

University of Manchester  
Worldwide  
Enquirer Experience, Discount  
and English Language  
Research

*Research Report, September 2019*

\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\*



Fresh Research Perspectives

All the angles covered

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# Research Background

Objectives & Methodology

# Objectives & Methodology

- The University of Manchester Worldwide (UMW) currently operates a non-standard fee structure for tuition fees. Tuition fees are set at individual course level appropriate for the subject matter and market. While market intelligence is used to suggest a target fee based on competitor advertised fees, there is little information available for discounts and scholarships offered to students. As such, research is required to gain a better understand on competitor discounting practices and policies for online and blended postgraduate taught courses to help inform the UMW strategy.
- UMW commissioned independent research agency Red Brick Research to:
  - Understand how competitors' offer and target discounts, incentives and scholarships.
  - Gather insight into how competitor institutions interact with potential applicants; including the information supplied and requested, the channels used and support offered.
  - Gather information on:
    - What universities request from potential applicants in terms of IELTS and whether they are flexible with those who do not meet the standard requirements
    - Which universities offer their own English Tests and if there is a charge for it
    - If courses are flexible with the application deadline
    - Advertisements offered by competitors universities/ courses

The research consists of:



## **Desk research**

- Desk research was carried out on 50 competitor courses to provide a database that includes:
  - Discounts/ incentives advertised
  - Scholarships advertised
  - Application deadlines advertised



## **Mystery shopping**

- Mystery shopping conducted on the 50 competitor courses
- We did not apply to any course; all conversations were pre-application
- The mystery shopping aimed to get detail around competitor offers and communications that is not viable by looking at what they advertise

*\*Please see appendix for a full list of courses interest was registered in*

# Mystery shopping: set-up overview

**Two identical groups of identities were created;** each group contained a UK, EU and International persona, each with their own email address, postal address and phone number. Splitting the personas by fee status allowed us to explore how communication and funding offers differ by the type of individual.

**Group A**



**Group B**



We used two identical groups of personas to allow us to be able to speak to numerous courses at the same institution without raising suspicion that we were not real potential applicants.

In total there were 50 courses; the courses were split between group A and group B with each identity registering interest with the 25 courses from their group.

# Mystery shopping: The personas

- Each of our personas had a short backstory including information on their qualifications, where they work and why they want to undertake further study. Each backstory was tailored to the individual courses spoken to in order to ensure our personas remained believable and could get the most information out of the mystery shopping process. To ensure there were no biases between the groups some personal factors were kept the same across groups and fee status e.g. both EU personas had a IELTS score of 6.5.

## Group A

## Group B



	Kellie	Anneke	Maurice	Olivia	Zoe	Grace
<b>Nationality &amp; residency</b>	UK	EU - Dutch	Overseas – Kenyan	UK	EU - Dutch	Overseas – Kenyan
<b>Prior qualifications (Higher Education)</b>	Degree 2:1 or equivalent	Degree 2:1 or equivalent	Degree 2:1 or equivalent	Degree 2:1 or equivalent	Degree 2:1 or equivalent	Degree 2:1 or equivalent
<b>Where did they study their prior qualification?</b>	University of Manchester	Vrije University (Amsterdam)	University of Nairobi	University of Manchester	Vrije University (Amsterdam)	University of Nairobi
<b>English levels</b>	n/a (native)	IELTS 6.5 (exam taken recently, 6 months ago)	No IELTS	n/a (native)	IELTS 6.5 (exam taken recently, 6 months ago)	No IELTS
<b>Where do they work?</b>	In all cases a 'named' institution such as Deloitte or AstraZeneca or Siemens					
<b>Why do they want to do a DL MSc?</b>	Promotion / more money; transfer to another job/ want knowledge in area / want own business					

# The Mystery Shopping Process

## 2. Follow-up email is sent

Approx. 1 week after registering interest a follow-up email is sent asking for further information on the course.

## 4. Chase-up emails

If no response is received from registering interest at stage 1 (Approx. 2 weeks) another follow-up email is sent.



## 1. Registering interest in courses

Interest is registered in courses; either by filling in the online contact form or sending an email saying we are interested in the course.

## 3. Ongoing conversations

Conversations are on-going; asking if there are any scholarships / bursaries or discounts available, confirming IELTS and flexibility, and confirming application deadline and flexibility.

Conversations are continued until a discount or incentive is made or conversation meet a natural close.

## 5. Re-contacting

Each course is re-contacted closer to their application deadline to see if there is any movement on financial assistance.

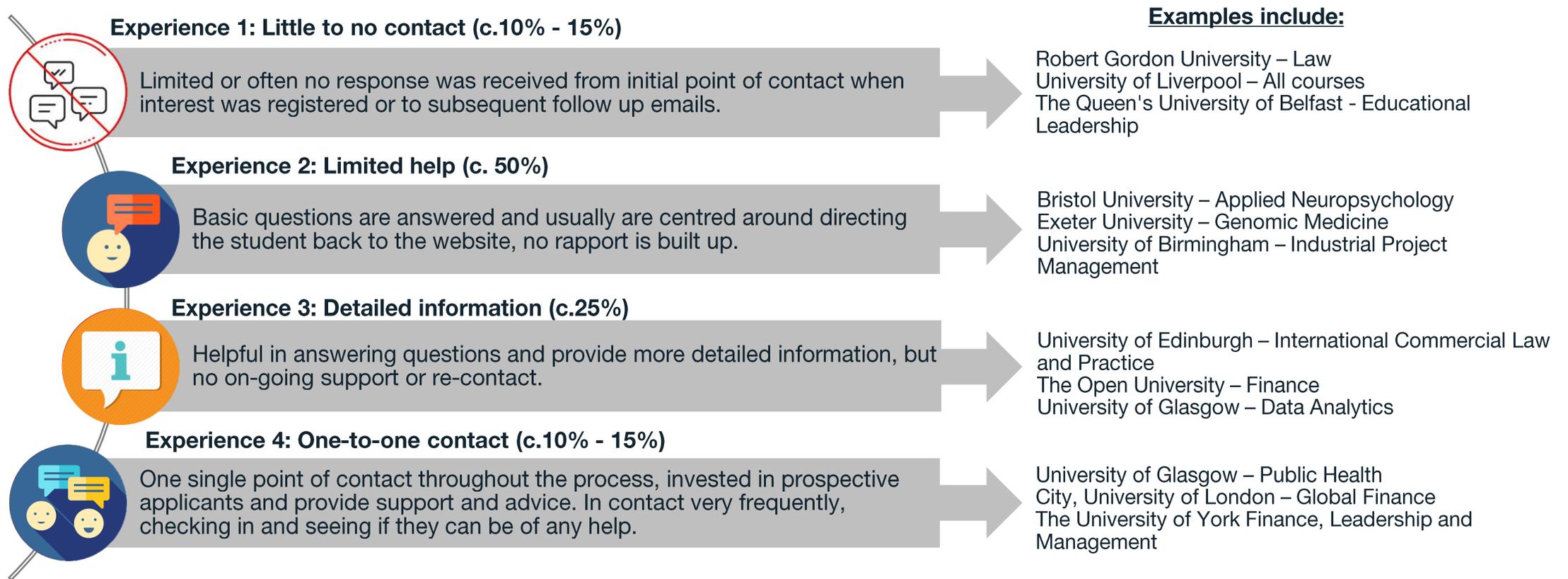
**\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\***

# Executive Summary & Recommendations

Key recommendations and findings

# Four main types of enquirer experience have been identified

During the mystery shopping process we gathered insight into how competitor institutions interact with potential applicants. This included analysis of how proactive courses were to our personas (e.g. number of emails /phone calls sent), what we were sent in relation to our queries and the level of support and guidance offered. From this, we identified 4 different types of experiences an enquirer might have:



Based on our mystery shopping the majority of courses did not offer a scholarship, discount or bursary pre-application

**Three discounts were offered during our mystery shopping**

The diagram features a teal bracket at the top that groups three vertical panels. The first two panels are grey and represent the University of Birmingham, while the third is blue and represents Queen Mary University of London. Each panel contains the university's logo, the course name, and details of the discount or bursary offered.

- UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**Industrial Project Management**  
A discount was offered to the **UK persona**; reducing the course fees from £10,500 to £9,600.
- UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**Industrial Project Management**  
A discount was offered to the **EU persona**; reducing the course fees from £10,500 to £9,600.
- Queen Mary University of London**  
**Global Public Health**  
A discount was offered to the **EU persona** which was split into two parts; £500 fee reduction if they applied before the 30th July and £250 fee reduction if they reserve their place on the programme within 48 hours upon admission.

**One bursary was offered during our mystery shopping:**

The panel is blue and features the Queen Mary University of London logo at the top. It details a bursary offer for the Global Public Health course.

**Queen Mary University of London**  
**Global Public Health**  
A £800 bursary was offered to the **international persona**.

**No scholarships were offered during our mystery shopping:**

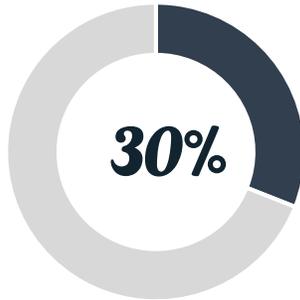
The panel is teal and contains text explaining that no scholarships were offered and providing advice on where to look for scholarships.

No scholarships were offered during the mystery shopping. When enquiring about scholarships available common practice was to direct us back to the universities scholarship webpages.

*\*All mystery shopping was conducted pre-application*

# A number of courses offer flexibility as an incentive to prospective applicants

- The majority of courses advertise an IELTS requirement of 6.5 or 7.0; however 15 courses waived their requirements in offer of demonstrating proficiency in English in another way. Typically this is by showing a letter from their employer confirming their English skills or having a qualification that was taught / assessed in English.



...of courses were flexible with their English language entry requirements

Flexible with IELTS Requirements	
University	Course
University of Birmingham	Industrial Project Management
City, University of London	Global Finance
The University of Edinburgh	Restorative Dentistry
King's College London	Public Health
The Queen's University of Belfast	Educational Leadership
The Open University	Educational Leadership and Management
University of Nottingham	MRes Molecular Pathology, Bioinformatics and Diagnostics
The Open University	Finance
The University of York	Finance, Leadership and Management
Newcastle University	Oncology
The University of Edinburgh	Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine
The University of Edinburgh	International Commercial Law & Practice
The Robert Gordon University	Project Management
University of Bristol	Applied Neuropsychology
The University of Bath	Educational Leadership and Management

# Recommendations – learn from examples of best practice

From a prospective applicant perspective, the ideal experience is between 3 and 4; the one-to-one contact that typically comes from course advisors provides lots of detailed information about the course but can be too intense at times. Reviewing the experiences at each stage of the mystery shopping process allows the ideal journey to be identified using examples of best practice;

## Make use of online forms to capture interest

- The process for registering interest varies across universities, with some courses being quite difficult to register interest in. An online contact form is the easiest and quickest way to register interest and in most cases it makes the subsequent conversations smoother as the member of staff has all the details of which course the student is interested in and if they've asked any specific questions.

### Register your interest

First (Given) name:

Last (Family) name:

Email address:

Country of residence:

Nationality:

Intake:

Ask us a question:

I'm happy to receive communications from Aston University

Yes

No

← Aston University's online sign up form for Health Psychology

## The first contact with prospective applicants should be personal

- After interest has been registered, all courses got in touch via email whether this was a direct response or simply an acknowledgement that an enquiry had been made.
- Personal emails acknowledging the course that the student is interested in and outlines the next steps to find out more were the most valuable; they make the student feel valued and make a good first impression.

