FURTHER STUDY - SHOULD I OR SHOULDN’T I?

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» Honours in my major?
» A postgraduate diploma?
» An interdisciplinary postgraduate course?

MAKING YOUR DECISION

All curricula can lead to a wide range of postgraduate study options and career opportunities. Making a decision about further study requires doing some groundwork beforehand if you want to reduce the possibility of having regrets in the future.

Begin by researching and weighing up all your options – work experience, internships, travel and gap years, as well as further study. It is important to look at why you are drawn to a particular option, in particular, your reasons and motivations.

Here are some questions to help you with the process of making an informed decision:

» Do you know where you are going in terms of your career?
» What do you expect to learn and gain from further studies?
» Are you sure that studying further will help you get to where you want to be? If so, how?
» Will it increase your employability? How?
» What are the pros and cons of further study?
» What other activities and/or experience could also be of benefit to you at this point in your career development?

Capping a degree with further study does not necessarily improve your job or career prospects. Establish whether you need deeper or additional knowledge and/or skills to compete in your career field. You can become overqualified and some employers may be hesitant to consider you for a position. They may be unsure of your commitment to a job that does not give you the opportunity to use your full potential.

On the other hand, your willingness to choose experience over salary in spite of your qualifications can be seen as evidence of your commitment to doing what it takes to get a foot in the door of a competitive industry or field that you’re passionate about.

Some occupations and industries require a minimum of a postgraduate diploma or an honours degree to enter, while others especially those relating to academia and research - require advanced (Masters and PhD) postgraduate studies.

GOOD REASONS TO STUDY FURTHER

» I enjoy what I’m studying and I’m doing well academically
» My interest in this field is motivating me to study further and studying further will enhance my degree
» I have done my research and know what my postgraduate course entails
» I will enjoy the opportunity to further develop independent critical thinking, stimulate my intellectual creativity, conduct research, and work with academics who are creating new knowledge
» I need a postgraduate qualification in order to meet the requirements of the occupation/job/work role I am interested in pursuing
» Postgraduate studies offer me the opportunity to further develop my personal and professional skills and experience
» The career field I am interested in is highly competitive and a postgraduate qualification will increase my options and opportunities
» I have a plan to manage the costs of an extra year of study.

BAD REASONS TO STUDY FURTHER

» I can’t find a job
» I assume that there are no employment prospects for someone with my degree and think that studying further is the only way I will find a job
» I don’t know what to do next and studying further will give me more time to figure out what I should do next
» Most of my friends are studying further so it seems as though this is what I need to do too.

If you are still uncertain about whether to study further, consult a careers advisor.