

Managing the transition from undergraduate to taught postgraduate study:

Perceptions of International students studying in the UK

Abstract

This article explores the perceptions of international students studying in the UK regarding their transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study, the challenges they faced in the process, and the factors that supported that transition. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 44 taught international postgraduate students at a UK university. It was found that students initially struggled with the academic demands of the course, particularly the ability to integrate critical thinking into written submissions. Consequently, students looked to develop peer support networks. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for universities, particularly concerning pre-course preparation and ongoing structured support.

Keywords

Critical thinking, postgraduate study, academic progression

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Introduction

Increasing numbers of graduates are deciding to stay in higher education to undertake postgraduate study, predominantly to differentiate themselves in the highly competitive graduate jobs market (Crouch and Goulding, 2013; Nordling, 2005; Tobin, 2012) and enhance their employment prospects (Donaldson and McNicholas, 2004; Liu, 2010). As a consequence, those engaging with Master's level study in the UK, increased from 406,905 in 2001/02 to 532,975 in 2015/16 (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>), with numbers dipping slightly between 2011-12 and 2012-13, but resuming a growth trajectory from 2013-14 onwards. International students are particularly attracted to postgraduate study in the UK, with 57.1% of full-time postgraduate students in 2015/16, non-UK domiciled (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>).

Several works have examined the student decision-making process in deciding to undertake postgraduate study. In particular, Glover, Bulley and Howden (2008) found that students were motivated by the desire to enhance their professional credentials. Similarly, Harvey, Sinclair and Dowson. (2005) found professional development to be a key driver, while Donaldson and McNicholas (2004), Le and Tam (2008) and Liu (2010) found that it was the perceived opportunity to enhance employment and career prospects through gaining additional skills that were drivers for students to progress onto a postgraduate course.

The substantial growth in absolute postgraduate student numbers depicts a positive scenario for universities, many of whom are actively seeking to grow revenue and diversify income streams (Robertson, 2010). However, how well the students, especially international students, cope with the transition between undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study has been relatively unexplored (Tobell, O'Donnell and Zammit, 2010). Yet the ability of students to adjust to, and successfully engage with, postgraduate study will be fundamental to student retention, achievement and satisfaction, all increasingly important metrics for universities.

Nonetheless, those individuals who progress on to a taught Masters course may find the difference between undergraduate and postgraduate-level study to be quite marked, with Watson and Reissner (2010) highlighting that critical thinking skills are the cornerstone of postgraduate study. Mellers (2009), who highlights the difficulties that postgraduate students have in critical thinking, confirm this and identifies that only through practice and time do students fully develop these capabilities.

Consequently, McClure (2007) suggests that the period of transition for students to adapt to postgraduate-level study is typically six months. Given that the average length of a full-time taught Masters degree is two years in mainland Europe and one year in the UK, a six month period of adaptation represents a substantial proportion of the course. Christie, Barron and D'Annunzio-Green (2013) therefore note that those students who adapt more speedily to postgraduate study are those who manage the demands of independent learning more effectively through good time management skills. This is confirmed by MacCann, Fogarty and Roberts (2011) and Tanriogen and Iscan (2009), who recognise the importance of good time management in relation to academic performance. Moreover, Misra and Mckean (2000) find that ineffective time management skills can increase stress levels. Stress among students can also be induced by excessive workloads (Kausar, 2010) and differences in approaches to assessment from those previously experienced (Cree et al., 2009). In addition, stress can be exacerbated by pressures to work part-time while studying, especially as a result of financial necessity (Evans, Gbadamosi and Richardson, 2014).

A number of academic works have focused on student retention. Here, the extensive use of engagement activities throughout the student learning journey (Crosling and Heagney, 2009; Fincher, 2010), facilitating social interactions (Kurantowicz and Nizinska, 2013; Miller, 2011) and providing a caring, supportive environment (O'Keefe, 2013; Pearson, 2012; Renard and Snelgar, 2015) have been found to be influential in keeping students engaged on

their course of study. Nonetheless, some works have explored student transition, and how individual students manage the process of moving from one academic level to another. In particular, Menzies and Baron (2014) find socialisation to be a key factor in supporting students' transition into a postgraduate environment. In addition, Swee-Choo and Matthews (2010) find that interaction between students in group-working, helped students get to grips with critical thinking. This has led to calls for universities to support the socialisation of students by providing an appropriate infrastructure (Tweed et al., 2010; Yau, Sun and Cheng, 2012). That socialisation process should ideally start before students arrive on campus, with Winter and Dismore (2010) suggesting use of the university's virtual learning environment (VLE) as a means to commence the integration of students. This approach may be especially valuable for communicating with, and integrating, international students.

