

# Hannah Cooke

## Management Consultant

**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning



**Job title:** Management Consultant

**Organisation:** EY

**Location:** London, UK

### How did you get to where you are now?

I have A Levels in geography, history and English literature and went on to study a BSc in Geography at Loughborough University.

Previous work experience I have includes part time jobs in retail and waitressing, and I also did market research for a local council and a summer internship at EY (which led to a graduate job offer).

### Was there anything particularly useful that helped you get into this role?

Being part of the Enactus Society at Loughborough definitely helped as I was able to network at Enactus events and use examples of business experience from the projects we did for Enactus in interviews. I took on the role as HR Manager for the Society which I think was useful when applying for jobs as it showed leadership abilities.

### What do you do as part of your role?

I am a Senior Consultant in the EY Advisory practice where I specialise in procurement. On a day-to-day basis, I work directly with clients to advise on procurement issues.

Examples of projects I have worked on include:

- Procurement savings initiatives
- Procurement technology transformation (implementing a new procurement system and managing the business changes associated with this)
- Advising on pricing strategies to support clients in providing the best value to their customers whilst driving profit
- Operating model redesign
- Supporting clients on tendering for new services

These projects have allowed me to work across a range of industries including: the financial sector, energy sector, local public sector, central government, police and pharmaceuticals.

### What skills and characteristics do you need for this role, apart from geographical knowledge?

To work in consulting you need: strong communication as you will be working directly with clients every day as well as communicating with your own team; personal leadership as you will often be managing your own work and in some cases managing others (Senior Consultant grade and above); and strong Excel and Powerpoint skills (although there is training in this, it's always good to get a head start).

### How does geography feature in your work/ what difference does it make?

My geography degree gave me a lot of transferable skills that I use regularly including

**W:** [www.rgs.org/iamageographer](http://www.rgs.org/iamageographer)

report writing and team work skills. The use of Excel/SPSS was also useful in providing experience in data analysis as well as some topics such as globalisation and economic geographies which provided me with some business related knowledge that has been useful. The many presentations we gave during the course also helped me to be confident in interviews and also for any work presentations I did once I started in my career.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

#### **What is the most interesting or enjoyable project you've worked on, and why?**

EY has a great community feel, I have made friends for life and so the people are my favourite part of my job. I also like the variety that it provides, I have worked for numerous clients across a number of sectors which has really broadened my knowledge of business. My most enjoyable project was working for a local authority in Edinburgh. We supported them to make huge financial savings that benefited the local people and area so it felt like we were doing a good thing. Plus, we had a great team that were all staying in Edinburgh during the week so we had lots of fun in the evenings.

### **Do you get to travel for your role?**

Yes, I have travelled to various areas of England, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Poland. Many of my colleagues have been on projects all over the world such as Cairo, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Ghana and the US.

### **What advice would you give to someone wanting to go in to this career?**

I would advise someone wanting to go into consulting to:

- Ensure you network as much as possible and join the business-related societies at university, as many of the Big Four Consultancies have links with these
- Find something that interests you that you can talk about in an interview. For example if you have an interest in working in the energy sector, read up on a topic so that you can discuss it.

### **How do you maintain your knowledge and interest in geography outside of work?**

My parents and sister all did a geography degree too so we all have an interest in the field which means various aspects of geography come up in conversations! I often read geography related books, for example I have just finished reading Prisoners of Geography.

I also travel a lot when I can. Last year I went to Naples and saw Mt Vesuvius which I really enjoyed given my geography background. I also spent a month in Australia this year and I am going inter-railing this summer to visit a few cities in Europe. My next plan is to go to Sicily to see Mt Etna so there seems to be a geographical theme!

### **Why did you choose geography? Why should others choose geography?**

I really liked geography at school and enjoyed the variety that it provided – geography is in everything after all! It has given me a breadth of knowledge and skills that I can use every day.