

Careers education in the geography curriculum

The case for including careers and progression education within our geography offer

Ten reasons why we need to embed careers education and guidance into the geography curriculum

1. This is an essential part of education. These are skills for life. We have an obligation to ensure that our pupils are equipped with more than just qualifications when they leave school. Ofsted recognise the importance of this. The following is taken from the inspection framework. It is a level descriptor at the outstanding level.

'Pupils have a wide range of well-honed skills that are highly relevant to their next phase of their life in education, training, employment or other constructive activity. They are aspirational, know precisely what they need to do and are determined to succeed.'

To make robust, appropriate progression into higher education and employment beyond, pupils need to learn to research opportunities, set targets, make choices, evidence their suitability and evaluate their progress for themselves.

2. Nobody else will do it for you. Over the past twenty years there has been a rapid decline in generic school based careers services. The role of Connexions varies from provider to provider but is generally focused on older, post age 16 children and especially on NEET provision. Many of Connexions employees are *personal advisors* who can help with a range of issues from EMA to housing issues but they are not required to hold a careers advisory qualification. With growing numbers of pupils aspiring to university entry there is increasing pressure on the few members of staff tasked with acting as HE progression experts and it is difficult for them to keep up to date with the range of degrees in all subjects which are on offer. In short we are at a stage where all school staff (both teaching and support staff) should be up to date and on message on careers and progression.

3. It will improve the aspirations and attainment of the pupils in your subject. Ofsted refer to this as follows *'the extent to which pupils understand the opportunities available to them, develop aspirations and understand how to achieve them'*. Knowing how to find out what the options are, Target setting and target achievement and evaluation are too often taught in an abstract way. Embedding this technique in our subject has real benefits in the way pupils then apply this to their revision, time management, controlled assessment and homework tasks.

4. It will improve take up rates at GCSE and retention rates through to A Level if more pupils have experienced the relevance of the subject to the world of work.

5. Parents will be more receptive to encouraging their child to take the subject and to achieve well in it if they appreciate how and where geography is relevant beyond 16 – 19 phase.

6. It will increase your numbers taking geography to HE level. These 'home grown geography ambassadors' can then return to your school to make visits.

7. Your department's teaching and learning will be enriched by the contacts you make with outside agencies including commercial and government agencies and subject based associations such as the GA and RGS-IBG. These contacts can also support your work across the curriculum, offer work experience opportunities for your pupils and CPD and training opportunities for staff.

8. Development of this work would provide a **new responsibility opportunity** for a member of staff, the chance to build a local network with other local schools, employers and HEIs, earn credits towards quality mark status (GA) and suitable experience towards your CGeog (teacher) accreditation. Case studies of how your department have developed an embedded approach to careers education through geography could be written up for a journal. The lists endless!

9. It will **raise the profile of your subject** within the school

10. It has **the capacity to improve the quality of the curriculum** in your school. All pupils thus benefit as a result of strategic curriculum auditing and planning across departments and Key stages. There will be less overlap and repetition and fewer gaps in the curriculum on offer.

Activity: Audit and action

You may wish to start this activity by completing section one and then return to activities two and three later, when you have read the main section of this unit which offers plenty of examples of how careers education can be embedded into your geography curriculum.

Activity one: **Map** your current provision of careers and progression input against your curriculum for each Key Stage

Activity two: Brainstorm and suggest possible interventions to achieve an embedded careers education approach in the geography department. Which interventions do you think are **essential** and which **desirable**?

Activity three: Draw up an action plan for the department on embedding careers education in the geography curriculum. Concentrate on the interventions or changes you deemed **essential** in activity two. Share and allocate responsibilities to departmental staff in terms of researching opportunities and managing the changes.

ACTIVITY ONE			ACTIVITY TWO	ACTIVITY THREE
Key stage: Year of study	Topic of study and key planned activities	Careers and progression input currently offered	Careers and progression opportunities for development	Who is to action this and what is the timescale?

Background

This section will help you to consider:

- What is careers education and guidance?
- What is our school provision of careers and progression education and guidance?
- Is our current careers provision effective?
- What can the geography department do in terms of careers education?

What is careers education and guidance?

Careers education and guidance is the planned provision of courses and activities to help young people manage their continuing personal and social development in the context of their choices of education, training and work.

Careers provision can be realised through a combination of

- *Careers education*: taught by the teacher using resources and activities
- *Careers guidance*: Through interviews with pastoral staff, subject specialists, HE specialists and careers guidance staff
- *Careers information*: promoted and signposted as available in the library and online and from visitors and visits.
- *Experiences of work*: Placements, fieldtrips, visits from role models, virtual ambassadors eg using clips from websites

What is our school provision of careers and progression education and guidance?

