

David- Biodiversity and climate change officer

David Mansell-Moullin is a Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer for Shell International

What A Level combination did you do?
Economics, History, Art & Design, Spanish

Why did you choose Geography at University?
Strangely, I had not studied Geography at GCSE or at A-level, and indeed went to University to study History and Russian. However, during my first year at St Andrews University, I became increasingly interested in environment and development issues, and given the flexibility of the Scottish University modular system was able to transfer to the Geography Department without too much difficulty. My passion for these issues has continued and grown.

At which University did you read Geography?
St Andrews University, Scotland

When?
1991-1995

Do you have any post-graduate qualifications? Please list:
MSc in Land & Water Management (Agroforestry Option) - Silsoe College, Cranfield University.

Please give an outline of your employment history after graduating (most recent at the top):
Shell International Ltd- Biodiversity & Climate Change Officer
International Petroleum Industry - Biodiversity Project Manager
Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)- Climate Change Project Manager
Silsoe Aid for Appropriate Development (SAFAD)- Agroforestry Training Officer - Uganda, Vice President
Tambopata Reserve Society- Biological Research Volunteer - Peru
Ayacara Foundation & CODEFF- Project Assistant - Chile
Redland School -Teacher & Librarian - Chile

What skills do you think you have developed through studying Geography?
Trained to view one issue from a diversity of angles and perspectives, and as a consequence, became aware that few issues are as black and white as they may initially appear
Understanding of the inter-connectedness between the physical and human environment, from a micro to a global scale
Developed specific technical (mapping, statistics, questionnaires, basic surveying, GIS, soil sampling etc) and transferable skills (presenting, report writing, reviewing and summarising information etc)

Do you think Geography has helped you with past/current jobs? How?
Geography helped fuel my interest in biodiversity, natural resource and development issues – areas that I am very glad to be working in now and which have taken me to some very interesting countries on very rewarding projects. Importantly it also laid the path for a one year Masters course, which was, and is increasingly, essential for career development in this field.

What advice would you give a 6th former who is good at Geography and considering studying it at degree level?
Firstly, I would visit and speak with staff in the geography departments at the University's you are interested in, primarily to get a better feel for what they offer and whether it is what you really want. Will this become a passion or a pastime?
Secondly, I would recommend taking a gap year prior to University. The experience and exposure to new environments and societies (e.g. as a volunteer on overseas conservation / environment projects) can only stand you in good stead during your UK based academic studies.

Are there any other ways you feel that geography and your career structure may be linked?
Being a generalist by nature, the breadth of topics and approaches in a Geography degree could not have

been more appropriate. This breadth does sometimes leave one feeling exposed in a world of specialists, but is of great value when tackling problems that require holistic thinking.

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

Yes it has, however a Masters degree, which built on my Geography undergraduate degree, was essential to move into the work I was really hoping for.

Education Department
Careers poster
2005