



SKILLS FOR WORKPLACE AND LIFE

The question, "What are you going to do with it?" is often asked of students and graduates of Geography. The study of accountancy, engineering and architecture can be readily associated with specific careers, but Geography..... Where can it lead?

Today's workplace demands a trained, disciplined and flexible mind. The study of Geography gives this, together with two of the most highly prized skills in a world of competing places - the abilities to construct a holistic perspective on a rapidly changing world and to communicate information relating to particular contexts.

"Geography has taught me how to think, how to question the things that I am told, and come to my own understanding, even if that understanding is that I do not understand it!"

"Geography really puts your mind "in place" hence any theory you learn is given a real life application. Geography taught me how to apply theory regardless of whether it was in geography or law."



"Geography provides an holistic view of society and the environment and, to a great extent, focusses on the practical application of knowledge ... Geo rocks!"

"I find my career is constantly stretching my boundaries and challenging my comfort zone. Geography has taught me how to be versatile, methodical and to accept these challenges."



"I'm glad that I have taken Geography because it is a recognised core subject, and yet versatile, because if anything is relating to the land, it is geography. I ended up specialising in cultural geography, and in particular Maori geography. I think geography goes hand in hand with the study of any culture because it is intrinsically related to the relationship people share with the land. It's a kind of psychology, expressed in the way people live in and modify their environment. I hope I don't sound like a geek, but I find it pretty interesting!"

"Geography gives you a broader view of the world than many other subjects do and an appreciation of the economic, social, political and environmental consequences of decisions. These are skills that are increasingly valued in business."

"The first thing I look for on a CV is Geography."

Peter Dale, CEO, Hilary Commission

"I look at my friends, and realise that we have the same degree, sat in the same classes and have practically done the same papers. However, the careers we are in vary widely, and we are not stuck in a rut."

Some of my friends have decided the jobs they have taken are not for them, and moved on. Geography allows you to be flexible."

THINKING

While different jobs have certain **technical skills** that are needed, all jobs in today's rapidly changing work environment demand some **flexibility** in thinking. When asked about the kinds of thinkers they are seeking, many employers state that the **ability to think laterally**, and to **approach problems with open minds**, are essential qualities. Geographers are taught to **synthesise and integrate information and ideas** and to distinguish between fact and opinion.

ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

Work on **independent research projects** give Geographers first hand knowledge of what it means to be a self-managing professional.

RESEARCHING AND REPORTING

The research experience gained in a variety of situations provides preparation, which is often commented on by Geography graduates in the workforce. They speak of the Geographers' ability to carry out **independent research projects**, to **interpret the research** of physical and social scientists and to clearly articulate complex ideas to a variety of audiences.

ANALYSIS

Geographers know how to 'unpack' complex people-environment problems in order to identify the main issues and stakeholders involved and to understand the key processes at work. Geographers have training in **quantitative, qualitative and spatial analysis**. Their knowledge of how data can be analysed is a very useful workforce skill.

COMPUTER LITERACY

Our graduates tell us that **computer skills** are simply expected of any new employee but that Geography graduates bring a capacity to know how different software might be used more effectively in work situations. A proportion of Geographers have training in **GIS** which is a very marketable skill in many work places.

PRESENTATION

Geographers can **effectively communicate** with all kinds of audiences. With **skills of expression** come skills of thought, **clear thinking** and **clear expression** support each other.

TEAMWORK AND PEER EVALUATION

Collaborating to achieve group goals is vital in the community and business environments. Through their training Geographers deepen their **negotiation skills** and learn how to **interact with the public, business managers and government officials**.