

Careers and employability with History



range of different backgrounds

What skills are employers looking for?

In a recent survey of graduate recruiters the following were identified as key graduate skills:

People Skills

Employers are looking for graduates who are taking responsibility and are getting things done, who work well with colleagues and are able to listen. Recruiters want students who can show they are good with people from a wide

Self-Management Skills

You need to be able to demonstrate drive and initiative and that you are able to plan ahead and work towards a specific target

General Skills

Employers value people who are practical about getting results and able to solve problems. They are looking for dependable and adaptable graduates, who can thrive in different kinds of situation and work

Source: Survey of Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)

How will a degree in a History or African Studies-related programme help you to develop these skills?

If you graduate from Birmingham you will have acquired a range of skills that will make you very attractive to employers, in Britain and internationally:

- you will have learned to research, analyse and prioritise large amounts of complex information efficiently
- you will have delivered results on time, under pressure, and in a challenging environment
- you will have worked increasingly independently over a prolonged period of time and taken responsibility for your own work
- you will have worked as a member of a team and supervised your own research project
- you will have made analytical decisions about evidence to answer complex questions by making strong arguments
- you will have communicated your judgments in a lucid and convincing fashion to a variety of audiences, orally and in your essays
- you will have acquired a broad range of knowledge, including an understanding and an appreciation of the culture and attitudes of societies other than our own

Finally: our students are **enquiry based learners**. What does that mean and how does it relate to that list of skills above? Enquiry based learners are able to take control of their own learning as they progress; our students learn through involvement and ownership and not simply by listening. Our learning culture encourages our students to reflect on their learning through feedback. This means that by the end of the degree, they have developed those self management skills that we know employers look for.

So, at the end of your degree course, you will be able to begin your graduate career confident in your ability to master the new working environment and to thrive on the challenges presented to you right from the start.

What careers are open to graduates from the School of History and Cultures?

Your degree will be extremely useful in the world of work. The number of possible careers open to graduates of the School is very considerable. Our graduates have gone into Accountancy, Charity Work, Housing, Human Resources, International Development, Publishing, Politics, Retail Management, Marketing, Media, NHS Management, Teaching, The Police, the Military; working for companies and organisations such as The BBC, Severn Trent Water, Oxfam, House of Commons, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, National Audit Office, British Transport Police and Nestle.

Further study is a popular option, with many students converting to other careers such as Law or choosing to specialise in an area of History & Cultures that interests them such as British First World War Studies and International Studies (Diplomacy).

How we help you on your way

The School of History and Cultures works together with the University's Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) to provide a comprehensive service to our students from answering initial questions to in-depth career guidance. We want our students to be aware of all the opportunities to learn more about employers and enterprise and how they can get to where they want to be. Last year the CEC had 200 employers on campus, enabling students to meet employers face to face and to learn about skills through employer-led workshops. Workshop topics include 'Successful Networking', 'Getting ahead of the Game', 'Making successful decisions' and 'Developing and Applying Commercial Awareness' all delivered by major graduate recruiters. Outside of the business world, our students can also hear from employers working in Media, Film, Communications, Publishing and Museums and Heritage.

Throughout the academic year we hold a number of alumni events, careers talks and other initiatives that are designed for our students to answer their careers questions and help them forge useful contacts outside the university.

Our students are encouraged to apply their skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer; the **Honey Pot scheme** (<http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/cec/improve/honey.shtml>) enables students to apply for funding for those career areas where placements are often unpaid. **Enterprise and Innovation** (<http://www.graduateschool.bham.ac.uk/skills/innovation.shtml>) (EI) is where students can develop those enterprise skills we know are valued by employers. Each year the Enterprise Skills Series provides students with a series of interactive workshops designed to help them develop the skills needed to run a business; those who want to take their ideas forward can access funding to set up a business through the SPEED programme as one of our Medieval and Modern History students did and hasn't looked back since (his story will feature shortly).

Students can get an award for what they do outside of their degree through the University's employability award called The Personal Skills Award. Students who take the

Personal Skills Award (<http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/psa/>) (Activity) pathway get points for engaging with EI and CEC activities, and **Guild of Students** (<http://www.guildofstudents.com/>) activities such as volunteering, part-time work and student mentoring and **University of Birmingham Sport** (<http://www.sport.bham.ac.uk/>).

Each student may also use their Personal Review Tutorials as an opportunity to reflect on their career planning on a regular basis

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