

Options with history

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.

What do employers think of graduates with a history degree, a subject that is ordinarily viewed as non-vocational? Employers widely respect history graduates as having a valuable combination of skills. Broadly speaking, history skills include:

- research skills, including the use of information and communications technology;
- excellent communication and writing skills;
- independent work skills of self-motivation and time-management;
- high-level analysis and evaluation skills.

Studying history improves the depth and range of your personal transferable skills including:

- critical reasoning and analytical skills, including the ability to solve problems and think creatively, often through doing extensive reading;
- intellectual rigour and independence, including the ability to conduct research using different types of tools and sources, gathering, sifting, interpreting, analysing and organising information;
- marshalling an argument, including evaluating, selecting and ordering relevant evidence and formally communicating findings in a structured, coherent, clear and persuasive manner, both orally and in writing;
- self-motivation and self-reliance, with the ability to work without direct supervision and manage time effectively, but also the ability to discuss ideas in groups.

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

- [Archivist](#) - plans and organises systems and procedures for the safekeeping of, and public access to, historically valuable collections. Archivists identify, evaluate and select important items, and negotiate the acquisition of material with the relevant providers.
- [Secondary school teacher](#) - develops schemes of work and plans lessons, encourages, monitors and records the progress of individual pupils, and devises and adapts resources to suit their own students. Secondary school teachers must also keep up to date with developments in their subject area, and new teaching and learning methods.
- [Museum/art gallery curator](#) - acquires, maintains, develops, displays and interprets a collection of artefacts

or works of art in order to educate, entertain and inspire the public.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Academic librarian](#), [Information officer/manager](#), [Information scientist](#), [Records manager](#) - responsible for the selection, acquisition, organisation and dissemination of information within an organisation, often with a user training and liaison role.
- [Broadcast journalist](#), [Magazine journalist](#) or [Newspaper journalist](#) - responsible for investigating, gathering and reporting on news and authoring journal-specific features.
- [Writer](#) - creative writing including prose (fiction) and poetry, non-fiction and material for the theatre, screen, radio and the web. Most writers work freelance and are self-employed. Writers are often required to financially support themselves through other types of employment, often including teaching, lecturing, publishing and editing.
- [Education administrator](#) - involved in organising and management of educational institutions' administrative activities, systems and processes. Areas of work include central administration (such as admissions and recruitment) of a particular faculty team or academic/support department, such as finance or careers, where the role is likely to involve more direct contact with students/pupils.
- [Civil Service administrator, main stream](#) - interprets and applies complex written information relating to policies and procedures, produces high-quality materials and reports, researches and conducts analysis, and delivers findings.
- [Primary school teacher](#) - planning, preparing and presenting lessons for pupils aged five to eleven, motivating pupils, and assessing and recording pupils' progress.
- [Barrister](#) - A significant number of history graduates train in law. Barristers are responsible for understanding and interpreting the law, managing legal briefs (cases), researching and writing opinions, preparing cases for court, and preparing and presenting legal argument.
- [Solicitor, commercial](#) or [Solicitor, non-commercial](#) - advises individuals and organisations on legal aspects of personal and business matters.
- [Careers information officer](#) - identifies resources and assesses the suitability and value of information relevant to a careers service, assists and trains users in locating appropriate resources. In addition, careers information officers develop collection management and development policies that meet current and anticipated needs, while considering budgetary constraints.

A history degree provides openings to a wide range of careers. A surprising number of history graduates have risen to the very top of a diverse range of professions and to key positions in society and have gone on to become the movers-and-shakers of modern-day Britain. The study of history, and the associated skills development, must have played an important part.

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?](#)

Statistics for students who graduated in 2006 show that, six months after graduating, approximately 53% of history graduates had entered full- or part-time paid employment. Some were in jobs they perhaps did not consider permanent, whereas others had found graduate-level employment in various occupations such as advertising account executive, banker, IT consultant, paralegal and training and development officer/manager. Typical employers include national banks, television and radio broadcasters, national and local governments, management consultancies, law firms, higher education institutions and retailers.

Many history graduates chose careers unrelated to their course of study. For example, 21% went into clerical and secretarial posts; 15% retail and catering; 11% managerial roles in commerce, industry and the public sector; 9% the business and financial professions; and 6% professional roles in marketing, sales and advertising. Approximately 6% of history graduates were unemployed, the same percentage as the national graduate unemployment average.

Where are the jobs?

With their flexible combination of skills, it is perhaps not surprising that history graduates who can demonstrate their abilities pursue a wide variety of careers, including teaching, law, researching, accountancy, journalism, administration, information management and the media, a range of careers that is wider than that open to students studying a purely vocational course.

For further information see the following sectors:

- [Creative arts](#) - opportunities to work as an Arts administrator, Museum/art gallery curator, Writer, amongst many other occupations
- [Education](#) - opportunities in schools as well as further and higher education
- [Local, regional and national government](#) - opportunities in local and central government

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

Data for students who graduated in 2006 shows that a large proportion - almost a quarter (22%) - of history graduates went on to further study, with some choosing to specialise at Masters or PhD level in an area of history that perhaps interested them during their undergraduate degree course.

In addition, many postgraduate courses accept graduates from any subject, and this allows history graduates to choose subjects as diverse as, for example, accountancy, journalism, law, museums, teaching and librarianship. These courses will help you gain vocational training skills in discrete occupational areas. Popular areas for further study include the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in primary and secondary teaching, graduate diploma in law, Masters in information management, and certificates in corporate finance and personnel practice.

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](#). [Find 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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