



3.2.1 What institutional purposes best match your interests?

Universities are generally classified as to purpose in terms of the relative importance assigned to teaching and research. So, research-intensive universities, those which place a high value on internationally-recognized research, tend to be large, put a heavy emphasis on post-graduate programs and supervision, and expect those in research-teaching positions to provide ongoing evidence of their scholarly contribution. Such universities tend to be collectively named, e.g., the Russell Group in the UK, the U15 in Canada, the Australian Group of Eight and the Carnegie Research 1 universities in the US. The majority of PhD graduates come from these universities, but most graduates seeking research-teaching positions will not find them here but rather in the other types of universities.

At the other end of the research-teaching spectrum are universities whose principal mission is teaching undergraduates. Such institutions focus on providing high quality learning experiences for students and may be professionally-oriented to ensure high employability of graduates. In such institutions, teaching has primacy and you will likely be judged on how well you teach, often based on student course evaluations and your responsiveness to these. Often in these universities opportunities to supervise student research will be limited to undergraduates. Nevertheless, there may be expectations of research activity, perhaps focused on teaching and learning. The US undergraduate colleges are a good example of this kind of university as are several post-92 universities in the UK.

Falling in between the teaching-focused and research-focused institutions are universities often called comprehensives, which address the learning needs of undergraduate students and postgraduate, largely Master's, students, while also carrying out some research. Those holding research-teaching positions will be expected to do well in their teaching, to supervise Master's students, and also maintain a research profile.



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