The benefits of your masters course

Many employers value the ability to develop new skills and continue learning. A masters course will not only increase or develop your skills and knowledge, but also provide evidence of your capacity to apply them effectively. For example, your course is likely to involve considerable independent study, and require you to make greater use of a range of skills developed at undergraduate level.

Skills

Evidence of well-honed skills is a significant benefit of having completed a masters course. These skills are likely to be transferable to a number of different contexts.

- intellectual skills: research, initiative, generating ideas, forming questions, answering questions, analysis, analysing data, handling information, sorting, problem solving, recalling, memorising, extrapolating, synthesising
- interpersonal skills: oral and written communication, working in a group or team, building positive relationships with peers and tutors, negotiating, persuading, collaborating, networking
- personal skills: self-motivation, taking early responsibility, commitment, time management, project management, personal presentation
- technical skills: from practical projects, IT, laboratory skills, research techniques

Knowledge

Gaining deeper understanding and knowledge of a subject is a clear benefit of a masters course. Masters graduates are likely to be able to conceptualise and think about the range of a topic, pose questions and formulate answers. You will be experienced in finding relevant subject specific information quickly and using a range of sources. Knowledge might be categorised in the following way:

- up-to-date subject knowledge
- knowledge of sources of information
- knowledge of the key people working in the field
- knowledge of current thinking about techniques relevant to the field.

Experience

Masters courses vary in style as well as subject. However, you are likely to gain experience of:

- group projects
- writing reports or extended essays
- a dissertation or extensive piece of independent research
- work related or professional experience.

From these experiences you can draw robust evidence of well-developed skills. For example, independent study involves self-discipline and motivation. A successful research project demonstrates initiative and resourcefulness. Managing to sustain family commitments or part time work while studying can also support claims of good time management and ability to achieve under pressure.

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