City, University of London's initial email→

Hi Grace,

Thank you for your enquiry into the online MSc programme with Cass Business School, City University of London. We're delighted you're considering studying with us.

As a first step, if you're able to send me a copy of your CV and a very brief description of your goals that would be fantastic and I'll be best placed to advise you further.

For further information on Cass Business school, including access to our informative webinars, please visit our [website](#).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

### Meet our academics



Watch this video to get to know us better.

### Download your brochure



Read more about the course.

# Recommendations – learn from examples of best practice

## Ongoing conversations with applicants

- The experience prospective students have when communicating with the university throughout the decision making journey goes a long way in determining their perceptions of the university and there are a number of elements to consider in terms of how to make the ongoing conversations as valuable as possible;

### **Make contact with applicants over the phone as well as via email**

- A small number of courses get in touch by phone which can go a long way to making the applicant feel valued and builds a much stronger rapport. Where possible, prospective applicants should be given the opportunity to have a call to discuss the course in more detail.

### **Carefully consider whether to put prospective applicants in touch with teaching staff**

- Speaking to teaching staff is valuable, but there is more room for individual differences to show through. A negative interaction (such as no reply, lack of information) can damage prospective applicants' perceptions of the course and make them question what the experience would be like if they were a student there; would it be difficult to get a response from their lecturer if they have a question? The University of Glasgow use teaching staff well for their Data Analytics course; the lecturer who emailed was friendly, gave detailed information and responded quickly.

### **Share materials that give more detail about online learning**

- A number of courses sent materials which gave an idea of what online study would be like and more details of the course. This kind of information is really valuable and helps the student to get a clearer idea of what it would be like to study there. Materials can include course brochures, programme handbooks, links to demonstrations of online learning platforms and many others.

### **Ensure marketing materials are relevant to online learners**

- Marketing emails should be used sparingly alongside genuine communications to give relevant information for online postgraduate learning; some courses sent information on life on campus, accommodation etc. which are less likely to be relevant to online learners.

# Recommendations – learn from examples of best practice

## Give detailed information on financial incentives

- Few courses offer financial incentives such as bursaries or discounts. Many offer a range of scholarships that are advertised online, though none of our personas were given a scholarship throughout the mystery shopping process.
- As such, if UMW do not offer any bursaries / discounts they will not be out of step with competitors and offering financial incentives could help UMW to stand out.
- While few courses offered a financial incentive, there are some stand out experiences;
  - Rather than directing our persona back the website, The University of Edinburgh name specific scholarships that are available to online learners.
  - The University of Sheffield reached out to the Finance team on behalf of our persona to check whether any discounts were available.
  - Robert Gordon University offer functionality on their website that allows scholarships to be filtered depending on mode of study / mode of attendance / subject area.

## Offer flexibility in IELTS requirements

- Many courses offer flexibility in IELTS requirements in the form of another degree / qualification having been studied in English, a letter from an employer, exemptions for certain countries or sometimes the IELTS requirements are just a recommended guide and not a strict entry requirement.

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**“You are not required to do IELTS if you have studied or worked in English before. You can simply request a letter from an employer stating that you are fully proficient in English and we will accept it as a proof of your level of English”**

*City, University of London – Global Finance*

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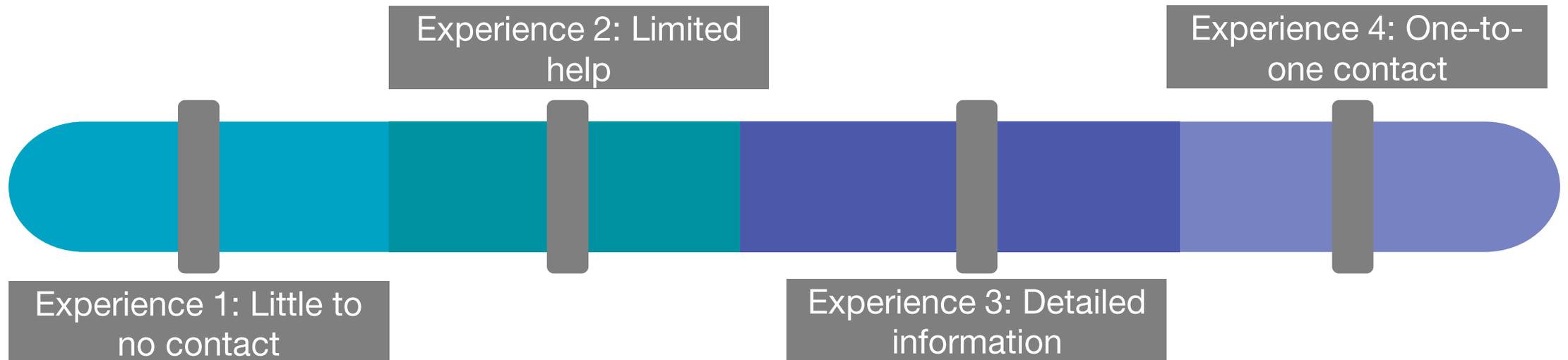
- In order to be in line with the competition, UMW should also offer flexibility in IELTS requirements where possible.

# Key Findings

# Enquirer Experiences

# Four different types of enquirer experiences have been identified through the mystery shopping

- During the mystery shopping process we gathered insight into how competitor institutions interact with potential applicants. This included analysis of how proactive courses were to our personas (e.g. number of emails /phone calls sent), what we were sent in relation to our queries and the level of support and guidance offered.
- From this we identified 4 different types of experiences an enquirer might have:



- Each experience type will be further discussed in the next section of the report.

# Courses that offer little – no contact were hard to get in touch with and offered very limited help and advice to prospective students



## Experience 1: Little – no contact

- In this experience it was difficult to get in contact with anyone for information. After registering interest in the course, no response was received. Limited or often no response was received from subsequent follow up emails.
- An example of a course that provided this type of experience is Robert Gordon University - Law. Both our EU and International personas received an automatic email thanking them for getting in touch, however they did not get a reply. The UK persona did have a slightly different experience and they responded after one email chasing them up. However, replies were slow, taking one week to respond. It is therefore possible for a single course to offer different experiences to potential applicants.
- **The proportion of courses we mystery shopped that fall into this type of experience is around: c.10%**

**“Thanks for getting in touch with the Student Admissions Service. Responding to your enquiry is really important to us.**

**If you have sent us documents or have got in touch with a question we are working on it for you and will get back to you within 2 working days”**

*Bristol University – Applied Neuropsychology*

# Courses that offer limited help answer the basic questions but show no interest in prospective applicants



Experience 2: Limited help

- In this experience those we spoke to offered a low level of customer service and did not provide our personas with a particularly helpful experience; they didn't build up a rapport or relationship and responses to our questions were short with basic information shared. They mostly sent links directing us back to their website offering no additional information.
- An example of a course that provided this type of experience is Bristol University – Applied Neuropsychology. When we enquired about scholarships after providing our backstory and desire to study the course we were just given a link to the universities general funding webpage.
- **The proportion of courses we mystery shopped that fall into this type of experience is around: c.50%**

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“Thank you for your email. There is information about funding postgraduate study here.”

*Bristol University – Applied Neuropsychology*

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“Thanks for your enquiry. I suggest reviewing UCLs general English Language requirement guidance here”

*University College London – Paediatric Dentistry*

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# Courses offering detailed information seem to genuinely want to help prospective applicants, but there is no ongoing support



## Experience 3: Detailed information

- In this experience those we were in contact with were helpful in answering our questions and often provided more information and detail than was requested. However, there was limited rapport and no offer of on-going support; no course in this experience re-contacted our persona to offer further information, help or advice.
- An example of a course that provides this type of experience is The University of Edinburgh - International Commercial Law & Practice. After registering our interest on the course, they sent a detailed email with information on; the duration of the programme, assessments, and the virtual learning environment. Our questions were always answered quickly and with detailed information. For example, when asking about the application deadline, the date and time was given alongside details of further intakes.
- **The proportion of courses we mystery shopped that fall into this type of experience is around: c.25%**

Dear Olivia

Thank you for your enquiry and for your interest in studying via online learning at Edinburgh Law School.

Your schedule for the online programme will depend on duration of the programme. For example, if you take the programme over one year (full time), you will study three courses per semester. Each course requires approximately 10 to 15 hours of research, writing and participation each week. Full-time students should expect to spend around 40 hours per week on the programme.

None of the courses you would take as part of the online programme will require you to be in Edinburgh and there are no exams. Each course will have a number of different summative assessments, which may include essays, contribution to a debate on a particular topic, reflective blog post, etc.

Our distance learning programmes and courses are delivered via our virtual learning environment (VLE). Learning and teaching happen 'asynchronously'. This means that you have the flexibility to log in at any time that suits you, contribute your views and respond to others. You can fit your studies around work and other commitments, study at times and in places convenient to you, and still maintain a sense of community with your fellow students across time zones. More information can be found on our webpages: <https://www.law.ed.ac.uk/study/online-masters-degrees/benefits-online-learning>.

I hope this helps but should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

# Courses offering one-to-one contact sell the course and guide students through the application process



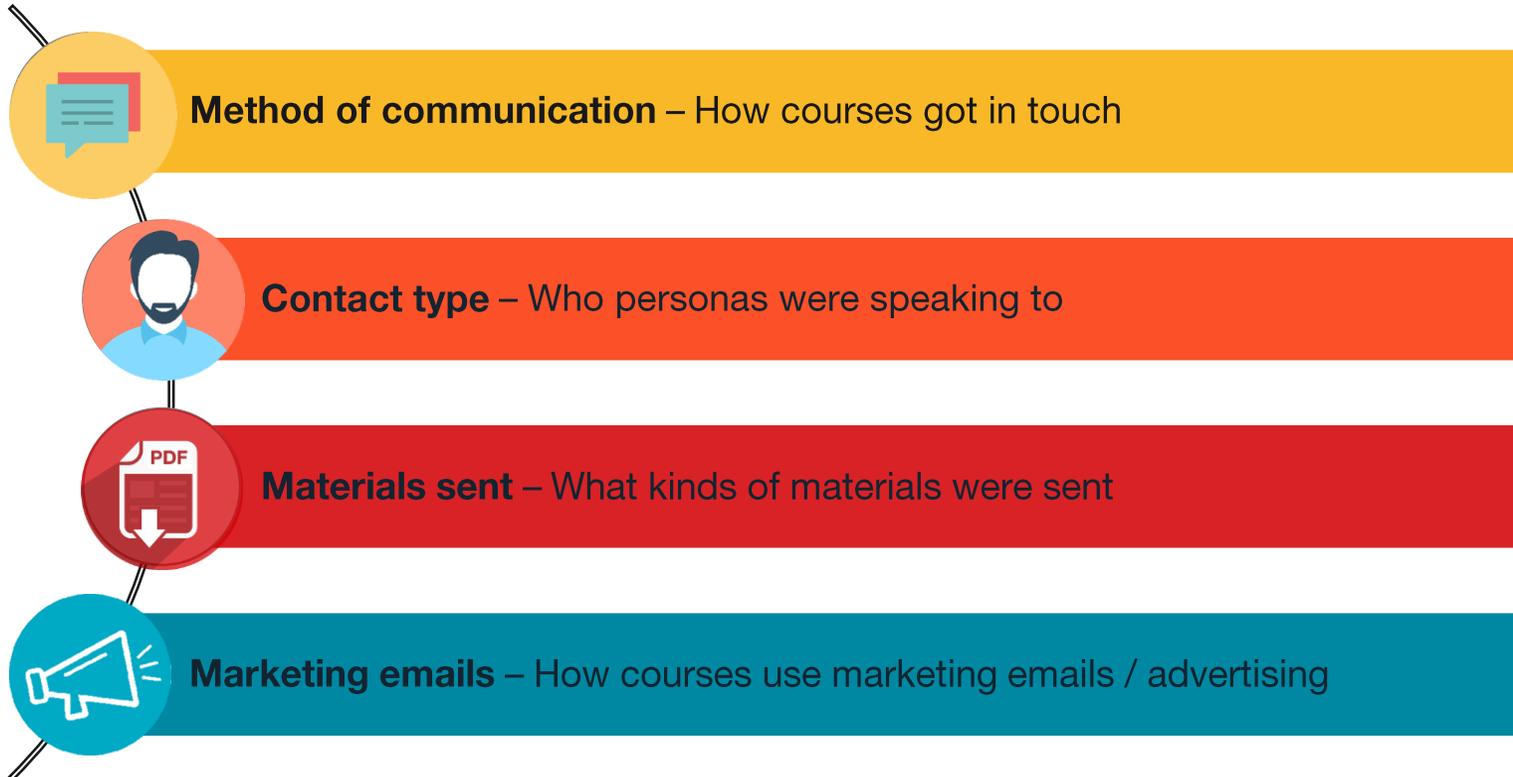
- In this experience those we were in contact with were the most invested in our personas; taking time to get to know them personally and asking about their career goals and ambitions. They were in contact the most often; sending emails checking-in, and sometimes sending voicemails and texts to see if we require any additional information.
- An example of a course that provided this type of experience is University of Glasgow – Public Health. They sent – sent an average of **11 emails, 3 checking-in emails** and **2 phone calls**. They promptly sent an introductory email after interest was registered in the course; introducing themselves as our dedicated advisor who were there to help guide us through the application process.\* They were proactive in sending course materials; such as a PDF document on the programme outcomes and graduate career prospects and in re-contacting our personas closer to the application deadline. They were proactive with our personas throughout the mystery shopping process; emailing our personas close to the application deadline offering to help get our application “moving as quickly as possible.” Our EU persona also received an email from the ‘Associate Director of Student Recruitment’ to see if there was anything they could do to support their decision in applying.
- While these courses were proactive in offering support and guidance at times the number of phone calls and emails asking if we were still interested in the course could be perceived as excessive; for example City – Global Finance sent on average 5 emails and 4 voicemails checking to see if we were still interested in the course.
- **The proportion of courses we mystery shopped that fall into this type of experience is: c.10%**

