</sup> individual meetings with the teacher who is responsible for the student's dissertation <sup>3</sup> courses held during the main teaching semesters; pre-session<sup>3</sup> courses are held before the main teaching semesters begin <sup>4</sup> English for Academic Purposes <sup>5</sup> become officially registered for the higher degree



When addressing someone with a PhD, always use their family name, e.g. *Excuse me, Dr Lopez*. Only medical doctors can be addressed simply as *Doctor*, without using their family name.

## Exercises

### 20.1 Answer the questions about the text in A.

- 1 How long does the Diploma or MA course take if you study full-time?
- 2 How many credits is a dissertation worth?
- 3 What is special about core modules?
- 4 What is the difference between doing a Diploma and an MA?
- 5 How many students are required for an elective module to run?
- 6 How long do assignments have to be?
- 7 What kinds of classes do the students get?
- 8 On what kinds of work are they assessed?
- 9 What is the maximum number of words allowed in a dissertation?
- 10 What do students have to do to get a distinction?

### 20.2 Complete the missing words in this email from a student to a friend.

Diploma    dissertation    in-sessional    MA    module    PhD    project    sign

Hi Erika,

How are things going with you? I'm sorry not to have written to you sooner but I've been desperately busy with the linguistics (1) ..... I have to do for the elective (2) ..... I'm taking this term. It's really interesting and I think I might decide to do my final (3) ..... on a similar topic. At first I was only planning to do the (4) ..... but now I've decided to have a go at an (5) ..... . I might even (6) ..... up for a (7) ..... if they'll have me! PhD students are usually offered some language teaching on the (8) ..... EAP courses they run for foreign students, so it would be useful for my CV for the future.

Shoshana

### 20.3 Choose the correct word to complete each sentence.

- 1 I started out doing an MA but then decided to *upgrade* / *defer* to a PhD.
- 2 Students whose first language is not English usually have to attend a(n) *in-sessional* / *pre-sessional* language course before their main classes start.
- 3 Only six students have *enrolled* / *opted*, so the MEd programme will not run this year.
- 4 Most students decide to *sign* / *proceed* to the MA after completing their Diploma course.
- 5 Core modules are *obligatory* / *optional*.
- 6 When I was doing my PhD I had monthly one-to-one *seminars* / *supervisions*.
- 7 I won't be able to finish the dissertation this year, so I'll have to *opt* / *defer* till next year.
- 8 *Assessment* / *Assignment* consists of a three-hour end-of-module exam.

### 20.4 Complete the table below. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.



verb	noun	adjective
opt		
		obligatory
	supervision +	
	assessment +	—
—		eligible

FOLLOW UP

Compare your own course, or one you hope to do, with the course described in A in terms of duration, modules and assessment.