In general terms the list in the table below would be a typical careers provision across the key stages of a secondary school. Complete the activities on the table below or on the notepad.

ACTIVITY ONE: Review the provision of Careers education in your school

ACTIVITY TWO: Assess the level of involvement and communication between the school and the geography department in terms of careers provision.

ACTIVITY ONE		ACTIVITY TWO	
Key stage and year group	Typical provision	Does this happen in our school? 👍 or 👎	What input does the geog dept have to this process?
KS3: Year 7 and 8	Explore main occupational groups		
	Meet the careers advisor		
	Visit the careers library		
KS3: Year 9	Investigate and make option choices		
	Develop skills of research, and investigation		
	Writing off for information, downloading relevant information from the internet.		
	Develop skills and experience of target setting and action planning		
	Develop skills and experience of recording and evidencing achievement.		

KS4: Year 10 and 11	Work related experience		
	Careers guidance interview		
	Careers conventions		
	Sixth form option evenings at school and other local providers		
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	Investigation of post 16 options including vocational and academic offers locally		
	Information and guidance for all parents re EMA and sixth form / FE expectations		
	Visit from ex sixth formers to talk about their post 16 experience		
KS5: Year 12 and 13	Visit from local HE students to talk about the university experience		
	Trip to at least one university and talk from admissions tutor (or similar)about UCAS process		
	Guidance on choosing a course, choosing a university and the UCAS process		
	Information on foundation degrees and part time HE study.		
	Information for pupils and parents re student finance and welfare		
	Subject based careers guidance including the opportunity to meet and work with career graduates and undergraduates in relevant subjects		

Is the current careers provision effective?

Has your school referred to its careers and progression provision in its SEF? Will OFSTED find your provision to be effective?

An outstanding education will provide *memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being.*

(Taken from the new OFSTED SEF framework).

Under the new framework careers provision is included in the inspection as part of the OFSTED process. Under Part A: Outcomes: how well are pupils doing, taking account of any variation?

Subsection: The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well being ; the inspectors will **evaluate**:

- the extent to which pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world of work and develop skills and personal qualities which will serve them well in education, training, employment and their future lives
- the extent to which pupils understand their future options and develop aspirations

and will **take account of**

- the extent to which pupils understand the opportunities available to them, develop aspirations and understand how to achieve them
- how well pupils are developing enterprise capabilities, including their approach to innovation, creativity, risk-management and risk-taking, together with a positive attitude and the drive to make ideas happen pupils' views and those of parents and carers about how well the school prepares pupils for their future education, training and employment
- where relevant, views of employers, trainers and staff from other institutions in partnership as expressed in surveys, discussions and reports
- for secondary schools, past pupils' participation in education and training after leaving the school, including the percentage of school leavers who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and the representation of specific groups.

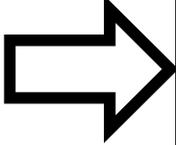
Here are the grade descriptors relevant to this section of the SEF (author's highlights):

<p>Outstanding (1)</p>	<p>The pupils' application of their basic skills across many areas of school life is innovative and highly effective. They have a wide range of well-honed skills that are highly relevant to their next phase of their life in education, training, employment or other constructive activity. They are aspirational, know precisely what they need to do and are determined to succeed. Pupils' attendance is likely to be at least above average and their punctuality exemplary.</p>
<p>Good (2)</p>	<p>The pupils successfully apply their well-developed basic skills for a broad range of purposes and are well equipped with wider skills and personal qualities. They have a good understanding of the next steps they need to take, and intend to take, to succeed in the future. Pupils' attendance is at least average and they are consistently punctual.</p>
<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>	<p>The pupils apply their basic skills securely in a range of contexts. Pupils develop the wider skills and personal qualities needed to equip them for the next phase of their education or the world of work and training. They recognise the next steps they will need to take to achieve their goals. Pupils' attendance is generally average and they are usually punctual. In exceptional circumstances, attendance may be low but is rapidly improving.</p>
<p>Inadequate (4)</p>	<p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Application of basic skills is weak. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A significant minority of pupils are not developing the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to succeed in the next phase of their lives. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils' attendance and punctuality generally, or for a significant minority, are poor and show no sign of improvement. </p>

Does your school have a whole school consensus on the role of careers education and guidance? What is the role of the geography department in this provision?

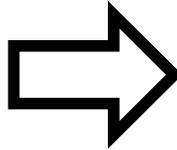
Is the provision planned at both school and departmental level? Is the provision designed with the pupil at the centre? Is it joined up, without gaps or unnecessary repetition or overlap?