## Experience 4: One-to-one contact

“The application deadline is less 2 weeks away and we are keen to support you in making the process as smooth as possible, so you are still able to achieve your goal.” *University of Glasgow – Public Health*

# Interaction with courses varies across the board

- The 4 main enquirer experiences were identified through analysis of individual elements of interaction;



- Each of these which will be explored in more detail in the next few pages;

# Courses get in touch with prospective applicants via email; few use alternative methods such as texts or voicemails

## 3 out of 49 courses sent texts messages :

**King's College London** was the only university to text our UK persona. EU and international personas did not receive any text messages.

Courses from King's College London who sent texts include:

1. Psychology & Neuroscience of Mental Health
2. Global Finance and Banking
3. International Financial and Commercial Law

Not all courses from King's sent text messages; Aesthetic Dentistry and Public Health did not.

All text messages were received from a course advisor and were used either to notify our UK persona of the application deadline or to prompt them to get in touch with their course advisors should we have any questions.

**"Please be reminded that the application deadline for the September 2019 intake is midnight (BST) tonight, Monday 19th August 2019."**

*Text from King's College London – International Finance and Commercial Law*

## 5 out of 49 courses left voicemails :

Courses that left voicemails include:

1. Queen Mary University London – Global Public Health
2. University of Glasgow – Public Health
3. City, University London – Global Finance
4. The University of York – Financial Management
5. Coventry University – Cyber Security

Voicemails are generally about catching up with our personas and offering to talk about the course in more detail.

Voicemails were most likely to be left from 'Course Advisors', who were the most proactive contact type the personas spoke to.

**"I am trying to contact you regarding your interest in our MSc in Global Finance & Banking. As a next step we recommend having a personal consultation call to answer your key questions."**

*Voicemail from King's College London – International Finance and Commercial Law*

# Through the mystery shopping 4 contact types have been identified



# Admin inboxes and enquiry teams tend to be less helpful towards prospective applicants

## Administrators and general enquiry inboxes (c.30%)

- Administrators and general enquiry inboxes were contacts who typically offered the lowest level of customer service towards our personas. They would answer our questions with short replies, providing no additional information to our questions, instead offering links directing us back to their website to find the information ourselves.
- The tone and length of the emails suggested their focus isn't on supporting potential applicants in their decision making journey but more signposting where potential students can find the information.
- The courses that use administrators and general enquiry inboxes tend to fall into Experience 1: Little – no contact or Experience 2: Limited help.

“Unfortunately, we are unable to advise you regarding funding. We would advise you to check our website for funding that you may be eligible for.”

*Exeter University – Genomic medicine*

## Enquiry / support teams (c.25%)

- This contact type usually responded to our queries with detailed information and at times with more information than was requested.
- Some courses had separate enquiry teams for dealing with UK or international enquiries. While teams were split up by fee status, our personas were not assigned one dedicated contact and instead spoke to several people over the course of the mystery shopping.
- This at times could be frustrating as contacts were not easily able to pick up conversations and information had to be repeated from our personas to more than one person.
- The courses that use enquiry/ support teams tend to fall into Experience 3: Detailed information.

“I would recommend visiting our Open Learn website. This site offers thousands of free online courses, research papers and online activities...You are able to either register online by clicking on the module registration tab and following the steps or you are welcome to call in and talk to one of our advisors

*Open University- Educational Leadership and Management*

# Course Advisers are not common practice but are the most responsive to students

## Course Advisors (c.20%)

- A dedicated Course Adviser is typically one personal contact given to a potential applicant. Course Advisers were typically more proactive in reaching out to all of our identities; sending the highest number of emails, chasing up contact or just generally checking in to see if we needed any further help.
- While they are the most proactive type of contact, few courses offer dedicated Course Advisers; out of the 49 courses mystery shopped only 8 offered this type of contact.\*
- Courses that use Advisors are mostly Financial (3 out of 8 course advisors spoken to) or Public Health (3 out of 8 course advisors spoken to). Other courses included Psychology & Neuroscience of Mental Health and International Financial and Commercial Law.
- The courses that use Course Advisors tend to fall into Experience 4: one-to-one contact.
- Often the point of contact differs between courses at the same institution.
- For example, University of Glasgow - Public Health was one of the most proactive courses, where as University of Glasgow - Psychology was less so. In comparison to Public Health who we were given one dedicated contact, the Psychology course made it difficult to find the right person to speak to.
- This suggests that for some universities, student queries are not centralised and are dealt with on a course by course basis.

**“As a first step, if you're able to send me a copy of your CV and a very brief description of your goals that would be fantastic and I'll be best placed to advise you further.”**

*City University of London – Global Finance*

**“Thank you for expressing an interest in the University of Glasgow's Online Public Health programme. I am here to support your decision-making process and my goal is to ensure that this is the right programme for you.”** *University of Glasgow – Public Health*

\* A full list of universities and courses that use Course Advisors can be found in the appendix

# There was mixed communications from teaching staff

## Teaching staff (c.20%)

- Communication with teaching staff was mixed and depended on which course and university we spoke to.
- At University of College London – Educational Leadership and management we spoke to a senior lecturer who's email was taken directly from the course webpage. When we asked for extra information on the course and if there was any funding available he told us everything we need is on the course website.
- In contrast, the course leader at University of Glasgow – Cyber Security, sent a detailed email introducing himself and the course. He came across as very personable and helpful on an individual basis to all of our personas. He sent a large selection of online materials including; links to the course handbook, week by week course content and logistical course information via a programme handbook.
- The University of Glasgow – Cyber Security also used marketing materials that were sent directly from teaching staff (example email shown on the right) which gave a face and name to who will be teaching them. They were the only course to use marketing materials in this way.
- From previous research conducted by Red Brick we have found the number one concern for those interested in studying online is the lack of interaction with teaching staff and an overall lack of support and guidance. In putting a face and name to lecturers the University of Glasgow – Cyber Security has enabled potential students to build up a sense of familiarity with teaching staff whilst also giving reassurance about the level of interaction and support that would be available.
- The courses that use teaching staff tend to fall into Experience 2: Limited help or Experience 3: Detailed information.



Dear Olivia,  
Are you still interested in the online MSc in Data Analytics at the University of Glasgow? It is not too late to start the application process so that you can embark on our online MSc at the end of September and join the University of Glasgow's vibrant community of online learners.



First of all, I would like to introduce myself. My name is **Charis Chaniavidis** and I am a lecturer in Statistics. Together with my colleagues Eilidh Jack and Colette Mair from the programme management team we look after our online learners. We are looking forward to meeting you and discussing how our online MSc in Data Analytics could transform your career. You will also be showing you how it is like to study online here at the University of Glasgow.

### Information Session for Prospective Students

We would like to invite you to join one of our upcoming webinars for prospective students on our online programme in Data Analytics. In this information session, you will learn more about the structure of the programme, the courses it is comprised of and what what you will need to do to apply. You will of course also have the opportunity to ask any questions you might have.



[Register for Webinar \(Monday, September 2nd, 1pm BST\)](#)

[Register for Webinar \(Wednesday, September 11th, 7pm BST\)](#)

# The University of Glasgow and King's College London send the most detailed materials out of all competitors

- No physical materials were received during the course of the mystery shopping; however around 30% of courses emailed online materials to our personas\*. These most often took the form of downloadable PDF attachments or embedded links within the email. There doesn't appear to be any patterns in the types of courses that send online materials; we received them from a wide range of subject areas from Law to Dentistry. The courses that sent the most detailed materials are shown below:

**Learning from Data**

Claire Miller and Suzy Whoriskey

Academic Year 2017-18

Week 1:  
**What is Learning from Data?**

A selection of R commands to display simple data summaries are included in the table below:

Description	R command
To produce the five-number summary and sample mean	summary()
sample mean	mean()
sample variance	var()
sample standard deviation	sd()
range of sample	range()
sample median	median()
sample quartiles, e.g. quartile 2/5%	quantile()
labelling categorical data	table()
arrangements for categorical data	arrange()

**Online learning module guide**  
Global Finance & Banking MSc/PG Dip/PG Cert

**MODULES OVERVIEW**

**FUNCTIONAL MODULES**

- Quantitative Methods for Finance
- Investments
- Commercial & Investment Banking
- Financial Derivatives

**ADVANCED MODULES**

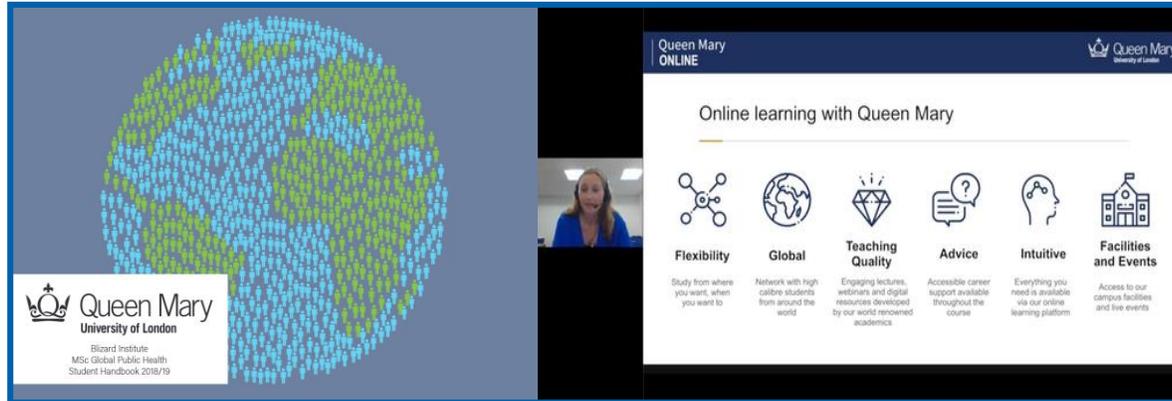
- Financial Derivatives
- Applied Risk Management for Banking
- Asset Pricing
- Corporate Finance
- Financial Economics
- Wealth Management
- Global Finance: Asia, Australia
- International Finance

**Week 1: The investment environment and basic concepts; net present value (open access)**

- The University of Glasgow – Data Analytics sent detailed course materials to our personas, including:
  - Week by week course content
  - Logistical course information via a programme handbook e.g. programme and assessment structure, key contacts and term dates.

