

Monish- Project manager

Monish Khoot is a Project Manager for a variety of education based projects

What A Level combination did you do?
Geography, Economics, Biology

Why did you choose Geography at University?

One of the main reasons for choosing to study Geography was because I was interested by the diversity of the subject but more importantly was that I enjoyed the subject. I was not sure what career I wanted to go into after University and Geography offered me a subject I enjoyed but also offered me to obtain a sound understanding in a number of areas. This allowed me to have flexibility on what area I wanted to specialise in and what career I may go into. Geography also offered a different way of learning and offered opportunities such as fieldwork that was not available through other courses.

At which University did you read Geography?
University of Greenwich

When?
1991 - 1994

Please give an outline of your employment history after graduating (most recent at the top):

Self Employed: Consultant Programme / Project Management (Department for Education and Skills (DfES))
Consultant Project Manager – Sonica Spanish
Consultant Programme Manager – Embedding ICT @ Secondary
Consultant Project Manager – Enhancing Subject Teaching Using ICT
Consultant Project Manager – Computers Within Reach
Funding Agency for Schools- Head of Operational Research Division
Senior Scientific Officer
Senior Business Analyst
Business Analyst
Analyst Programmer
GIS Developer

What skills do you think you have developed through studying Geography?

There are many skills that I have developed but the ones I have felt have been key to me have been the:
Data handling & analysis – how to use large datasets, manipulate and analysis the data and how to present this in a form that is understandable by non specialist
Use of ICT – from the specialist skills of using GIS systems to the use of databases and spreadsheets
Questioning – learning how to construct arguments and the skills on how to use information to provide constructed answers / options for these questions
Communication / team work – studying geography I had the opportunity of meeting people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and this helped me in the context of what was being taught about the world. It improved my communication skills and awareness of what was around me. Many of the areas covered required the involvement of working within a team – the skills developed from this is used in my everyday work and allows you to work in different environments.

Do you think Geography has helped you with past/current jobs? How?

Geography played a major role in getting my first job after finishing University – whilst in the final year at University the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS) were looking for undergraduates to do some mapping work for them in plotting the grid location of all the schools in England. Once I had graduated I was offered a short term contract to continue the work. I was then able to apply for a full time post and worked on setting up there GIS system on schools and was able to advice on what additional datasets that may be required to provide data for analysis. The skills learnt in integrating and displaying information was a very useful when completing this work.

Whilst progressing through my career other skills I learnt have played an every day part in my work from communication skills, data handling & analysis, team work to presentational skills. In my current work how ICT can be embedded in the teaching and learning of the subject.

What advice would you give a 6th former who is good at Geography and considering studying it at degree level?

The opportunities that studying Geography gives you today are much greater than those that were available in the early 90's when I had finished my degree. Studying geography gives you a wide range of skills that are required in the workforce today. One area within Geography that is in great demand is knowledge and skills of using Geographical Information Systems. The use of GIS has increased dramatically over the last 10 years and is now used commonly across national and local government and the private sector for example by the rescue services, election planning, flood guidance, mailing companies, route planning Geography offers a sound basis in a number of disciplines and firm understanding of national and international issues in an era when media brings global events into everyone's lives and where technology uses the skills learned in geography and makes them available to many parts of industry that one would not normally associate with the subject.

Geography offers a unique opportunity for those entering the workforce – it allows you to go into specialised jobs that require the degree as a basis but give you the opportunity to apply for jobs that are looking for expertise in specialist areas such as GIS and others areas that require a very strong knowledge in geo-politics, manipulation of data, communication skills. Overall geography gives you a wide range of transferable skills that are required by employers in today's working environment.

Do you feel that studying Geography has meant you could reach your career goals? Why/why not?

Geography provided a platform for me to start my career whilst doing the degree I did not have a clear view on what area of work I wanted to go into post graduation. The diverse skills I learnt from data analysis, use of ICT, presentational skills, communication skills, group work to specialist skills such as GIS have all played a part in my career to date and gave me a strong foundation in a number of skills that studying other subjects would not have given me. This I felt gave me an advantage when entering the workforce and over the years have built on these skills which I use in my work today.

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