While the implications concerning the internationalisation of the UK's higher education sector has been previously discussed (see for example, De Vita and Case, 2003; Luxon and Peelo, 2009; Robinson, 2006; Ryan 2011); the issues faced by international students in coping with a new learning environment at a new academic level (where greater independence is expected), coupled with potentially different pedagogical approaches, are noted. In particular, arriving at a new university, in a different country, possibly to study a different discipline from that studied at undergraduate level, in a non-native language, could result in international students feeling like 'freshers' again (Gibney et al., 2011), giving rise to feelings of isolation (Armstrong, 2009). Moreover, Hall and Sung (2009) note that international students tend to have difficulties adapting to UK educational norms, particularly when accustomed to teacher-led rather than student-centred approaches (Bache and Hayton, 2012; Clerehan et al. 2011; Kember, 2001).

While Sun and Richardson (2012) list evidence to counter typically held pre-conceptions regarding international students, Hall and Sung (2011) highlight the gap between lecturers

perceptions of students' linguistic abilities being at the root of problems students encounter, while students themselves indicate cultural differences in learning to be the key issue. Nonetheless, how to ensure international students fully engage with their studies has been subject to academic debate, with Madgett and Belanger (2008) highlighting the importance of providing appropriate support services, especially access to tutors (see also Clerehan et al., 2011; Guilfoyle, 2006), while Burdett and Crossman (2012) and Wang (2012) advocate interaction between international and domestic students. In addition, Arambewela and Hall (2009) and Bartram (2008) call for a more bespoke services rather than services based on a 'one size fits all' system (Cathcart et al, 2006). However, the students own ability to adapt and survive is also noted, with Lin, Yi-Ping and Lai. (2011) and McLachlin and Justice (2009) finding social networking to be useful. While Menzies and Baron (2014) and Quan (2013) recommend that international students make good use of social networks to overcome social barriers, they still require structured support from staff regarding the academic 'step up' to postgraduate study (West, 2012).

Focus of This Study

Growing competition to recruit international students in the post-Brexit era is likely to result in an intensified marketing and student recruitment activity as universities attempt to increase non-UK/EU student numbers. How well students, and in particular international students, engage with and succeed in postgraduate study is therefore important to UK universities and the broader UK economy.

As a result, postgraduate study will become increasingly important to policy-makers, higher education providers, and other stakeholders. This evolution is gaining further impetus through the emergence of postgraduate loans, resulting in a rise in home students of 22% in 2016-17 (HEFCE). Moreover, the increasingly competitive graduate jobs market, coupled with an 8% drop in graduate vacancies (Association of Graduate Recruiters Annual Report,

2016) means that more graduates are delaying their entry into the jobs market by undertaking postgraduate study.

Yet, little work has been conducted on how students, especially international students, make the transition from degree-level study to postgraduate study. Most work has focused on students moving from school to university (see for example, Berger and Malaney, 2003), from further education to higher education (see for example, Knox, 2005) or from foundation degree to top-up honours degree (see for example, Mytton and Rumbold, 2011). Those works focusing on international students, have tended to explore their integration into a new learning environment or culture (see for example, Clerehan et al., 2011), rather than their transition between academic levels. There is, therefore, a gap in existing literature relating to how international students manage the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study.

In this study, the perceptions of international students studying a taught Masters degree at a UK university were explored regarding their transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study, the challenges they faced in the process, and what factors supported the transition. This study not only complements the work of Tobbell et al. (2010; 2013), but also extends previous studies on the transition of students to postgraduate level study by seeking practical measures that might be adopted by universities to better support student progression and transition.

Method

Since the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of participants (students) regarding their transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study, and the challenges that they faced throughout the process, it was felt that an interview-based approach (Gray, 2014) would yield greater insight than one based on a survey. The study was therefore qualitative descriptive in approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

The Research sample

The research participants for this study were international taught postgraduate Business Management students of a UK university, who were engaged in full-time study. This particular university was chosen as it recruited a broad mix of local, national and international students. Business Management students comprised most of the taught postgraduate student body at that institution, with other academic disciplines having relatively small full-time and international student numbers.