- King's College London – Global Finance and Banking sent several online materials to our personas, including:
  - A Finance Fact Sheet
  - Admissions Fact Sheet
  - A Masterclass guide
  - An online link to view a demo platform where you can trial a week in the life of a student on this course.

# All courses enquired at Queen Mary University of London and most courses at King's College London sent online materials



- Queen Mary University of London – Cancer and Clinical Oncology, Global Public Health and Genomic Medicine sent online materials to our personas.
- Online materials received included student handbooks and information on the course such as module guides and course handbooks.
- Queen Mary also sent links to webinars. Topics included; specific course information which was hosted by the course academics and the student experience of studying online.



- King's College London – Global Finance and Banking, International Financial and Commercial Law, Public Health and Aesthetic Dentistry sent online materials to our personas. The only King's course to not send any materials was Psychology & Neuroscience of Mental Health.
- Online materials received from all courses included module descriptions and the course handbook.
- Aesthetic Dentistry was the only course to send a link to their distance learning open day.

29 \* A full list of courses and materials received can be found in the appendix

\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\*

# Just under half send marketing emails, with more being sent closer to the application deadline

- There doesn't appear to be a pattern in the types of courses that are sending marketing emails; a wide range of courses from Health Psychology to Global Finance to Advanced Clinical Practice in Radiotherapy and Oncology. All personas received marketing emails
- There has been some differences observed between marketing materials and fee status. For example Aston University Health Psychology sent 7 to our UK persona and did not send any to our EU or International persona. This could be explained by contact type; both EU/ international spoke to a generic team inbox while the UK persona spoke to a PG Admissions officer, suggesting they could be targeting UK potential applicants.
- The frequency of marketing emails varies; some are sent weekly E.g. Aston University, Robert Gordon. While others such as City, University of London use them sparingly amongst communication with course advisors.
- Often the first email after registering will be a marketing type of email, but can be replied to and then a genuine conversation can be started
- A small handful of courses have sent marketing emails closer to the deadline, reminding prospective students of the timeframe, Examples include;
  - Open University – Countdown timer to the deadline sent in a marketing email, reminders every week for three weeks leading up to the deadline
  - Aston University Health Psychology – 2 weeks before the application deadline we were told if we apply they will give us a decision within 48 hours



**Aston University**  
BIRMINGHAM UK

Dear Olivia,

There's still time for you to join us on a Master's at **Aston University** starting this September.

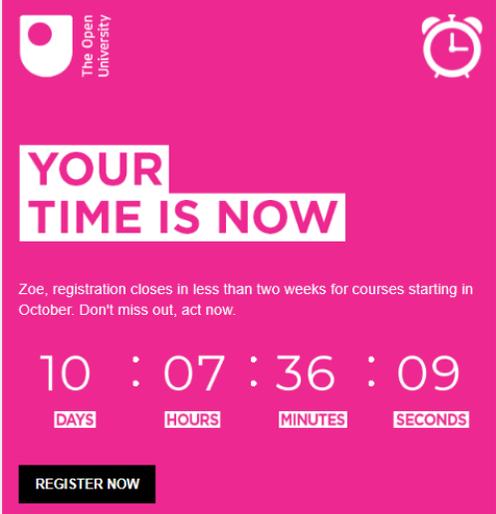
All you need to do is submit your application and we will give you a decision within 48 hours.

Your welcome week will begin on Monday 16 September, with teaching beginning on Monday 23 September.

APPLY NOW AND START YOUR JOURNEY

[BROWSE OUR COURSES](#)

[APPLY TODAY](#)



**YOUR TIME IS NOW**

Zoe, registration closes in less than two weeks for courses starting in October. Don't miss out, act now.

10 : 07 : 36 : 09

DAYS HOURS MINUTES SECONDS

[REGISTER NOW](#)

# Marketing emails aim to give students an idea of what it would be like to study the course

- The content of the marketing emails varies widely and includes;
  - Inviting prospective students to an open evening / webinar / online chat
  - Selling the benefits of online learning
  - Selling the University as a place to study
  - Guidance on the application process
- While there are differences in the content, it is clear that all marketing emails aim to encourage students to apply. Many include 'Apply now' buttons at the bottom of the email or offer a contact point for students to get in touch and find out more information.



**Queen Mary  
ONLINE**

[Apply now](#)

**Dear Kellie**

Through our online programmes, we provide students with invaluable access to an outstanding postgraduate education from a Russell Group university.

As you study part-time and 100% online, this flexible model of learning enables you to schedule your professional and personal commitments around your studies. This in turn provides you the freedom and flexibility to continue advancing your career while earning a master's degree from a world-class university.

[Start your application today](#) and reap the rewards of a prestigious postgraduate education:

- A master's degree equal in value to the one earned on campus.
- Access to a network of like-minded professionals based across the globe.
- The opportunity to connect with leading academics who are also professionals in their field.

To discuss your application further, please feel free to contact me directly by phone or email and I would be more than happy to assist you.

Kind regards,

**RGU** ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

TEF  
Gold



**Postgraduate Open Evening -  
22 August 2019, 5:00pm to 7:00pm**

Dear Olivia,

We are delighted to invite you to our Postgraduate Open Evening on Thursday 22 August in the Sir Ian Wood Building at our Garthdee campus.

This is an excellent opportunity for you to find out more about the postgraduate courses we have on offer. Whether you are thinking of studying full-time, part-time or online, we have courses starting in September and January.

The event is designed so that you can:

- Talk to course leaders about our course options
- Receive one-to-one guidance from our colleagues in student services including Employability & Professional Enrichment, the Library and many more.

If you have any questions regarding this event please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing: [openday@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:openday@rgu.ac.uk)

**REGISTER NOW**

**\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\***

# Not all marketing content is relevant to online postgraduate learners

- However, not all marketing materials received are relevant to online learners. Some included details on living on campus and information on the surrounding town which is less likely to be relevant to online learners who won't necessarily be studying and living in the city that the university is based in.
- A range of courses and universities sent emails that are less relevant to online learners including Aston and Newcastle, as shown opposite.
- Robert Gordon University send a number of emails that weren't tailored to online learning or to postgraduate study, that included details of living costs and how to apply to undergraduate study. This is despite having to select the level and mode of study interested in on their online form.

Aston University



**OUR ACCOMMODATION, EVERYTHING YOU NEED**

Hi Olivia,

At Aston University our accommodation is located on campus, in Birmingham city centre. Everything that you need is within walking distance.

Our accommodation is gated and secure. Rooms on campus have either been built within the last four years, or have recently been refurbished. All of our rooms have private bathrooms and access to high speed internet.

We guarantee a room for all postgraduate applicants who accept their place and request a room before the accommodation deadline.

Facilities include:

- Bedroom complete with study space
- All utility bills included
- Free high speed internet
- Private bathroom facilities
- Onsite safety laundry

Newcastle University



Discover our city and region



Hi Zoe,

Still unsure where to study your postgraduate degree? Newcastle was voted a world top 100 student city (*QS Best Student Cities, 2017*) and has [something for everyone](#):

**Cultural delights**  
Newcastle is packed with museums, galleries, theatres and festivals. Exhibitions regularly stop off in the city, and we even have our own art gallery based on-campus

**Excellent location**  
Our city-centre campus is only half an hour away from beautiful beaches, rural countryside and UNESCO World Heritage sites

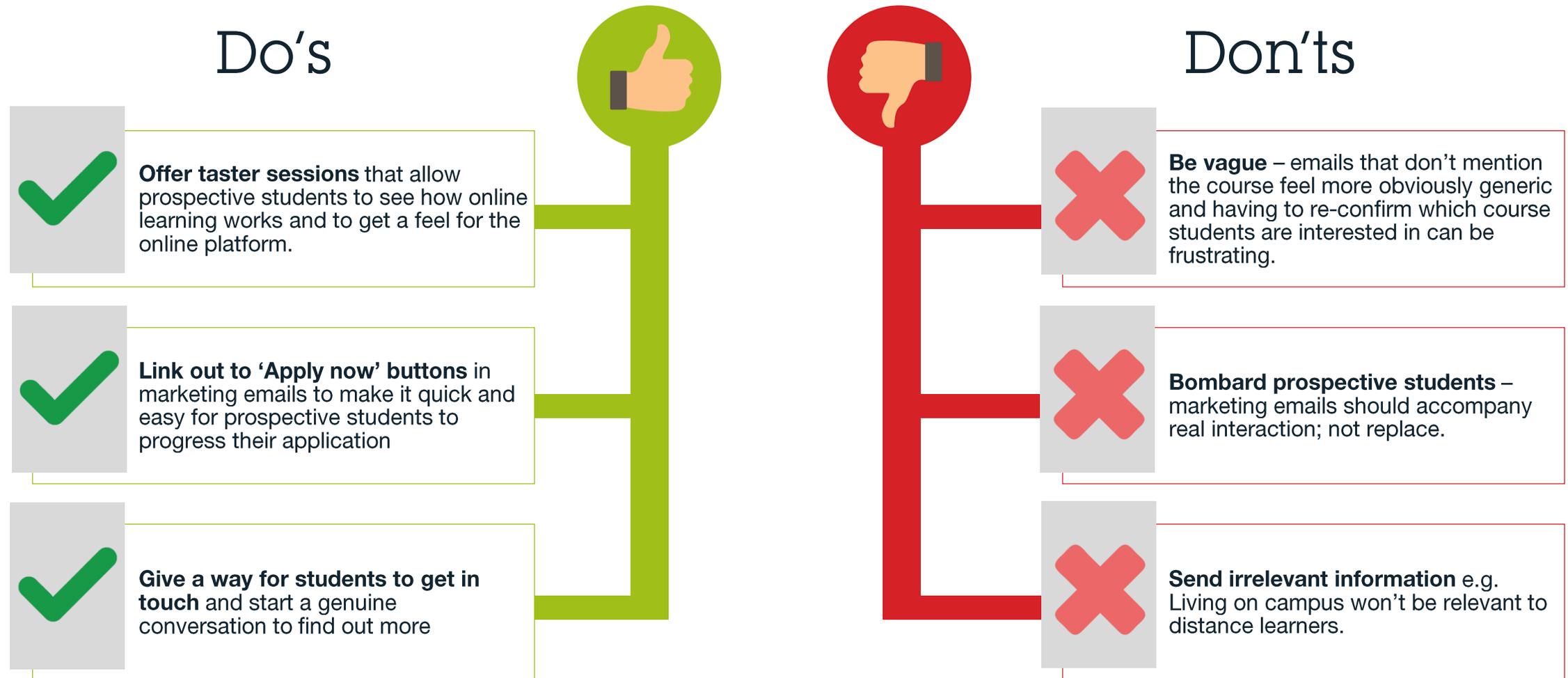
**Fabulous shopping**  
Newcastle has an eclectic mix of high-street shops, markets and designer boutiques. There's a city-centre shopping mall and Europe's largest shopping centre, The Metrocentre, is just a 10 minute bus journey away

**World class sport**  
Newcastle has its own professional football, rugby, netball and basketball teams, and hosts a series of sporting events each year. The world's favourite half marathon, the Great North Run, is an annual event and Gateshead International Stadium regularly hosts world-class athletics competitions

**Explore the city for yourself**  
Newcastle really is the perfect place to study - why not come and visit? Book a place at our next student-led [PG Café](#).

