

Response from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

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Advancing geography and geographical learning

● Improving students' ability to make the right choices about higher education for them (OfS' proposed strategic approach)

... The Office for Students invited feedback on its proposed strategic approach to improving students' ability to make the right choices about higher education for them – whether, what and where to study.

Respondent capacity / type of organisation:

Other

Do you think there are any critical gaps in the proposals?

Yes

The OfS's proposed strategic approach omits subject bodies [a term we use to refer collectively to organisations as diverse as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), accrediting bodies subject associations and learned societies] as key information providers for tailored or personalised information, focusing only on higher education institutions and other bodies which take a more general approach.

We recommend this gap be addressed by including subject bodies as a key source of subject-specific information and guidance to inform tailored support.

Most students search for institutions and programmes of study with a particular subject (or small group of subjects) in mind. Subject body advice is extensive, personalised to subjects (and sometimes to student cohorts or characteristics), independently recognised as innovative, designed in support of the transition between school and higher education, and valued by students, teachers and schools, parents and universities. Our recent experience in providing subject choice advice for geography includes, for example:

- Geography Ambassadors [<https://www.rgs.org/schools/geography-ambassadors/>] – a subject-focused scheme, free to schools, which recruits, trains and supports undergraduates, postgraduates and professional geographers to make school visits to share the benefits of geography in further study and careers. The scheme delivers 1100+ Ambassador sessions annually, typically to class-sizes of pupils, reaching an audience of c30,000 young people.
- Going Places with Geography [<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/going-places-with-geography-brochure/>] – Events for Key Stage 3 students on the importance of geography and its relevance for future study and careers.
- Study Geography and Support for Students [<https://www.rgs.org/geography/studying-geography-and-careers/>] – Advice and resources to support students at all stages (school,