The Research Process

A request for participants to be interviewed was issued to 52 full-time international MSc Management students via e-mail early in the second semester of the academic year. The study was timed to enable students to have some experience on which to base their reflections and comments. No incentive to participate in the study was offered. Forty-four positive responses were received from students (see Table 1). Twenty-nine students had previously studied business management, or a closely related discipline, at undergraduate level, with three of these having completed their full undergraduate studies at the same university.

[Table 1 here]

Semi-structured interviews were held with each of the students in a location within the University, by one of the authors as part of a ‘students as partners’ scheme. The interview covered perceived differences between undergraduate and postgraduate study, personal issues that students had faced in coping with the transition to postgraduate study, personal coping

strategies adopted, and how the University had supported them (see Appendix 1). Participants were however, also encouraged to talk freely. The interviews were not recorded as it was thought that this might have inhibited discussion, but shorthand notes were taken. The interview comments were transcribed and analysed for commonality of responses. The identified recurring themes were then tabulated into another document and reviewed for appropriateness against the original document. Given that this was a small sample from a specific cohort, it was felt that any further analysis such as cross-tabulation of responses into for example, gender or place of prior study might have led to inappropriate conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and associated discussion are presented in the three themes that emerged from the data analysis: *the need for criticality*, *grappling with critical writing*, and *pre-course preparation*. Any students' comments have been identified by gender and continent only, rather than name or country, in order to retain anonymity.

The Need for Critical Thinking

Given that 29 of the 44 students had studied a business related subject at undergraduate level, it might be expected that these individuals would have found similarities between undergraduate and postgraduate-level study, perhaps experiencing an incremental, barely perceptible transition between the two levels. However, while the content was seen to be similar for these individuals, the need for greater depth of understanding to be demonstrated was universally voiced. Comments suggested that “*delivered knowledge at both undergraduate and postgraduate [is] similar. However, the level at which the content is analysed in written coursework is higher than at undergraduate level*” (Male, Africa).

Additionally, *“I have the impression that the content of modules is not so different from undergraduate to postgraduate study. However, lecturers expect students to be more focused on details”* (Male, Americas) and *“both have the same qualities and knowledge, but postgraduate is more specialised in the chosen majors and professional in terms of studying environment and lecturers”* (Male, Africa). None of the students interviewed felt that the change of discipline from undergraduate to postgraduate study contributed to any perceived differences between the respective levels.

The skills requirements for Masters level students (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>) were echoed in all of the students’ responses, with the need for critical evaluation and a deeper understanding at postgraduate level being recognised by the students as the key differentiator to undergraduate studies; with students typically commenting that postgraduate requires a greater emphasis on critical thinking.

The process of critical evaluation, and acquiring deeper understanding, are deemed by students to be derived through engaging with research, which again reinforces the requirements of studying at Masters level. Here comments included *“postgraduate studies are more about research and not so much about learning the concepts of your discipline, which is what you do during undergraduate”* (Female, Asia) and *“I do a lot of research, which I did not do when I studied at undergraduate”* (Male, Africa).

The requirement for critical evaluation is perceived by students to be a significant difference between studying at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Nonetheless, given that the benchmark statements for Business Management degrees (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>) specify students should develop the ability to demonstrate ‘cognitive skills of critical thinking’, it could be expected that the difference in skill levels required is, to an extent, incremental in nature. Yet, seven of the students stated that critical skills were not required at undergraduate

level; commenting that “*we do not critique at undergraduate level*” (Female, Asia), “*at undergraduate [level], we just copy and paste from source*” (Female, Europe), and “*references are not required at undergraduate level*” (Female, Asia). These comments highlight the need to support individual students acquire cognitive skills of critical thinking early in their transition into postgraduate studies, perhaps through format feedback on written work.

There was also a perceived simplicity in referencing associated with undergraduate studies; with participants commenting that at undergraduate level referencing was perceived as simple, for example, “*just copy the link of any website that you find on the internet or say where they come from*” (Female, Europe) and “*at undergraduate, we can use Wikipedia for everything. It is easier because it goes straight to the point you are looking for, but it is not allowed here*” (Female, Europe). Such comments suggest some cause for concern for the MSc Management course teams, where the standard entry requirement is a second class honours degree, or better.