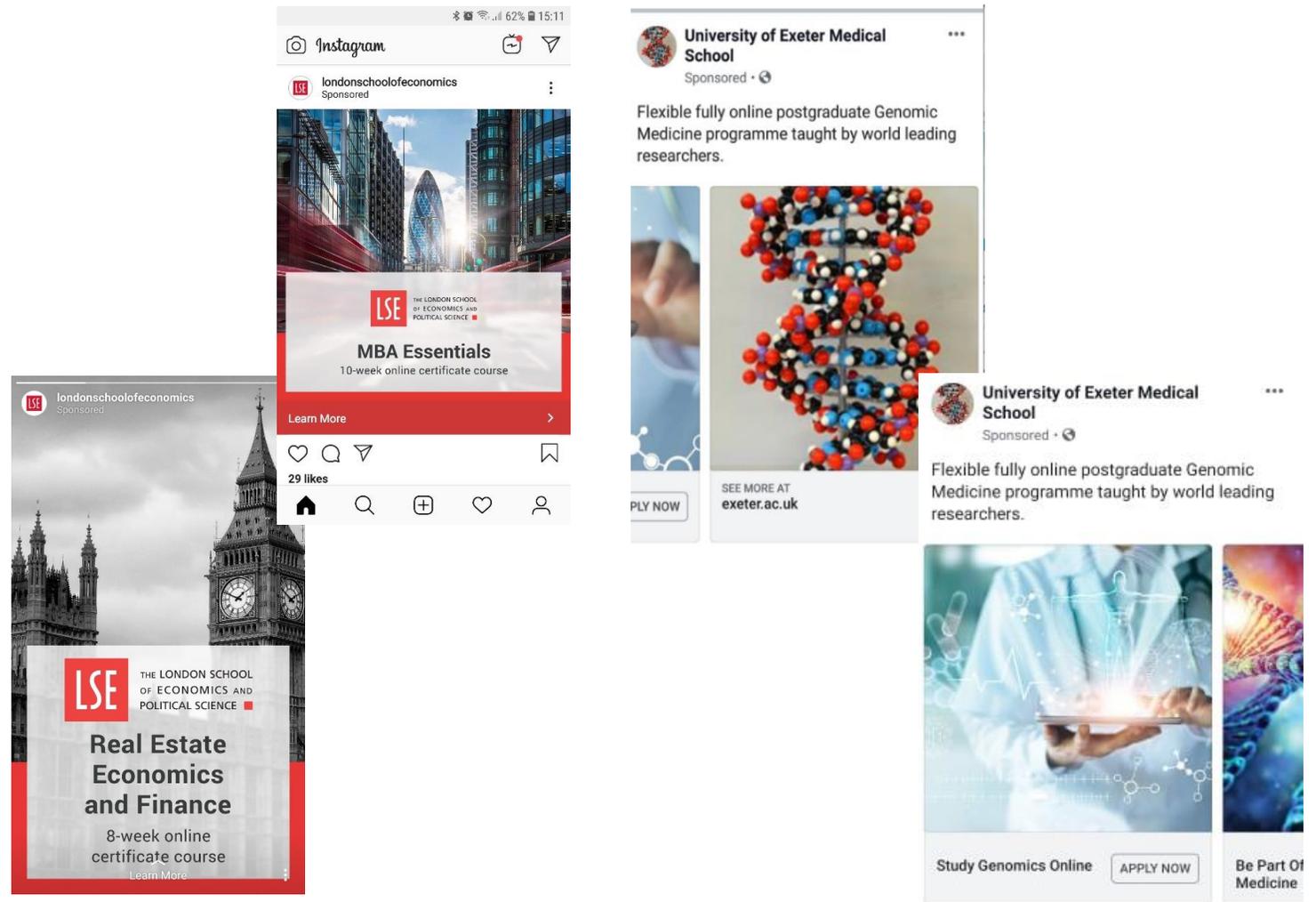
\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\*

Through our experiences during the mystery shopping, a number of do's and don'ts of marketing emails can be collated;



# Targeted social media advertising is used by a range of universities

- Through conducting desk research and registering interest on university websites, a number of adverts have been seen as a result across a range of social media platforms. Typically, adverts relating to Financial Management or Public Health are advertised online, though a small handful of adverts for universities that are not specifically related to an individual course have also been seen.
- Overall, adverts have been seen for the 10 courses / universities\*. The University of Exeter's adverts for Genomic Medicine are the most prevalent, with five adverts being seen across LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram (A sample of these are shown opposite).
- There have also been a number of adverts for Universities that we have not registered interest in, but that offer similar courses e.g. LSE – Real Estate Economics and Finance (8-week online certificate course) and MBA Essentials (10-week online certificate course), both shown opposite.



\*Please see appendix for full details of online adverts seen

# Scholarships, Discounts & Bursaries

# The vast majority of courses did not offer scholarship, discount or bursary

- The overarching aim of the mystery shopping process is to understand how and to whom scholarships / discounts / bursaries are used and applied by Manchester's key competitors, which the next part of the report explores in detail.
- The table below gives an overview of the incentives offered to each persona type. There are discussed in more detail on the following pages:

Persona Type	Scholarships	Discounts	Bursaries
UK	No scholarships offered	University of Birmingham – Industrial Project Management £900 discount	No bursaries offered
EU	No scholarships offered	University of Birmingham – Industrial Project Management £900 discount Queen Mary University – Global Public Health £750 discount	No bursaries offered
International	No scholarships offered	No discounts offered	Queen Mary University – Global Public Health £800 bursary

# No scholarships were offered to any persona during the mystery shopping

- When enquiring about scholarships, most courses direct us to their website; few include specific details of scholarships that could be relevant to distance learning and the courses our personas were interested in.
- The University of Edinburgh was the only course to provide details of specific distance learning scholarships, which was given to our international persona. This included the 'The Glenmore Medical Online Postgraduate Scholarship' and 'Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarship' which are available to a range of countries in Asia and Africa, although they suggested they would particularly welcome applications from students in Africa.
- Common practice for funding webpages is to show scholarships that are available to all students not just distance learners, which can often be time consuming and leave potential students unclear on what might be suitable. However, Robert Gordon University and the University of Edinburgh offer more advanced functionality.

**"There is a scholarship which we have just been informed about for high achieving offer holders. The Glenmore Medical Online Postgraduate Scholarship would particularly welcome applications from students from Africa with offers from eligible MSc programmes"**

*The University of Edinburgh – Public Health*



## Example of best practice: The Robert Gordon University

Students can select your mode of study and are taken to scholarships specifically applicable to online learning. Click [here](#) to visit their website.

A screenshot of the Robert Gordon University search interface. It features a search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter search term'. Below the search bar are four dropdown menus labeled 'Country', 'Mode of Study', 'Online Learning', and 'Subject Area'. To the right of these menus is a 'CLEAR RESULTS' button with a refresh icon.



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

## Example of best practice: The University of Edinburgh

Edinburgh include a link to specific online learning scholarships on their International Commercial Law & Practice course webpage. Please click [here](#) to visit their website.

A screenshot of the University of Edinburgh search interface. It shows a search bar with the text 'Scholarships and funding' and a minus sign icon. Below the search bar, under the heading 'Featured funding', there are two bullet points: 'Edinburgh Law School Tercentenary Awards for Excellence' and 'Online Learning Scholarships'.

# The majority of courses do not offer any discounts towards their fees, but some offer more help than others

## Most courses link prospective students back to the funding website;

- When enquiring about discounts, the experiences have been similar across the personas; the majority of courses said they do not offer any discounts on their fees. Emails were often kept short, clearly stating there were no discounts available. At times we were directed back to the university funding webpage to look for alternative sources of funding:

“Discounts or bursaries are not available for this course. The only option could be the student loan, but you need to check if you have the correct recruitments (Link to loans website)”

*Aesthetic Dentistry– King's College London*

“Currently, we do not provide financial aid to our students. I would suggest viewing the Scholarships Portal for any scholarship opportunities.”

*Educational Leadership and Management - The Open University*

## However, some courses provide more help;

- While most courses offered little in the way of support to potential applicants when asked about discounts, there are a small handful of courses that offered more support.
- The **University of Sheffield – Masters of Public Health** is a good example of where support was given; they checked with the financial support team and the School of Health & Related Research to see if there were any other funding options that could be available to help our persona.

## Example of best practice: University of Sheffield



Hi Olivia

The financial support team have responded that, unfortunately, there are no discounts available with respect to the tuition fees. I will now forward your enquiry to the School of Health & Related Research to see if they know of any options.

# University of Birmingham offered discounts to UK & EU personas to encourage 'early' application

## Discounts were offered to UK and EU personas;

- The University of Birmingham offered a financial discount to both UK and EU personas for the Industrial Project Management course.
- The same offer was given to both identities; reducing the course fees from £10,500 to £9,600. In addition, the course professor offered to present the benefits of course to our persona's employers.
- The discount was an instant offer after supplying current job title, with no request for a CV or phone call.
- The discount was offered in mid-July to both identities, for the January 2020 course which has an application deadline of December 2019 suggesting it was used to encourage early application from UK and EU students.

## However, no discounts were offered to the international persona;

- Our international identity didn't receive a financial discount and had a different experience than the UK / EU identities.
- The international persona was asked to send their CV to the professor and they were told he would speak to his colleagues and be in touch. Three emails were sent chasing up a response which concluded in no discount offer being made. This could suggest they are more focused on EU / UK applicants.

"Hi Zoe, (EU persona)

Good to hear from you. We can cut the fees to £9,600 for the full MSc and it is possible to pay in instalments. A significant number of the P.M.S on the course are sponsored by their companies.

We would be happy to present the course to your HR people at Siemens if that helps.  
Regards, Neil

*Professor of Minerals Engineering – University of Birmingham*

"Hi Grace, (International persona)

Sorry it took so long to get back to you. I am afraid we would not be able to offer anything for entry this year.

Apologies  
Neil

*Professor of Minerals Engineering – University of Birmingham*

# Queen Mary University offered a discount to the EU identity for the Global Public Health course close to the application deadline



## EU Experience

- The financial discount was split into two parts; £500 fee reduction if they apply before the 30th July and £250 fee reduction if they reserve their place on the programme within 48 hours upon admission.
- This was an instant offer after providing brief details on their university qualifications, current employment and ambitions for the future.

We have an opportunity for 750 pounds fee reduction, which is split in two:

- 500 pounds fee reduction if you apply before the 30th July;
  - 250 pounds fee reduction if you reserve your spot on the programme within 48 hours upon admissions.
- Do you think this tuition reductions will help you start your studies?