Consider and respond to the following.

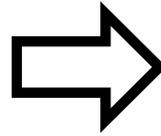
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT		<p>Does the school and geography department recognise the value and impact of careers provision on standards achieved?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>How is this commitment messaged to pupils, parents, staff and Ofsted/ SEF</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

Does the school and geography department recognise the value of **embedding** careers education in the curriculum?

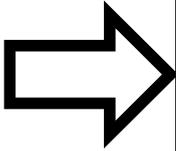
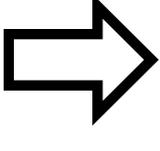


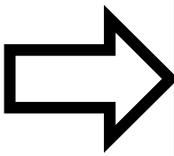
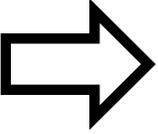
At whole school level has the school mapped where core and subject careers and progression input will be delivered to avoid gaps and repetition?



Has your department devised curriculum guidelines, provided resources and agreed on how and when key careers and progression messages will be delivered in the geography curriculum?



STAFF DEVELOPMENT		Is there a named member of senior staff responsible for careers and progression education either across the whole school or for each key stage?		Is there a member of staff in the geography department with responsibility for devising departmental input, training and advising as required and communicating this provision back to the staff member with whole school/ key stage responsibility?
				

<p>EXTERNAL INPUTS</p>		<p>Does the school have existing contacts with universities, Aimhigher, Local Authority G & T programmes, Local businesses and corporate sponsors, STEM schemes and Local Business Partnership schemes? Do the geography department make use of any of these offers?</p> 		<p>Is the way geography uses these schemes fed back to the member of staff with responsibility for careers and progression in the school? Furthermore is the department making full use of support offered by the Action Plan for geography in the form of the careers materials online and brochures, Careers and progression days for year 9, 10 and 12 pupils and visits by geography ambassadors throughout the key stages?</p> 
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What can the geography department do in terms of careers and progression education?

a. CAREER PLANNING

Using 'planning from the future backwards' as a strategy throughout teaching and learning and especially in careers education.

1. This is where I want to get to
2. These are the steps I need to take to achieve that (like the rungs of a ladder)
3. Thinking down the ladder to the present this is the first thing I need to do....

This simple structure is the principle behind all good career planning. The focus is on **aspiration and planning** for success. It requires **research** to understand the options and the use of **SMART targets** to realise those goals.

It is useful for pupils also as they try to juggle their busy lives, get their coursework and revision done on time etc.

b. USING REAL EXAMPLES

Embedding case studies of **what geographers do** into our curriculum work.

Using ambassadors to visit or virtual ambassadors from the **ambassadors online** section of the RGS-IBG website www.rgs.org/schools will illustrate quickly, easily and perfectly naturally what geographers do. If it flows within the curriculum it will not feel contrived and will make good sense to the pupils.

Eg 'Before we start learning about our new unit of study on flooding let us hear from Ed , a geographer, who works for Defra on flood control schemes. As you can see what we are learning about is actually something that provides employment and exciting job possibilities.'

c. GETTING THEM THE BEST DEAL AT UNIVERSITY

Geography is offered at most universities. It is a popular option and numbers are rising fast with some departments growing very rapidly as geography prospers at university level. How best can you advise and guide your students through the myriad of choices to **find the right course** for them? What can you do that will improve their chances of **getting an offer**?

d. MAKING BEST USE OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES

The RGS, your local GA branch, your local university, Business education partnerships and more..... **There is so much on offer**. What is available to you and your pupils to enhance your geography careers provision? How much will this cost? How long in advance do you need to arrange it and will the agencies come to your school or is this going to require cover or long distance travel?

View the PowerPoint career planning background ideas to understand the key ideas behind robust career planning for pupils.

Activity: Draw a ladder with 4 rungs. Find a 'top' job on a website (see selection below) or from the *Going Places* Career brochure or DVD and put this top job as the top rung of your ladder. Now plan the lower rungs, ending up with the lowest rung which should be either A level choices or university choices depending on the ages of the pupils you have in mind. **Always plan from the top downwards.**

Activity two: For any of the following situations show how you could use unpacking, traffic light colour coding and smart targets to help a pupil achieve their goals.

