

Options with business studies

Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

Because of the breadth of this field of study, it is useful to think carefully about the specific benefits that you can 'sell' to an employer. What are the strengths of your course? Is it strong in a specific field such as financial management, group work, or cross-cultural working?

Most business courses address contemporary and pervasive issues, such as business innovation, e-commerce, creativity and enterprise, knowledge management, sustainability, globalisation, business ethics, values and norms. Think about how you can demonstrate your awareness of relevant issues to potential employers.

You may already be on the way to a professional qualification. Specific modules, e.g. in accounting, human resources and marketing, may carry the bonus of enabling you to accredit prior learning. Check with your department.

Many employers search hard for applicants with commercial awareness, and business studies graduates should have the edge because you develop specific skills: business analysis; marketing; research methods; sensitivity to organisational needs; and good quantitative skills. General skills are also relevant: independent study; cross-cultural working; leadership and teamwork; communication and information technology. Consider, too, the opportunity provided by your course to test your skills in project management or by participating in a small business or enterprise module - a strong plus for employability.

Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#) a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Advertising account executive](#) - works for an advertising agency that serves outside clients, acts as a link between client and agency, and coordinates that client's campaigns.
- [Chartered accountant](#) - provides accountancy, audit/assurance, tax and business advisory services to external or internal clients.
- [Distribution/logistics manager](#) - manages the supply, movement, distribution and/or storage of goods and materials for an organisation.
- [Investment banker \(corporate finance\)](#) - provides investment and advisory services to client companies, institutions and governments.
- [Marketing executive](#) - develops product brands using marketing and promotional campaigns. The fast-moving

consumer goods (FMCG) field covers high-volume, low-value items with high public visibility and short life span, such as food, drink, confectionery, toiletries and household goods.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Retail merchandiser](#) - responsible for retail product planning. This involves working closely with buying teams to forecast trends, plan stock levels and monitor performance.
- [Human resources officer](#) - develops, advises on and implements policies for the effective deployment of an organisation's human resources (HR). The work might include recruitment and selection, training and development, employee relations, pay and conditions, and diversity.
- [Banker](#) - provides financial services to individual and business customers including: bank accounts; cash handling; cheque clearing; credit and debit cards; loans and mortgages; foreign currency; and insurance products.
- [Sales executive](#) - maximises sales of a company's goods or services in designated markets at home or overseas. Opportunities include those in FMCG (fast moving consumer goods); consumer durables (e.g. clothes, footwear, domestic equipment and toys); or in specialist industrial supply.
- [Systems/business analyst](#) - examines a business activity to help decide whether new IT solutions will improve productivity.

Other options

If you decide to take time out, volunteer or travel, try to make sure you make the time count by getting involved in something in which you can apply some of the skills you've gained from your degree studies. Employers will appreciate it and it will help you to stand out from other candidates at interview.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's also worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Every year statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

In 2007, six months after graduation, nearly 62% of business students were in full-time paid employment, so the vocational relevance of your degree choice is evident.

Business studies graduates are found in almost every employment sector but around 22% typically enter employment in commercial, industrial and public sector management. Commercial roles are found within: retail; manufacturing; utilities such as electricity, gas and water supply; construction;

distribution; hotel and catering; transport; ICT; and business services.

About 19% enter employment in business and finance. Relevant accounting and finance opportunities include those in professional services (chartered accountancy, consultancy, law and tax); and those with major industrial and manufacturing organisations and finance - banking, city markets or insurance.

Significant numbers of business graduates also head for media jobs, the hospitality industry and retail.

Where are the jobs?

Explore 'commercial' roles or take a detailed look at a particular sector. Graduate training schemes advertised in the autumn by your careers service include commercial opportunities and those in specific functions such as accounting, human resources, logistics and marketing. Key public sector management training schemes are also advertised. Media employers in fields such as PR or advertising may not appear directly. They will expect YOU to apply to them!

For more detailed information, check the following sectors:

- [City markets](#): traders and investment professionals;
- [Financial services](#): retail, commercial and private banking and financial advice;
- [Accountancy and business services](#): accountants, actuaries and tax specialists.

Career management is an ongoing process; one that you'll no doubt develop throughout your working life. [Explore job sectors](#) for further information on all the above employment areas.

Further study

In 2007, six months after completing their course, just over 6% of business graduates had opted for further study, with another 9% combining work and study. Popular options include an MSc in Marketing or Human Resources; the Common Professional Examination (CPE) for conversion to law; and computing/ICT courses. Those combining study with a job are often working towards a professional qualification, for example, studying for the examinations of one of the accounting bodies; Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) (<http://www.cipfa.org.uk>), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) (<http://www.accaglobal.com>), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) (<http://www.cimaglobal.com>), Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) (<http://www.icaew.co.uk>), Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI) (<http://www.icaei.ie>) or Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (<http://www.icas.org.uk>), or for those in city careers such as investment analysts, Securities and Investment Institute (SII) (<http://www.sii.org.uk>) qualifications, or for city trader posts, Financial Services Authority (FSA) (<http://www.fsa.gov.uk>) examinations.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Search courses and research](#) to identify your options; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for more details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. For something different, check out [self-employment](#) and [flexible working](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have

definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- [Explore job sectors](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

(c) Content copyright of or licensed to AGCAS (www.agcas.org.uk)

Written by Paul Kingston, AGCAS, October 2006.

Edited by Carol Bebawi, AGCAS, October 2006.

Last updated by Sarah Nichols, AGCAS, November 2007.

The work of writers and editors is gratefully acknowledged.

To view the terms and conditions for the material provided in this publication, please see <http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/disclaimer>.