

Options with leisure/recreation management

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.

Leisure/recreation management studies provide an excellent grounding in general business management skills, including finance, human resources (HR), physical resources management, business planning, marketing, legal matters (health and safety) and customer service. These are all highly transferable skills and can lead to a management role in any sector.

Leisure/recreation management is studied from political, economic and social perspectives. Gaining an understanding of issues relating to psychology, sociology and social policy also means you could move into roles within the public sector and government, including policy planning, community development and social work. Your practical assignments and placements also provide you with hands-on experiences in public, private and voluntary sector environments.

The content and structure of leisure/recreation management courses encourages you to develop interactive and group skills, problem-solving abilities and excellent time management and organisational skills, all of which are key to any job in any sector.

As leisure and recreation studies fall into the category of management studies, courses are designed to enable graduates to enter work at managerial level. In reality, it is likely that first positions may be at assistant or trainee manager level until further experience is gained. Many graduates are ultimately aiming to manage their own leisure facility.

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

- [Fitness centre manager](#) - manages a centre for the promotion of activities relating to physical fitness, including: attracting new and retaining existing members; generating revenue; ensuring health and safety compliance; maintaining equipment and premises; and supervising and training staff.
- [Outdoor pursuits manager](#) - runs a centre for outdoor activities such as climbing, walking, horse riding, mountaineering, water sports and cycling. Responsibilities include managing and training staff and instructors, and ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations at all times.
- [Theme park manager](#) - responsible for every aspect of the day-to-day running of a theme park, including managing the customer experience, strategic planning and

development, monitoring health and safety and overseeing the park's finances.

- [Event organiser](#) - oversees the production of events, from conception to completion. This might include festivals, exhibitions, concerts, conferences, social events, fundraising activities, product launches. Event organisers generally work for event management companies or for in-house teams attached to event venues.
- [Tourist information centre manager](#) - runs a service providing information to the public and local businesses about tourist attractions, events, accommodation, transport and other facilities in the region and nationwide. The managers of these centres are responsible for ensuring that the centre runs smoothly, recruiting and training staff, and purchasing items.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Cinema manager](#) - responsible for general management of the cinema, including human resources (HR), facilities, sales, finances, overseeing marketing and the promotion of films, and hiring out premises. Duties may also include box office work, front-of-house supervision and management of ticket sales.
- [Sports development officer](#) - aims to improve access to and develop more public interest in sport and physical activity by organising sporting-related projects, programmes, information and training for both the competitive and leisure user in all sections of society in order to increase levels of participation.
- [Tourism consultant](#) - provides specialist management and development services to a particular tourist attraction or a specific area. Typical consultancy commissions include feasibility studies, strategic marketing and planning, urban or rural regeneration projects, and preparing applications for funding.
- [Customer services manager](#) - ensures that a company or organisation satisfies its customers' needs. Customer services managers may work at various levels, from head office to the front end of the business. Work might include: helping to develop a customer service policy for an entire organisation; managing a team of customer services staff; or handling face-to-face enquiries from customers.
- [Sports administrator](#) - carries out administrative and organisational tasks, including business and financial management, event management, marketing and advocacy, including liaising with sports councils and committees, advising sports clubs, consulting with local communities, and serving on task groups and think tanks.

Other options

There is a crossover between the leisure/recreation industry and hospitality and catering. Roles in hospitality include [Accommodation manager](#) (i.e. in conference centres and hotels) and [Restaurant manager](#), where your general understanding of managing a range of facilities will apply.

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?](#)

Latest first destination surveys for graduates reveal that in 2007, six months after graduation, over 75% of leisure and recreation management graduates had found paid employment, with over 60% in full-time work. Of those in work, almost one fifth had taken positions in retail, catering and hospitality and a similar number had taken up management or management trainee positions in the private or public sector.

Where are the jobs?

Typical employers include fitness and leisure centres, hotels and accommodation facilities, and cinema and entertainment complexes. Leisure facilities are owned and managed by both commercial companies and local government. Politically focused roles relating to developing communities through leisure, strategic planning, and implementing national policy are also available in local government.

Leisure/recreation management graduates are also finding opportunities within event management companies (producing festivals, concerts, exhibitions and corporate or private parties) and also within leisure management consultancies (providing advice to the public and private sector on how best to manage their sports and leisure facilities).

For more information, see the following sectors:

- [Sport and leisure](#) - the sector that helps people enjoy their spare time! This includes provision for physical activities (fitness, outdoor hobbies), entertainment (cinemas, theatres, restaurants), relaxation and cultural pursuits (museums and galleries, reading, shopping).
- [Tourism](#) - this sector covers provision for tourists, both in the UK and abroad. The travel industry is closely linked. Employers include tourist boards, tour operators and travel agents, tourist information centres and any business associated with a 'tourist attraction'.
- [Hospitality](#) - this sector is dedicated to providing services which contribute to people's enjoyment and comfort away from home, mainly in their leisure time but also in a work context. The sector includes organisations such as hotels, restaurants, pubs and clubs, and catering services.

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

Around 12% of leisure/recreation management graduates pursue full-time or part-time further study.

Some take postgraduate courses in order to specialise in a particular area such as arts and culture, events management, or even such narrow specialisms as, for example, 'Lake District studies'.

Others wish to enhance their management qualifications or widen the scope of their understanding of the leisure industry by studying international leisure management, for example. You can study for an MA, MSc, PGDip, PhD or MBA.

Many graduates who work within this area also choose to study for the professional qualifications offered by the Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL) (<http://www.ispal.org.uk>) or those listed by the sector skills councils, People 1st for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism (<http://www.people1st.co.uk>) and SkillsActive - The Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning

<http://www.skillsactive.com>).

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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