## UK Experience

- Our UK identity didn't get an explicit offer of a discount, but they were told it was something that could be investigated.
- While the discount and tone of the emails suggest they want potential applicants to apply 'early', it was quite late in the application cycle (the application deadline was at the end of August with the EU persona being offered a discount 54 days before the application deadline and the UK persona offered a potential discount 46 days before the application deadline). This could suggest they are trying to fill in student numbers but are packaging the discount differently to students.

"This is something I could investigate for you as Admissions often provide early application incentives to applicants. Would you be able to submit your application within the next few days? I can then consult Admissions to investigate how we can bridge the gap."



## International Experience

- Despite receiving the same initial email from Queen Mary after registering interest in the Global Public Health course, our international identity did not receive a reply to their email about financial assistance and were not offered a discount.

# Queen Mary – Global Public Health was the only course to offer a bursary

## Most courses direct us back to the university website when we enquire about bursaries

- When enquiring about bursaries, the majority of courses told us they do not provide bursaries and instead redirected us to their website to look at other funding options such as scholarships and loans.

---

“Dear Olivia, Thank you for your email. There is very limited financial support from the University for Masters courses. Information about what is available can be found on our web page (Link to website)”

*University of Nottingham - MRes Molecular Pathology, Bioinformatics and Diagnostics*

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“The Open University does not provide scholarships or discounts...For further information on financial support, please see the link below”

*The Open University - Finance*

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## Queen Mary offered an £800 bursary to our international persona

- The only course to offer a bursary was Global Public Health at Queen Mary. This was sent via a marketing email (a snapshot of this is shown below) and upon further discussion it was confirmed as being available to all students. The bursary was offered 11 days before the application deadline which suggests they could be trying to fill in student numbers.
- Both UK and EU personas did not receive the bursary offer. However, this is not surprising considering the EU persona was offered a discount and the UK persona was offered a potential discount towards their fees.



Flexibility: IELTS &  
application deadline

\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\*

# A number of courses offer flexibility as an incentive to prospective applicants

- In addition to scholarships / bursaries / discounts, some courses offer other incentives to potential applicants in the form of flexibility on the application deadline and IELTS requirements. The next few pages explore this in detail.
- In total 15 out of 50 courses (31%) were flexible with their English language entry requirements. The table to the right summarises which courses offer flexibility.



...of courses were flexible with their English language entry requirements

IELTS Requirements
University of Birmingham - Industrial Project Management
City, University of London - Global Finance
The University of Edinburgh - Restorative Dentistry
King's College London - Public Health
The Queen's University of Belfast - Educational Leadership
The Open University - Educational Leadership and Management
University of Nottingham - MRes Molecular Pathology, Bioinformatics and Diagnostics
The Open University - Finance
The University of York - Finance, Leadership and Management
Newcastle University - Oncology
The University of Edinburgh - Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine
The University of Edinburgh - International Commercial Law & Practice
The Robert Gordon University - Project Management
University of Bristol - Applied Neuropsychology
The University of Bath - Educational Leadership and Management

# 30% of courses offer flexibility on IELTS requirements pre-application

## 15 out of 49 courses offer flexibility in IELTS requirements



- While online course pages tend to specify students need an IELTS of 6.5 or 7.0, many are willing to waive these requirements in lieu of demonstrating proficiency in English in another way. Typically this is by showing a letter from their employer confirming their English skills or having a qualification that was taught / assessed in English;

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**“You are not required to do IELTS if you have studied or worked in English before. You can simply request a letter from an employer stating that you are fully proficient in English and we will accept it as a proof of your level of English”**

*City, University of London – Global Finance*

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- IELTS flexibility appears to be set on a course by course basis as at some universities there will be flexibility on one course and not on another, E.g. University of Edinburgh – Restorative Dentistry offers flexibility while their Public Health course does not.
- There is no clear pattern in the types of courses that are willing to waive IELTS requirements; there are a mixture of Finance, Medical, and Education courses.
- A few universities offer pre-sessional English courses e.g. University of Nottingham – Educational Leadership, University of Bristol - Applied Neuropsychology, Coventry University - Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Care. The Open University offer ‘Openlearn’ (a free online course) which is available to all students to sharpen their English skills.
- However, Robert Gordon University is the only university to offer an in-house English test at a cost of £30.

# Flexibility on application deadline is offered by a few courses closer to the deadline

- Following conversations throughout the pre-application mystery shopping process, City – Global Finance gave an explicit offer to extend the application deadline if our persona needed more time to think about their decision. This offer was made to our UK persona over the phone, then confirmed in an email.

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“The application deadline was yesterday, as I told you if you are interested in doing the course I can try and extend your deadline”

*City, University of London – Global Finance*

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- A small number of other courses hint towards flexibility in the application deadline;



- When first enquiring the application deadline was confirmed as 1<sup>st</sup> July, but when enquiring closer to the deadline it was changed to the end of the week.

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“If you wish to start in September, you will need to submit an application no later than end of this week (7th July).”

*University of Bath – Educational Leadership and Management*

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- Global Finance course - Willing to consider late applications if there is enough space on the course

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“If you are interested to join us for September 2019 intake, applications for full-time entry in September are normally required by July, but will be accepted later subject to places being available”

*Aston University – Global Finance*

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# Appendix

Example Course Advisor emails, List of courses who use Course Advisors, Summary of discounts offered & IELTS flexibility, What courses accept in lieu of IELTS, Online materials received and Online adverts

# Appendix: Example Course Advisor emails



UK: 0800 904 7258  
INTERNATIONAL: +44 (0)141 278 7247

Hi Kellie,

Thank you for expressing an interest in the University of Glasgow's Online Public Health programme. I am here to support your decision-making process and my goal is to ensure that this is the right programme for you.

First of all, I would like to ask a couple of questions to determine your eligibility for the programme. Please reply to this email with answers to the questions below:

1. Do you have a bachelors degree?
2. Do you have any professional work experience? If so, how many years?
3. Have you ever taken an English Language Certificate?
4. When would you like to start a programme?
5. When would be a suitable day and time for me to contact you?

With this information, I can schedule an appointment between you and a member of our admissions team. Your dedicated student recruitment co-ordinator will be able to discuss the programme in greater detail, talk through the entry requirements and the application process as well as answer any questions you might have.

In the meantime, I have attached an information sheet which provides more detailed information about the programme's duration, fees and content.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Introductory email from University of Glasgow's – Public Health Course Advisor



**KING'S BUSINESS SCHOOL**

**KING'S College LONDON**

Dear Maurice,

As a student of King's College London you will have exposure to world-leading research and academic excellence, as well as the benefits of University connections to over 150 institutions worldwide.

In order to progress your application, we need to find out more about you and assess your eligibility for the course.

Please **reply to this email** answering the three short questions outlined below.

1. Please describe the course title, awarding institution and final result of your undergraduate degree. If you have completed any further study, including postgraduate and professional qualifications, please provide further detail.
2. Do you have any previous professional experience related to the course?
3. Have you considered when would you prefer to begin your studies?

Please **reply to this email**, or alternatively if you have any further questions **please call** your Enrolment Advisor on **+44 (0) 207 848 7860**.

Or to book a slot in my diary please use the link below -  
<https://kcl-christaylor.youcanbook.me>

Yours sincerely

Introductory email from King's College London – Global Finance and Banking Course Advisor



Hi Kellie,

I'm your Course Adviser with Queen Mary ONLINE. I am here to assist you further with your enquiry, and will try to call you within the next couple of days.

In the meantime, please see information about the Global Public Health [here](#).

May I ask that you send me your CV and a brief explanation of your goals, to enable me to advise you more accurately.

You can find detailed information about the course [on our website](#).

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards,

Introductory email from Queen Mary University of London – Global Public Health Course Advisor

# Appendix: Course Advisors

- Through the mystery shopping we have identified the following courses that use Course Advisors:

University	Course
City, University of London	Global Finance
King's College London	Global Finance and Banking
King's College London	Psychology & Neuroscience of Mental Health
King's College London	International Financial and Commercial Law
King's College London	Public Health
Queen Mary University of London	Public Health
The University of York	Finance, Leadership and Management
University of Glasgow	Public Health

# Appendix: Discounts offered & IELTS flexibility summary

- To the right is a list of courses spoken to (please also see next slide for further courses).
- The table gives an overview of discounts offered, those who were flexible in English language requirements and those who offer an in-house English test.
- Queen Mary offered a discount of £750 to our EU and UK persona and a bursary of £800 to our international persona.

University	Course title	Discount offered			Flexibility	
		UK	EU	INT	IELTS	English In-house test offered
Aston University	Health Psychology	N	N	N	N	N
Cardiff University	Genetic and Genomic Counselling	N	N	N	N	N
City, University of London	Global Finance	N	N	N	Y	N
Coventry University	Cyber Security	N	N	N	N	N
Coventry University	Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Care	N	N	N	N	N
King's College London	International Financial and Commercial Law	N	N	N	N	N
King's College London	Psychology & Neuroscience of Mental Health	N	N	N	N	N
King's College London	Global Finance and Banking	N	N	N	N	N
King's College London	Public Health	N	N	N	Y	N
King's College London	Aesthetic Dentistry	N	N	N	N	N
Newcastle University	Oncology	N	N	N	Y	N
Queen Mary University of London	Global Public Health	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Queen Mary University of London	Cancer and Clinical Oncology	N	N	N	N	N
Queen Mary University of London	Genomic Medicine	N	N	N	N	N
Sheffield Hallam University	Advanced Clinical Practice: Radiotherapy and Oncology	N	N	N	N	N
The Open University	Education (Leadership and Management)	N	N	N	Y	N
The Open University	Finance	N	N	N	Y	N
The Queen's University of Belfast	Educational Leadership	N	N	N	Y	N
The Robert Gordon University	Project Management	N	N	N	Y	Y
The Robert Gordon University	Law and International Commercial Law	N	N	N	N	Y
The Robert Gordon University	Law	N	N	N	N	Y
The University of Bath	Education (Educational Leadership and Management)	N	N	N	Y	N
The University of Edinburgh	Public Health	N	N	N	N	N
The University of Edinburgh	Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning)	N	N	N	N	N
The University of Edinburgh	Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine	N	N	N	Y	N
The University of Edinburgh	International Commercial Law & Practice	N	N	N	Y	N

# Appendix: Discounts offered & IELTS flexibility summary

- The highest discount offered to our personas was University of Birmingham – Industrial Project Management who offered a £900 reduction in fees to our UK and EU personas.
- The courses highlighted in grey have been discontinued.
- The University of Liverpool are reviewing their portfolio of online programmes and are currently not running any online courses. They did not get in touch with any of our personas during the mystery shopping process.