While the above quotes cast some doubt over the rigour of assessment at undergraduate level and it is hoped that these comments are not representative of the experience of the student body as a whole. It is possible that this lack of demonstrable critical skills required (or perceived to be require) at undergraduate level is linked to the assessment regimes deployed on qualifying undergraduate courses, particularly due to the use of examinations in some disciplines, institutions, or national systems. To emphasise this, students commented “*at postgraduate assignment, at undergraduate test*” (Female, Europe) and “*we can be lazy all year round and only start to study when the exam is coming*” (Male, Africa).

Nonetheless, Kember (2001) found that students were more likely to struggle to adjust to higher education if the process of learning, teaching and assessment did not reconcile with

their previous experience and expectations. Consequently, if these students were expecting summative examinations at postgraduate level, based on their experiences at undergraduate level, but were required to undertake other forms of assessment such as presentations or written assignments, then they were more likely to find study at postgraduate level challenging. For international students, this could result from differences in educational systems between their home country and the UK (Bache and Hayton, 2012), with Hall and Sung (2009) noting that international students often struggle to adapt to UK educational norms. This differential was highlighted by one student who stated *“the pedagogic style of teaching is different from country to country. In the US, much more lectures are given and you can have a percentage of your grade from your contribution in class”* (Male, Americas). However, this was countered by another student, *“I experienced undergraduate studies in France, but it is hard to make a comparison as they are two different systems, based on cultural difference. However, it seems normal to me that the expectations level is higher for postgraduate studies. I don’t think it is linked with a different university or country”* (Female, Europe). It would appear to be helpful, therefore, for academic staff to understand the different educational (as well as cultural) backgrounds of their students, and develop strategies to help them adapt to alternative approaches to assessment.

Grappling with Critical Writing

The issue of engaging with criticality in written assignment work was seen to be the most significant problem faced by students at the postgraduate level; with comments including *“I have difficulties with the assignment because [I am] not acquainted with writing and critical skills”* (Male, Asia) and *“[it is] difficult to be critical and give my point of view. [I] usually give personal opinion at undergraduate, but can’t do that, or don’t know how to do that at*

postgraduate, because everything must be critical” (Female, Europe). Other comments included, *“New research approaches and methodologies and critique that have never seen before and [I am] not familiar with”* and *“[it is] very hard to finally find out how to do research and criticise”* (Female, Africa). In addition, students found it difficult to express their personal perspectives in assessed written work; with one stating that *“it seems that we do not have the chance to share our own ideas and initiative. Everything must be based on our research in books or journals”* (Male, Americas).

Nonetheless, an alternative perspective is that what is considered ‘critical’ at Level 6 (the final year of a UK undergraduate degree) is not the same as ‘critical’ at level 7 (postgraduate level). Indeed, words such as ‘critique’, ‘analyse’ or ‘evaluate’ can be found to describe learning outcomes across all levels of the UK’s education system (Scott and Martin, 2012). Thus, the words used to describe levels gain meaning only when they are placed in a particular context. Students tend to understand what these words mean in these contexts only when they undertake the assessment (Scott and Martin, 2012). Therefore, at Masters level, students discover a new interpretation of the word critical that was not demanded of them during their undergraduate studies.

Critical writing requires students to weigh up the quality, relevance and usefulness of the evidence and arguments presented in the literature and develop their own perspective. It will include an assessment of the evidence presented and conclusions reached, along with consideration of why these conclusions might be accepted or treated with caution. This will lead to a clear presentation of the students’ own evidence, arguments and conclusion that recognises the limitations in that evidence, argument, and conclusion (University of Leicester Learning Development Centre, 2013). Critical writing therefore represents an important skill that will underpin academic and professional development as graduates’ progress within any

future organisational setting. It is important that educators support the development of these skills amongst postgraduate students as they progress through their higher-level studies.

Because students were required to engage with wider reading and research, and at the same time tackle the intricacies of critical writing, this created further issues of time management for two students. One commented, “*Managing time to cope with assignments has been the biggest difficulty*” (Female, Africa), while another said “*one issue is time management. I had to learn to organise my time between lectures, assignments ... and the job I have beside*” (Female, Asia). This situation will be common as many students now work part-time, with international students working up to 20 hours per week during term-time.

