

# Guiding University Choice

## Session Three: Foundations for a future career

### Reading

Certain degrees can offer you a direct pathway into a career. But what about other subjects?

If you were to be asked the question: *What sort of careers do English graduates go into?* What would be your answer? A teacher, an author, or maybe a librarian?

For many subjects there doesn't seem to be a natural link into careers does there? However, English graduates, like graduates from many other academic degrees, go into a wide range of careers.

Remember, gaining a degree will not only provide you with valuable knowledge and expertise in the subject you study but it will also help develop skills which employers are looking for.

Have a look at the list of careers below. How many of these do you think English graduates go into? The answer is in fact 'All of them'.

Career	Yes	No
Accountant	✓	
Advertising Copywriter	✓	
Civil Service Executive	✓	
Film Producer	✓	
Hotel Manager	✓	
Journalist	✓	
Public Relations Officer	✓	
Retail Manager	✓	
Social Worker	✓	
Solicitor	✓	
Teacher	✓	
Web Site Editor	✓	

As you can see it's not all about subject knowledge linked directly to a certain job. Often a degree can be seen as a 'ticket' into a career where you will be able to develop particular professional skills. David, a Careers Consultant, explained a little bit more about this in the video.

As David highlighted in the video 'Employability' is a buzz word that you will hear universities talk a lot about when you are researching where to study. You might not recognise it at the moment but you are already developing 'employability' skills through your current studies and any employment experience or voluntary work you have undertaken. If you write an essay you are employing skills such as research, analysis, evaluation and communication. Continuing your studies to degree level will develop these even further. However, as David clearly pointed out in the video, a degree on its own is no longer a guarantee of success in the graduate employment market.

**Remember:**

**Transferable Skills + Academic/Technical Knowledge + Work Experience = Employability**

A common question many people ask is: *Just how do you find out about career opportunities while studying at university?*

It might seem a long way off as you haven't applied to university yet but, as David explained in the video, planning ahead is important even at this stage. All universities will have resources and support facilities to help you develop your career plans. You might want to look in some detail at how the universities you are interested in attending address this when reading their prospectus or visiting their website. Questions to think about are:

**What support is there for preparing students for the world of work?**

- **Careers advice** – where you can discuss your future plans
- **Careers fairs** – where you can talk directly to employers and find out more about career opportunities that interest you
- **Employability skills programmes** – many universities offer tailor-made programmes to prepare you for entering the world of work after you graduate
- **Volunteering opportunities** – providing you with the chance to develop your skills and gain knowledge and experience of a particular sector
- **CV workshops and assessment centres** – helping you with the more practical aspects of applying for work.

**What links do they have with employers?**

- **Sector-specific events** – many universities organise specific occupational events where employers discuss opportunities in their industry
- **Mentoring schemes** – opportunity for one-to-one guidance and support from a professional in a particular industry.

**Do they offer work placements?**

- **Short term internships** - for students wishing to gain some work experience over the summer holidays
- **Opportunities to work within the university** – a lot of universities run their own internal employment agencies for students to gain short term jobs, as well as operating Ambassador Schemes.

The specialist graduate careers website [Prospects](#) can help you investigate what platform the degree you are thinking of doing can provide for a future career.

Here you can discover:

- What sort of jobs graduates from different degrees enter
- The type of employers who recruit graduates from those degrees
- The 'transferable skills' you would gain from studying that degree
- Information on further study options and case studies of students entering the world of work.

### **Further information on graduate career opportunities**

Top Universities – [www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice](http://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice)

Bright Knowledge – [www.brightknowledge.org](http://www.brightknowledge.org)

### **Session Tutor**

Andy Smith

Widening Participation Outreach Coordinator

[City, University of London](#)