- Writing a personal statement for UCAS
- Applying for work experience
- Applying for a gap year scholarship from the RGS Learning and Leading scheme
- Choosing a geography course at university
- Getting work experience
- Motivating a pupil to get themselves into the sixth form
- Applying for a position in a company offering foundation degree earn and learn places

Resources: Job websites list

General job site: eg Guardian jobs <http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/>

Sector job site: eg Environment jobs http://www.environmentjobs.co.uk/joblist_all.cfm

Specific roles: eg Defra <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/jobs/vacancies>

Or Trailfinders <http://www.trailfinders.com/employment.nsf/personSpecification?ReadForm>

Main Section

‘Geography is not just something we learn about. It is what geographers do.’ Discuss

Embedding careers education is the most effective way of learning and experiencing careers education as it makes sense of our learning. Information on careers is strengthened by the context of the academic background learnt in class. This is a two way process so it is a ‘win win’.

Mix and match the following resources across the curriculum so that pupils get experience of all these ways of learning about careers with geography

Get an ambassador in

With over 500 young enthusiastic and engaging geographers registered to the new website www.findgeographyambassadors.org the RGS geography ambassador scheme is very easy to use. There is no charge for the ambassador visits and they can be organised approximately one month in advance – or longer. There are over 100 graduates registered to the scheme and all ambassadors will have a subject specialism they can talk about and illustrate with reference to their university studies or their own research if they are undergoing a dissertation.

Using audio visual material

There is a large and growing library of video clips available online in the following place: www.rgs.org/schools There is also a 20 minute DVD made by the RGS-IBG called Going Places with geography. This contains clips of 20 young geographers talking about their careers and experiences of geography. It can be previewed on Youtube but the quality on the DVD is much better so you are advised to apply for a copy at ambassadors@rgs.org. In addition there is ‘I love geography’, <http://www.teachers.tv/video/23982> a DVD made by Teachers TV with the geography ambassador project and featuring a young undergraduate and four career geographers.

Task: Using any of these sources record the career case studies available and think about where they could be used in your curriculum across the key stages

Name of ambassador	Career profiled	Where in our curriculum could I use this?
Tania	United nations project worker on climate change	
James	Advertising account manager	

	Put into italics	

Use the internet for research

Use *Going Places with geography* brochures from the RGS. Order hard copies from ambassadors@rgs.org or download at <http://www.rgs.org/schools>

Use Other printed resources

- Careers supplements from geographical magazine PDF downloadable from <http://www.geographical.co.uk/vnoffice/data/0/0/14/204/l%20am%20Geographer%20supplement.pdf>
- Prospects leaflet *Options with geography* http://www.prospects.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Options_with_your_subject/Your_degree_in_geography/Your_skills/plFjmLkc

Send information to parents

Recent letter written by Michael Palin can be downloaded from <http://www.rgs.org/schools> and sent out to parents.

Organise a stand at your careers fair or options evening

UCAS and HE guidance work with year 12 and 13 pupils

The ideal time to do this would be in the later spring or early summer of Year 12

For UCAS: View the PowerPoint: 'How to choose and apply for a geography degree'

For careers guidance: View the PowerPoint 'Career planning for geographers'

Activity

Complete the activity on the PowerPoint around using entry profiles to get into the admission tutor's head and write a winning personal statement

Activity

Consider these two questions:

'There is no such thing as a geography job - there are jobs that geographers do'

Discuss

How would taking geography at A Level benefit a pupil who planned to go on to study:

Medicine or vet med

Architecture

Engineering

Business and finance

Marketing

Using external agencies to enhance your careers education offer in geography

Speakers/ assemblies

Speakers who can provide an inspiring talk about their world of work, their progression or some of their achievements are worth their weight in gold. Ex students could be a source to tap in to as could the geography ambassador scheme at www.findgeographyambassadors.org. Bear in mind that if the speaker has travelled a distance this is likely to be a short slot so be very careful to allow them the time you have agreed. There is nothing more frustrating for a speaker who has left home at 6am to make your assembly slot than to have 10 of the precious 25 minutes stolen by the Head of Year reading out lists of people who will be getting a late detention! Why not offer the visitor a tour of the school or the chance to sit in on a geography lesson etc to make their visit more memorable.

Also consider the value of parents and governors at the school as potential speakers on the world of work and ex pupils can come back and speak about the progression to university.

Lectures and debates

Set up a cross curricular debate within school and ask local MP, journalists and business people to come and speak. Invite parents too. Prepare pupils first with a master class. Geography ambassadors from the RGS are useful at coming to help with this preparation. For schools within reach of London the 21st century challenges series at The RGS offers opportunities for pupils to attend and schools members may be eligible for free tickets. Other organisations running debates and lectures include:

Your local GA branch <http://www.geography.org.uk/aboutus/branches/contactsprogrammes>

Debating matters <http://www.debatingmatters.com/globaluncertainties>

Mentoring

Your local Aimhigher partnership offers a mentoring programme. There will be volunteer geography undergraduates working as mentors in your local university so why not ask for geographers when you are speaking about this with your member of the staff team responsible for Aimhigher activities?