The ability of some students to manage their independent study more effectively than others (Gibney et al., 2011), has led van der Meer, Jansen and Torenbeek (2010) to argue that universities should actively seek to support the development of students’ time management capabilities. Here, effective time management was only one solution suggested by the students, since coping with communication issues and critical thinking involved adopting more innovative solutions. Comments including: “*I try to notice who is the best one in class and ask for her or his e-mail or Facebook, so we can talk at home*” (Female, Europe) and “[I] *join the same table with a classmate who is good at that subject*” (Female, Europe) highlight the tactics used by students to support their learning. The suggested use of technology-based networking raises a key point for course teams, with Stefanica (2014) advocating that staff make greater formal use of Facebook (and other social networks), to create discussion groups and encourage student engagement with university-based activities. It is the integration of students into a wider student community that Bliuc et al (2011) deem crucial to students’ academic success.

Lin, Yi-Ping and Lai (2011) examine how the use of social networks and interpersonal relationships can help individuals cope with adjusting to new learning approaches. However, a feeling emerged amongst students that the onus to cope with the transition lay predominantly with themselves, and was not a shared problem. One respondent commented that *“honestly, there is no particular support. However, I don’t know if one is needed. It is more a personal thing, to learn to be more organised, and to be more concerned with details”* (Female, Asia). Another student noted that *“there is no other way to cope with this other than reading, studying the methods and trying to apply them in assignments”* (Female, Asia). While a further respondent said *“I studied hard by making a lot of questions, reading various books, spending more time at the library”* (Female, Asia). This commentary reconciles to the findings of Iyer-O’Sullivan (2013) who suggests that critical reading skills lead naturally to critical writing skills among postgraduate students.

While coping with learning issues emerged as requiring a more personal, internalised approach of ‘knuckling down’, students offered several suggestions for course teams to support future cohorts in making the transition to postgraduate study.

Pre-course Preparation

Students suggested that support for the Masters programme should occur even before classes commence, with one suggesting that course teams should *“not assume that we know everything because we are taking the Masters. I recommend that the university send us some materials before we start the class for those who haven’t studied the same subject at undergraduate [level], so we can learn the basics before coming to class”* (Female, Europe). Others suggested that the University might offer pre-sessional classes before starting the first semester to introduce students to writing assignments, critical skills, digital literacy skills,

undertaking primary and secondary research, and Harvard referencing – all skills that are actually introduced early in the taught programme. Knox (2005) found that early engagement with students through a preparatory module had a positive impact upon transition and subsequently on retention and performance. Students clearly want a supportive environment upon commencement of postgraduate studies, including an accessible introduction to the study skills that will be required to thrive on their chosen course. This may have a significant impact upon the planning of induction and familiarisation activities, suggesting that course teams assume that students are starting from a zero-base of academic skills, ignoring those skills supposedly honed during their previous undergraduate studies.

It was felt that any initial support should extend to helping students develop critical evaluation skills, with students expecting the course team to “*explain, with specific examples, what is critique at the beginning before we start the first semester*” (Female, Asia) and suggesting that the “*personal tutor ... recommend step-by-step how to start writing and reading*” (Female, Europe). In a parallel study by Pike and Harrison (2011) a similar demand was noted amongst top-up students that joined directly in to the third year of a 3-year undergraduate degree, with students requiring information regarding what was expected of them before engaging with their studies, in order to reduce anxiety and stress.

Once classes begin, students felt that the role of Tutors in supporting students becomes important. Comments here included that staff “*should continue to explicitly communicate the expectations of the university towards postgraduate students and continue to have staff as available as they can be*” (Male, Europe) and “*some tutors explain what is critique and how to do that, but usually they do that in the last class of the module right before the deadline so it is very hard to change what we have written on the assignment*” (Male, Africa).

This supports the findings of Clerehan et al. (2011) who found that international students considered relationships with staff and peers to be important in managing their transition. However, students in this study also felt that support should be directed specifically towards individual assignments, with students commenting that staff should “*go through the assignment requirement, what points we need to focus [on and] what readings are recommended*” (Male, Africa). Others suggested that while the support sessions delivered at the beginning of the semester are useful, they remain too theoretical and should be focused more specifically on the first assignments that students have to submit. Here, Hallett (2010) provides a useful differentiation between study support as a remedial activity on the one hand and a desire from students to engage more with the specific course context on the other, with the latter seemingly preferred by these students.