University	Course title	Discount offered			Flexibility	
		UK	EU	INT	IELTS	English In-house test offered
The University of Sheffield	Master of Public Health	N	N	N	N	N
The University of York	Finance, Leadership and Management	N	N	N	Y	N
University College London	Paediatric Dentistry	N	N	N	N	N
University College London	Applied Educational Leadership and Management	N	N	N	N	N
University of Birmingham	Restorative Dentistry	N	N	N	Y	N
University of Birmingham	Industrial Project Management	Y	Y	N	Y	N
University of Bristol	Applied Neuropsychology	N	N	N	Y	N
University of Exeter	Genomic Medicine	N	N	N	N	N
University of Glasgow	Public Health	N	N	N	N	N
University of Glasgow	Psychology (Conversion)	N	N	N	N	N
University of Glasgow	Data Analytics	N	N	N	N	N
University of Leeds	Advanced Dental Practice PGDip (Open to home/EU students only)	N	N	N	N	N
University of Nottingham	Educational Leadership and Management	N	N	N	N	N
University of Nottingham	MRes Molecular Pathology, Bioinformatics and Diagnostics	N	N	N	Y	N
BPP University (London Campuses)	International Business Law					
National University of Ireland, Galway	Health Sciences (Oncology)					
The University of Sheffield	Health Informatics					
University of Glasgow	Advanced Education Leadership					
The University of Liverpool	Cyber Security					
The University of Liverpool	Project Management					
The University of Liverpool	Public Health					
The University of Liverpool	International Business Law					
The University of Liverpool	Corporate Finance					
The University of Liverpool	Psychology					

**Key:**  Discontinued courses  Liverpool courses under review

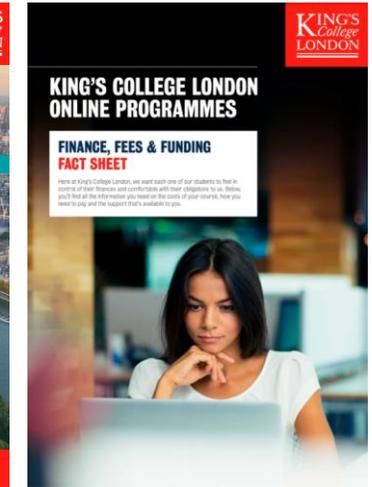
# Appendix: IELTS – What courses accept in lieu of IELTS

University and course	Entry requirement	Flexibility
University of Birmingham (Industrial Project Management)	IELTS: 6.5	Degree or qualification from an English-speaking university will count instead of IELTS
City, University of London (Global Finance)	IELTS: 7.0	Will accept letter from employer
The University of Edinburgh (Restorative Dentistry)	IELTS: 7.0	Not needed if you studied in a certain country
King's College London (Public Health)	IELTS: 6.5	Will accept letter from employer
The Queen's University of Belfast (Educational Leadership)	IELTS: 6.5	Make an Exception if they can demonstrate their English proficiency
The Open University (Educational Leadership and Management)	IELTS: 6.5	Recommend 6.5, but not required
University of Nottingham (MRes Molecular Pathology, Bioinformatics and Diagnostics)	IELTS: 6.5	If degree from an institution they recognise they could waive the IELTS
The Open University (Finance)	IELTS: 6.5	Recommend 6.5 on IELTS, but not required
The University of York (Finance, Leadership and Management)	IELTS: 6.5	Will accept letter from employer
Newcastle University (Oncology)	IELTS: 7.0	IELTS requirements would be set by admissions after receiving an application, if students have qualifications in English already then IELTS may not be required.
The University of Edinburgh (Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine)	IELTS: 6.5	A degree certificate from an English-speaking majority country where the degree has been carried out in English
The University of Edinburgh (International Commercial Law & Practice)	IELTS: 7.0	IELTS not needed if your university is a recognised institution
The Robert Gordon University (Project Management)	IELTS: 6.5	Not needed if studied in a NARIC recognised country
University of Bristol (Applied Neuropsychology)	IELTS: 6.5	If you have a 'Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education' you could be exempt
The University of Bath (Education (Educational Leadership and Management))	IELTS: Will advise after application	If you're a class teacher/ teacher in English/ on an international Baccalaureate programme or similar in a recognised English-medium international school (an IB World School) and you have been teaching in such a school for at least two years.

# Appendix – Online materials received

- Below is a list of all online materials received from King’s College London.

Identity	Course	Materials received
UK	Global Finance and Banking	Link to download course brochure
Int	Global Finance and Banking	PDF x2. A Finance Fact Sheet and a Online Learning Fact Sheet
Int	Global Finance and Banking	PDF x3. Global Finance and Banking Guide, Admissions Fact Sheet, Masterclass
Int	Global Finance and Banking	Link to online demo for online learning
UK	International Financial and Commercial Law	Fact sheet, module guide, course handbook
EU	Public Health	PDF Module descriptions
UK	Public Health	Link to download course brochure
UK	Public Health	PDF of Finance fact sheet (fees and funding) and online learning factsheet
UK	Public Health	PDF of module guide
UK	Aesthetic Dentistry	Link to recording of online open day



# Appendix – Online materials received

- Below is a list of all online materials received from University of Birmingham, Queen Mary University of London, and University of Glasgow.

Identity	University	Course	Materials received
UK	University of Birmingham	Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning)	Course information
Int	University of Birmingham	Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning)	Course information
UK	University of Birmingham	Industrial Project Management	Course brochure
EU	University of Birmingham	Industrial Project Management	Course brochure
UK	Queen Mary University of London	Cancer and Clinical Oncology	Programme handbook
UK	Queen Mary University of London	Global Public Health	Brochures - summary on the course, modules, tuition fees. Sent webinars on student experience, academics
EU	Queen Mary University of London	Genomic Medicine	Course handbook
Int	University of Glasgow	Public Health	PDF – information about the programme's duration, fees and content.
EU	University of Glasgow	Public Health	Course information
UK	University of Glasgow	Data Analytics	Link to course handbook
EU	University of Glasgow	Data Analytics	Link to the programme handbook



# Appendix – Online materials received

- Below is a list of all online materials received from The University of Edinburgh, Open University, City, University of London and Cardiff University.

Identity	University	Course	Materials received
EU	The University of Edinburgh	Molecular Pathology and Genomic Medicine	Course fact sheet, programme handbook
EU	The Open University	Finance	Information on Distance learning
EU	City, University of London	Global Finance	Programme brochure and link to webinar
UK	City, University of London	Global Finance	Module summary and course brochure
UK	Cardiff University	Genetic and Genomic Counselling	Applicant factsheet, standalone modules factsheet



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## MSc Genetic and Genomic Counselling Applicant Factsheet

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**Module list**

The MSc programme consists of two stages: Stage T (taught stage, 180 credits) lasts for a total of 24 months. Stage R (dissertation, 60 credits) lasts for a further 12 months, following completion of the taught stages. The total normal duration to complete the full MSc programme (stages T & R) is three academic years, from the date of initial registration on the programme. You can exit the course after successfully completing 180 credits of the taught (Stage T) component (including all required modules) with a Postgraduate Diploma.

*Some of the modules are available as standalone modules if you decide you don't want to commit to a full MSc, or want a taster of the full course. Contact us to find out more.*

**Time commitment**

This is a highly intensive programme and a commitment of 2-3 days study per week is recommended for general study. There is also the commitment to the face-to-face study blocks, weekly timetabled online tutorials, deadlines to be met for assignments, and the 72 day placement in year 2. There are occasional additional timetabled online sessions, for which you will be given at least one month's notice.

# Appendix: Online adverts

## BPP

Our law personal open days are tailored to you, contact our specialist admissions team today to arrange a date that suits you. <http://bit.ly/2laNOM8>

**Meet our Law Careers advisers and Pro Bono team**

## Brunel University

For careers in health and social care, local government, education, and the voluntary sector. Take the next step towards a career in public health. <https://lnkd.in/dyTqTCG>

**Online Public Health and Health Promotion MSc**

[Learn More](#)

See the bigger picture. Make a positive social impact. Leave a legacy.

[info.online.brunel.ac.uk](http://info.online.brunel.ac.uk)

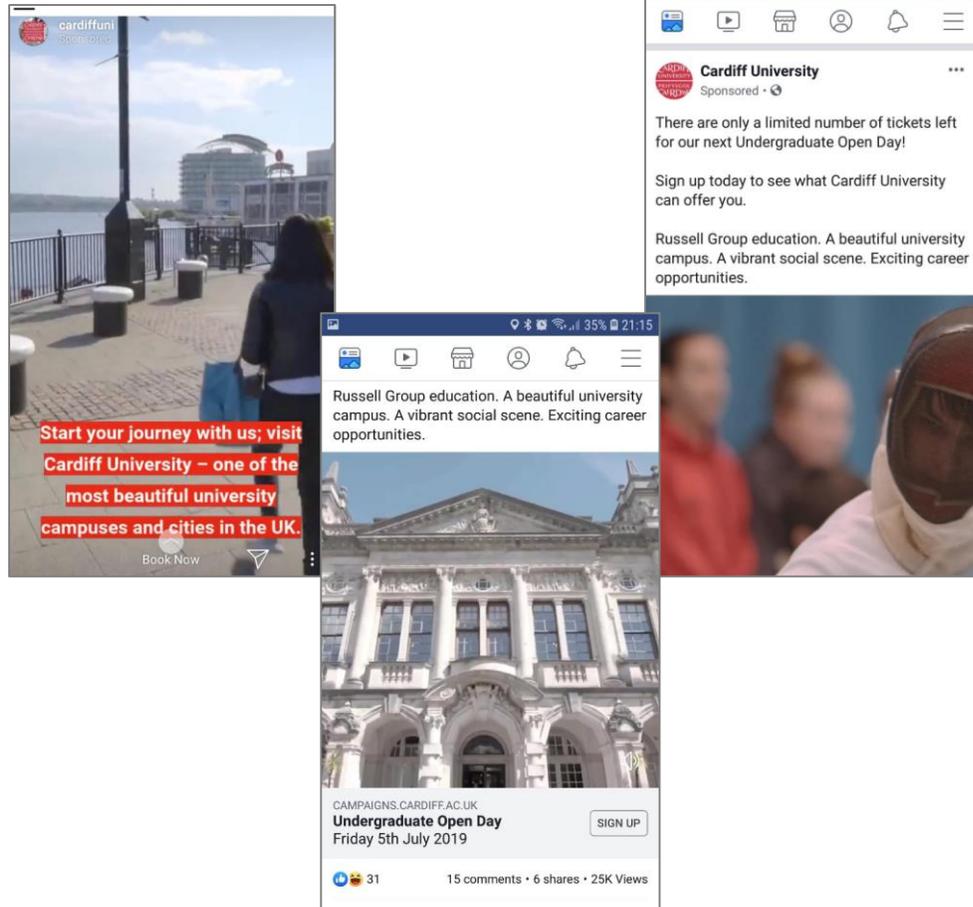
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Like Comment Share

Be the first to comment on this

# Appendix: Online adverts

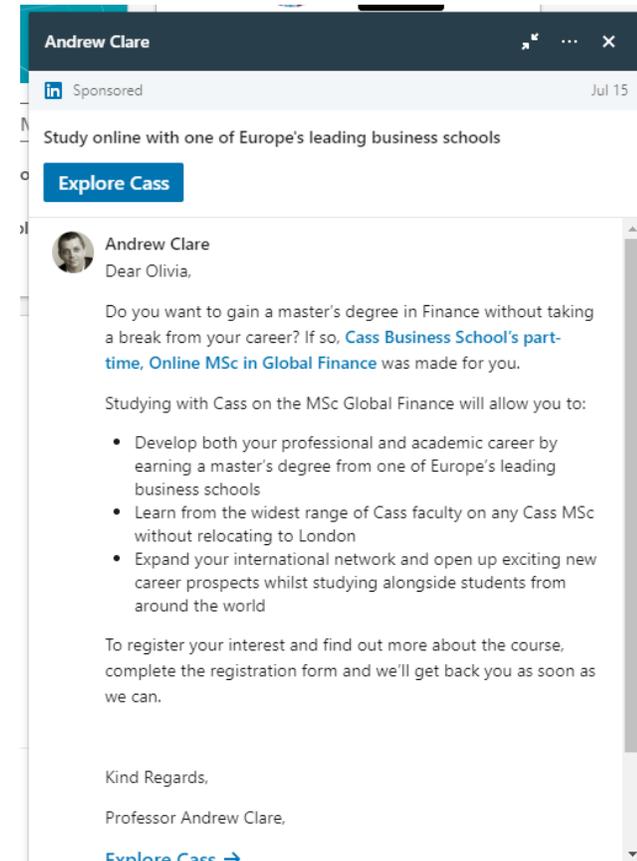
## Cardiff University



The Cardiff University advertisement collage consists of several elements:

- Top Left:** A photograph of a waterfront promenade with a building in the background. A red text box overlaid on the image reads: "Start your journey with us; visit Cardiff University – one of the most beautiful university campuses and cities in the UK." Below the image is a "Book Now" button.
- Top Right:** A screenshot of a sponsored Facebook post from Cardiff University. The text says: "There are only a limited number of tickets left for our next Undergraduate Open Day! Sign up today to see what Cardiff University can offer you. Russell Group education. A beautiful university campus. A vibrant social scene. Exciting career opportunities." It includes a "SIGN UP" button and shows 31 reactions, 15 comments, 6 shares, and 25K views.
- Bottom:** A screenshot of a Facebook post with the text: "Russell Group education. A beautiful university campus. A vibrant social scene. Exciting career opportunities." Below this is a photograph of the main building of Cardiff University.

