

Options with geography

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.

Geographers look at issues from a wide perspective and develop a range of skills which are attractive to a very broad range of future employers. Specific technical skills directly relevant to geography-related careers include: fieldwork, research and report writing, preparing maps and diagrams, using social survey and interpretative methods, collecting and analysing information using various technical and laboratory-based methods for the collection and analysis of spatial and environmental information (e.g. GIS, remote sensing and mathematical modelling), and recognising the moral and ethical issues involved in debates and enquiries. These skills equip you to apply for geography-related jobs when you graduate, although it is also useful to do some work-shadowing to find out about particular career areas which are of interest to you.

In addition, during your course you develop other personal and intellectual skills which are required by all employers, whether they are employing graduates in careers related or unrelated to geography. These skills can be developed through your experience at university as a whole but also through your degree programme as geography is very diverse and includes lots of hands-on, practical application work. Skills you develop include analysing and problem-solving; decision-making; critically interpreting data and text; developing a reasoned argument; numerical skills - interpreting and presenting relevant numerical information; team working; planning skills; presenting oral and written arguments; and information, communication and technology skills (ICT) - including word processing, databases, internet communications, information retrieval and online searches.

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.

These job options are just a small sample of the jobs open to geographers. Most will require some experience or further training after your degree. The Royal Geographical Society (<http://www.rgs.org>) website includes biographies of geography graduates.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Cartographer](#) - evaluates sets of geographical data and presents the information in the form of diagrams, charts, spreadsheets and maps.
- [Environmental consultant](#) - collects and interprets data from a variety of sources to help formulate policies for clients. Works in air and land contamination, noise and water pollution, or ecological land management.

- [Geographical information systems officer](#) - IT professional who uses computer-based systems to handle geographical information.
- [Planning and development surveyor](#) - investigates, plans and manages proposals either to build new developments or to organise the refurbishment of existing buildings.
- [Secondary school teacher](#) - you'll need to take a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), or Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in Scotland, or equivalent course, before you can teach geography in schools or colleges.
- [Town planner](#) - directs the planning of land use, trying to reconcile any conflicting demands such as the needs related to housing, the environment, or recreation.
- [Urban general practice surveyor](#) - values, manages and markets residential and commercial property and may act as an agent for clients in the sale, purchase or leasing of property.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Distribution/logistics manager](#) - manages the supply, movement and storage of goods and materials through the whole supply chain process from manufacturer to customer.
- [Local government administrator](#) - works in economic development and regeneration, transport, tourism, housing, environmental services (e.g. sustainability and recycling) or central services such as finance.
- [Market researcher \(qualitative/quantitative\)](#) - performs a wide range of activities and will often specialise in a particular area such as consumer, industry, or social and political research.
- [Retail manager](#) - manages a department or store aiming to improve commercial performance by maximising profit and increasing customer satisfaction.
- [Transport planner](#) - devises transport strategies in line with government policies.

Other options

Whatever you do, try to keep in mind your long-term goals and the way in which whatever you do will contribute to your experience and skills portfolio.

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, approximately 50% of geography graduates had entered full-time paid work and over 15% part-time paid work (with some combining work with further study) within six months

of graduating. Of these, the Higher Education Academy - Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>) Subject Centre Graduate Employability Survey shows that 40% of geographers enter subject-related employment. Depending on how much relevant work experience (paid or voluntary) you have built up during your degree, you could also try for environment-related careers in sustainability-related work, pollution control or nature conservation; or media and communications work, such as public relations.

In addition to subject-related jobs, geographers are successful in entering a wide variety of professions. Rarely do these jobs specify that geography is necessary, but most require the broad skills you develop over the years at university or college. During your final year or straight after your degree, you could apply to go directly into jobs including:

- graduate management training schemes in industry and commerce such as logistics, IT, finance, human resources, market research, retail, property and surveying;
- public sector careers e.g. civil service, local government, health, housing, armed services or police.

Where are the jobs?

Examples of employers include local government, private companies, environmental consultancies, environmental protection agencies, utilities, charities, information systems organisations, education authorities, further and higher education institutions, commerce, industry, transport, tourism and the civil service.

For further information on some of the above employers see the following job sectors:

- [Environmental, food chain and rural](#);
- [Local, regional and national government](#);
- [Voluntary](#).

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, within six months of graduation, around 20% of geography graduates had begun another course of full-time study and around 7% were working whilst studying. Geographers often choose to study masters or postgraduate diploma courses to specialise in a specific area, such as geographical information systems, remote sensing, environmental conservation, environmental management, oceanography, coastal and marine management, meteorology, or water resources. These courses may put you in a better position to get a job in those fields. Postgraduate courses in teaching, surveying or urban/rural planning are also popular, as they qualify you to work in the profession as soon as you complete them.

Choosing to undertake a PhD will enable you to specialise into research and university teaching.

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.

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