Conclusion

Students enter postgraduate taught study with clear notions of what will be expected of them, recognising the need to adopt a more independent research oriented approach than was typically the case at undergraduate level, and to be more critical of the theoretical concepts encountered. Despite this expectation, students are seemingly ill-prepared to cope, at least initially, with the academic demands of postgraduate study, especially the ability to integrate critical thinking within written coursework. As a result, students require time to ‘bed in’ and become accustomed to the requirements of postgraduate study. Yet, given that most taught Masters courses in the UK are 12 months long, students do not have the luxury of having time to adjust. Consequently, there is an opportunity for universities to support postgraduate students more effectively. In this study, participants point towards some form of pre-course preparation, suggesting that universities start from a premise that students will need support

prior to commencing the course. This does, of course, raise questions around the extent to which some undergraduate courses prepare students for postgraduate study.

Any structured support should be extended to incorporate the actions of course tutors providing comprehensive guidance on assessments requirements. Comments from participants suggest that they look to Tutors to define more explicitly the concept of ‘criticality’, especially in relation to specific assessment tasks. Here, Peel (1994) advises that teachers need to make more explicit the purpose of any assessment tasks, and what represents a successful outcome. Eales-Reynolds et al. (2013) recommend breaking down an assignment into its component elements, which should then prompt further questions, perhaps enabling students to use a Question Matrix (Burns and Sinfield, 2013) to analyse more deeply beyond the assessment questions. However, students look to tutors for support and guidance and therefore Lillis’s (2006) suggestion of a more participative approach, in engaging in tutor-student dialogue would seem to be appropriate.

The extensive use of informal networks amongst postgraduate students implies an absence of formal connections being readily available. Again, this raises a possible opportunity for universities to link students together utilising peer support and learning networks as an integral aspect of course design. This connectivity could help overcome students’ feelings of isolation in grappling with postgraduate study.

The limitations of this study centre on the use of one student cohort at a single university. Nonetheless, as an exploratory study in an area where little research has been undertaken, it provides useful insights that can be extended and developed. In particular, the study raises questions regarding the effectiveness of undergraduate study as preparation for postgraduate study. This supports the findings of Woloschuk, McLaughlin and Wright (2010) in their examination of medical students, that found little evidence to suggest undergraduate

attainment influenced postgraduate performance. In addition, the treatment of the sample as a homogeneous cohort raises potential to explore individual characteristics, especially regarding gender, where several studies have demonstrated that female students tend to outperform males (Dayioglu and Turuk-Asik, 2007; Khwaileh and Zaza, 2011; Ngozi, 2011). The international dimension of students engaging with Masters study in a different language and communication systems (Brown, 2008), differences in teaching and learning approaches (Clerehan et al., 2012), and personally integrating into a different culture (Scheyvens, Wild and Overton, 2003), deserve further exploration. Additionally, all students in this sample moved directly from undergraduate to postgraduate study. It would therefore be interesting to explore the perceptions of those individuals who have a gap, either to travel or to undertake work experience, between their undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

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Table 1: Student Sample Numbers by Gender and International Origin (Continent)

International Origin	Male	Female	Totals
Europe (non-UK)	2	12	14
Asia	6	16	22
Americas	2	0	2
Africa	4	2	6
Totals	14	30	44

Appendix 1: Interview questions

1. What academic discipline did you do for your undergraduate study (e.g. business, geography, etc.)?
2. Why did you choose this University for your postgraduate study?
3. What do you perceive to be the differences between undergraduate (degree) and postgraduate (Masters) study?
4. Are the differences linked to discipline?
5. Are the differences between undergraduate and postgraduate linked to differences in university or country?
6. Has the perception of difference between undergraduate and postgraduate changed over the period from when you first started the postgraduate study?
7. What issues or problems have you been faced with in coping with postgraduate study?
8. How have you personally dealt in coping with the transition to postgraduate study?
9. What has the university done to support or help you make the transition to postgraduate study?
10. What could the university do to help you make the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate easier?

Are there any other points you would like to make about managing the transition to postgraduate study?