## Cass Business School



The Cass Business School advertisement collage includes:

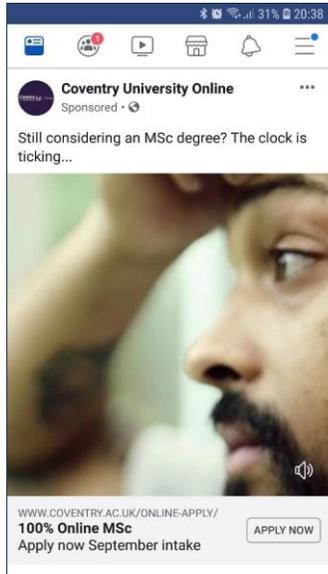
- Top:** A screenshot of a sponsored LinkedIn post by Andrew Clare. The text reads: "Study online with one of Europe's leading business schools" and includes an "Explore Cass" button.
- Bottom:** A screenshot of a direct message from Andrew Clare to Olivia. The message says: "Dear Olivia, Do you want to gain a master's degree in Finance without taking a break from your career? If so, Cass Business School's part-time, Online MSc in Global Finance was made for you. Studying with Cass on the MSc Global Finance will allow you to:" followed by a bulleted list of benefits:
  - Develop both your professional and academic career by earning a master's degree from one of Europe's leading business schools
  - Learn from the widest range of Cass faculty on any Cass MSc without relocating to London
  - Expand your international network and open up exciting new career prospects whilst studying alongside students from around the worldThe message concludes with: "To register your interest and find out more about the course, complete the registration form and we'll get back you as soon as we can. Kind Regards, Professor Andrew Clare." and an "Explore Cass" link.



The Cass Business School advertisement features a man in a suit sitting in a blue chair. The text reads: "Cass Business School 60,267 followers Promoted. Wherever you are in the world, have direct access to world-class teaching. The online MSc in Global Finance Find out more. Study online with Cass Business School's online MSc in Global Finance online.cass.city.ac.uk".

# Appendix: Online adverts

## Coventry University



Coventry University Online  
Sponsored · 🌐

Still considering an MSc degree? The clock is ticking...

WWW.COVENTRY.AC.UK/ONLINE-APPLY/  
**100% Online MSc**  
Apply now September intake

APPLY NOW

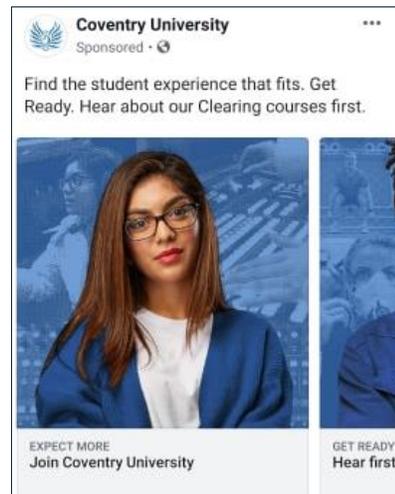


Coventry University @covcampus · Jul 2

Be the first to hear about our Clearing courses. Find a place at the University of the Year for Student Experience.

Get Ready. Join Coventry University  
coventry.ac.uk

Promoted



Coventry University Sponsored · 🌐

Find the student experience that fits. Get Ready. Hear about our Clearing courses first.

EXPECT MORE  
Join Coventry University

GET READY  
Hear first

## University of Exeter



University of Exeter Medical School Sponsored · 🌐

Flexible fully online postgraduate Genomic Medicine programme taught by world leading researchers.

Study Genomics Online Apply Now

Be Part Of Future Medicine

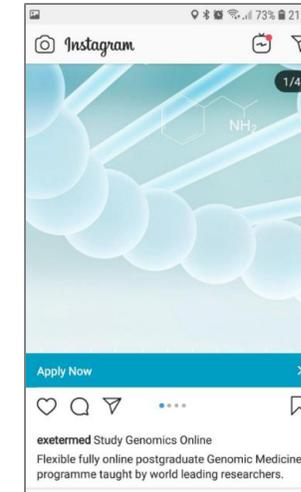


University of Exeter Medical School Sponsored · 🌐

Flexible fully online postgraduate Genomic Medicine programme taught by world leading researchers.

Study Genomics Online APPLY NOW

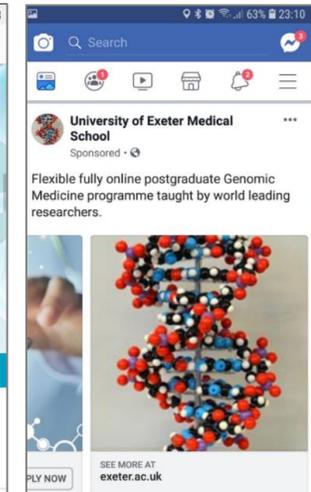
Be Part Of Medicine



Instagram

Apply Now

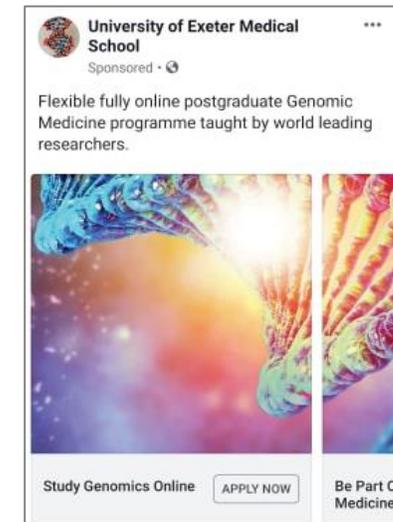
exetermed Study Genomics Online  
Flexible fully online postgraduate Genomic Medicine programme taught by world leading researchers.



University of Exeter Medical School Sponsored · 🌐

Flexible fully online postgraduate Genomic Medicine programme taught by world leading researchers.

PLY NOW SEE MORE AT exeter.ac.uk



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Flexible fully online postgraduate Genomic Medicine programme taught by world leading researchers.

Study Genomics Online APPLY NOW

Be Part Of Medicine

# Appendix: Online adverts

## King's College London



King's College London.



You still have time to discover how your skills can help populations across the globe beat the world's most pressing health challenges.

Get back in touch with us here at King's College London and register your interest for the next intake of the Public Health MSc.

Contact an advisor today.



Don't miss this opportunity to make an impact with a master'...  
Transform your career. World-class tea... [LEARN MORE](#)



An advertisement for King's College London. It features a red 'K' logo, the text 'King's College London' with '217,213 followers' and 'Promoted'. The main text reads: 'Transform your career prospects with a top-tier master's degree in Global Finance &amp; Banking from King's College London. Aimed at maximising employability within the Finance and Banking industry, this flexible 100% online course allows yo...see more'. Below is a vibrant image of a financial chart with blue and purple lines and bars. At the bottom, it says 'Explore new opportunities - 100% Online Master's degree' and 'kcl.ac.uk'.

An advertisement for King's College London. It features a red 'K' logo, the text 'King's College London' with '218,449 followers' and 'Promoted'. The main text reads: 'This flexible online master's in Global Finance &amp; Banking is ideal for professionals wishing to progress their career in financial services. The course draws on King's College London's renowned teaching expertise, research and industry lin...see more'. Below is an image of a financial chart with blue and yellow lines and bars. At the bottom, it says 'Take your career to the next level - Master's in Finance and Banking' and 'kcl.ac.uk'.

## London School of Economics



An Instagram post from the London School of Economics. The image shows a city street with modern buildings and a red double-decker bus. Overlaid on the image is a white box with the LSE logo and text: 'THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE', 'MBA Essentials', and '10-week online certificate course'. Below the image is a red bar with 'Learn More' and a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom, there are icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark, along with the text '29 likes'.

An advertisement for the London School of Economics. It features a background image of the Big Ben clock tower. Overlaid on the image is a white box with the LSE logo and text: 'THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE', 'Real Estate Economics and Finance', and '8-week online certificate course'. Below the text is a 'Learn More' link.

# Appendix: Online adverts

## Queen Mary, University of London



## University of Reading



# Appendix: Online adverts

## University of Oxford

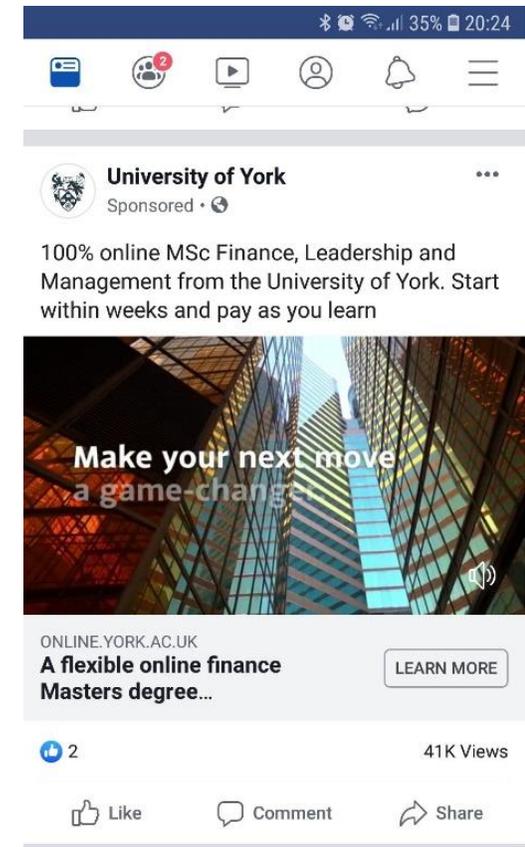


Instagram interface showing a sponsored post from 'oxfordsbs'. The post features a photo of students in a classroom and a video player. The text reads: 'Oxford Digital Marketing: Disruptive Strategy Programme', '8 weeks. Online.', and 'Learn More'. The bottom of the post shows engagement icons (heart, comment, share) and the text: 'oxfordsbs Equip yourself with invaluable data oriented insights to apply to your digital...'

## University of York



Facebook interface showing a sponsored post from 'University of York'. The post features a video player with the University of York logo. The text reads: '100% online MSc Finance, Leadership and Management from the University of York. Start within weeks and pay as you learn'. Below the video is a 'LEARN MORE' button. The post shows 2 likes and 41K Views. The bottom of the post shows engagement icons (like, comment, share).



Facebook interface showing a sponsored post from 'University of York'. The post features a video player with a cityscape background and the text: 'Make your next move a game-changer'. Below the video is a 'LEARN MORE' button. The post shows 2 likes and 41K Views. The bottom of the post shows engagement icons (like, comment, share).

**\*\*NOT FOR ONWARD CIRCULATION\*\***



Fresh Research Perspectives