

# Options with sociology

## 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.

Sociology is the study of people and therefore the skills and knowledge you develop within the course are relevant to a wide variety of careers. It involves study of the behaviour of people in groups and of the relationship between these groups. This balance of studying major issues of concern for society and linking this to academic concepts and theories develops important skills. The ability to critically analyse common issues of concern is recognised by employers.

Additional skills you will acquire include:

- appreciating the complexity and diversity of social situations;
- researching, judging and evaluating complex information;
- making reasoned arguments, both orally, in tutorials and presentations, and in written work;
- strong IT skills, gained through the presentation of projects and dissertations;
- a knowledge and understanding of research methods, analysis and statistical techniques;
- formulating and solving problems;
- developing opinions and new ideas, thinking and working creatively with others;
- using effective methods to communicate your ideas and conclusions;
- statistical and other quantitative techniques;
- relating theoretical perspectives and concepts in sociology to their application to social life;
- the ability to recognise the relevance of sociological knowledge to social, public and civic policy;
- organising your work and meeting deadlines.

## 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

- [Social researcher](#) - designs, formulates, carries out and manages social research projects, on topics such as unemployment or crime.
- [Counsellor](#) - works with people to explore, in a confidential and safe environment, difficulties, feelings of distress, dissatisfaction or a loss of purpose.
- [Community development worker](#) - empowers communities to develop the skills and awareness required to regain control over and improve the quality of their lives.
- [Advice worker](#) - responds to requests for help from members of the public and assists clients by providing information and confidential advice on a wide range of

issues.

- [Further education lecturer](#) - organises and teaches one or more subjects in a general or specialist college of further education (FE), a tertiary college or a sixth form college.

### Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Probation officer](#) - works with offenders by combining continuous assessment and risk management with the provision of expert supervision programmes designed to reduce re-offending.
- [Social worker](#) - works in a variety of settings and within a framework of relevant legislation and procedures, supporting individuals, families and groups within the community.
- [Charity fundraiser](#) - works with the general public and corporate and business organisations, as well as with charitable trusts, to raise awareness of a charity's work, aims and goals.
- [Housing manager/officer](#) - develops, supplies or manages housing and related services on behalf of local authorities, housing associations, universities and property management companies.
- [Primary school teacher](#) or [Secondary school teacher](#) - develops work and lesson plans and teaches in line with curriculum objectives.

### Other options

The traditional occupation for sociology graduates has been social work or some other form of public sector welfare work. However, recently the range of jobs that sociology graduates have gone into has tended to broaden in both the public and private sectors. Employers recognise that the chief concern of sociology graduates is people and therefore jobs such as human resource management, police training, market research, retail management, journalism, the civil service and general management training are all jobs into which sociology graduates have gone.

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 70% of sociology graduates were in either full or part-time employment. Graduates from sociology degrees go into a wide variety of jobs on leaving university, for example, 10% went into the social and welfare professions, 11% into public and private sector management roles and 8% into business and finance, with smaller numbers entering a variety of other professions.

For many graduates the first employment position after graduation is a 'stepping stone' job to gain the experience that may be necessary to enter into a career area or course, such as social work. This may account for the relatively high numbers of those employed in clerical and secretarial positions (19%) or in retail, catering and bar work (14%). Others aim to progress within a particular organisation or industry by starting off in a grade lower than those on a graduate programme.

## Where are the jobs?

The wide variety of jobs that sociology graduates go into upon leaving university is reflected by the different types of employers who are likely to recruit sociology graduates. Typical employers include: local and central government; industry; commerce; the NHS; education authorities; further and higher education institutions; and charitable, counselling and voluntary organisations.

For more information take a look at the following sectors:

- [Education](#)
- [Local, regional and national government](#)
- [Social care](#)

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 graduation, 13% of sociology graduates had moved on to further study, with an additional 8% undertaking further study alongside their employment.

For students who are considering further study, there are generally two types. Firstly, for some careers areas, it is necessary to undertake a vocational postgraduate qualification. Examples include teaching, social work, law, housing, counselling, community education, information management and IT. However, for those who wish to continue to study sociology or related subjects (e.g. social policy), it is also possible to study Masters degrees (either via a taught course or a research programme) on leaving university and then study towards a PhD.

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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