For sixth formers who would benefit from a gap year experience generous bursaries and mentoring are available from the RGS- IBG led 'learning and leading' programme at landl@rgs.org

Geography ambassador visits to classroom

The scheme recruits, trains and supports undergraduate and postgraduate geographers from universities and business to act as ambassadors for geography in the classroom. Over 1,000 young geographers have registered and trained as geography ambassadors.

This is a great way to introduce younger students to the benefits of studying geography and encouraging them to pursue the subject beyond the compulsory stages. The ambassadors act as positive role models for pupils and they illustrate, with enthusiasm, both the specific and transferable skills they have developed as a geographer. The scheme offers schools the opportunity to strengthen links with local HE and businesses.

Ambassadors deliver a presentation with activities to groups on a mutually agreed theme such as 'Why study geography?', 'Geography and careers' or 'My special project or research interest'. Subsequently ambassadors could return to support geography clubs, homework clubs or fieldwork activities.

To register for a free visit from a geography ambassador go the new website www.findgeographyambassadors.org

Visits to university geography depts

Your local university geography department would be pleased to organise a visit for your class of young geographers. They have widening participation targets to meet and they would be pleased to make contact with you. Contact the departmental admissions tutor or staff member i/c schools liaison. Alternatively the geography ambassador scheme would be pleased to broker this link for you. Contact k.amis@rgs.org with your request.

Going Places With Geography events from RGS-IBG

The RGS - IBG geography ambassador scheme, part of the Action Plan for geography, can host Going Places events in the regions to meet your needs. See www.rgs.org/whatson
 These half or full day events bring together local undergraduate and graduate ambassadors to run workshops on all aspects of progression and careers with geography. Contact ambassadors@rgs.org to discuss dates and requirements.

Plenary/ conclusion

To be able to keep your pupils informed about opportunities with geography requires that you keep yourself up to date with what the geographers of today are doing. As a teacher finding time to attend lectures, participate in regional networks and maintaining links with universities is hugely beneficial. It will benefit you and your knowledge of what is current and good for employment as well as directly feeding your teaching.

Activity one: **Map** your current provision of careers and progression input against your curriculum for each Key Stage

Activity two: Brainstorm and suggest possible interventions to achieve an embedded careers education approach in the geography department. Which interventions do you think are **essential** and which **desirable**?

Activity three: Draw up an action plan for the department on embedding careers education in the geography curriculum. Concentrate on the interventions or changes you deemed **essential** in activity two. Share and allocate responsibilities to departmental staff in terms of researching opportunities and managing the changes.

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Resources for careers education in geography

Audio visual resources

- *I love geography*

Teachers TV

(15 minutes long)

Free to download

Other info Made in association with the RGS – IBG Geography ambassadors project

<http://www.teachers.tv/video/23982>

- *Going Places with geography*

RGS IBG ambassador project

(18 minutes long)

Download at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27p2k1oot80>

DVD Disc version (better quality) available free from ambassadors@rgs.org

Other info: Complements the careers brochure also available from the RGS IBG

Visits from outside agencies

- RGS IBG Geography ambassadors project

To book an ambassador to visit your school register at

<http://www.findgeographyambassadors.org>

Printed materials

- *Going Places with geography*

careers brochure

16 pages A4 glossy brochure

Available free from ambassadors@rgs.org

- *Options with geography*

A4 double sided b&w information sheet

Available to download at <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>.

(Click on 'careers advice' on the home page top tab and then 'options with your subject' and click through to geography where you can download a well designed print friendly PDF version)

- *I am a geographer*

Careers brochure

Produced by the Geographical magazine downloadable as PDF from

<http://www.geographical.co.uk/vnoffice/data/0/0/14/204/1/%20am%20Geographer%20supplement.pdf>

Careers display materials

- Request loan of careers display at ambassadors@rgs.org

Useful websites for information for teachers

- GENERAL

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk>. (click on 'careers advice' on the home page top tab and then 'options with your subject' and click through to geography where you can click through to hyperlinked case studies and other organisations who offer careers materials for geographers)

- UNIVERSITY COURSES

A directory of university courses in geography

<http://www.rgs.org/schools>

Full alphabetical listings by university and subject area. The entry profiles (EP) are essential reference <http://www.ucas.com/>

- VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Foundation degrees in coastal and river engineering

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/jobs/114999.aspx>

£12,000 pay plus all fees paid

Ucas general info on foundation degrees

Including which universities offer geography and environment related courses

<http://www.ucas.com/students/choosingcourses/choosingcourse/foundationdegree>