

The Education Landscape

A guide for employers

Promoting geographical careers

Developed in
partnership with:



Introduction

A skilled workforce is at the heart of every business. As a business leader you get enquiries to work with local schools, colleges and universities – and you'll probably have some questions given the education and skills landscape can be complex to understand. There are many different ways to get involved – but which are the best fit for your business, and how will they help connect you to your future workforce, or boost productivity by upskilling your current team?

* The term young person is used to include students at schools, colleges and universities up to age 24.

That's why we've created this resource – ***The Education Landscape: A Guide for Employers***. It describes options for working with schools, colleges and universities, young people* and older learners, and the benefits of doing so for your business. You can also find out how technical education is changing to better meet your skills needs – including apprenticeships, T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications.

You can find out more about the business benefits of different opportunities – from providing workplace experiences for students, using your industry expertise to help design courses, to getting training for your new employees and existing staff.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

The benefits for business



Discover new talent

Being involved with schools, colleges and universities is an opportunity to identify potential employees who are a good fit with your organisation. In the medium-term this can reduce expensive and time-consuming recruitment activity and support your planning for the future.

Fresh perspectives

Students on an industry placement will quickly acquire new knowledge and skills and make a real contribution to your team as they do so. They can also bring awareness of emerging trends and new ideas to your business.

Develop your current team

Getting your employees involved in education engagement activities can be rewarding and inspiring. It contributes to your team's professional development, helping to build communication, leadership and management skills, and can strengthen their loyalty to your company. Linking up with your local college or university can also open the door for technical training to upskill your existing staff.

Build new partnerships

Connecting with schools, colleges and universities offers a strong value exchange. These institutions gain broader insight into your industry needs, and you can get involved in shaping the skills being taught in your local area, whilst benefitting from building your existing knowledge and expertise, for example, in developments in technology. This collaboration also demonstrates the wider contribution your business makes to the community.

Connect locally

Working with your local education institutions can contribute to your organisation's social responsibility and reputation. Your real-world input brings the curriculum to life and gives learning a concrete focus. It's also a great opportunity to inspire, inform and help young people which is good for them, the community, and you.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Ways to get involved



Supporting students

Much of your future workforce is currently in education. Sharing your knowledge, experience and advice will inspire and inform their career choices – helping them to develop the confidence to move into a role that is right for them – and to be the right employee for you. Opportunities include giving a careers talk or providing mentoring for a student on a longer-term basis.

Development of teaching resource

Employers can share specialist knowledge with students in a variety of ways, such as advising on new technologies, processes and services within a specific industry. You could get involved in a range of activities with students including presenting masterclasses, helping to deliver workshops or lectures or being a case study in one of our teaching resources.

Advice for job applications

Employers can provide invaluable support and advice on writing CVs, completing job applications and interviews. Activities you can take part in include offering CV feedback or workshops, practice interviews and Q&A sessions. All of these will help students to build their confidence, develop essential communication and presentation skills, and identify potential job vacancies.

Supporting extra-curricular activities

Employers can help students develop essential skills, such as teamwork and problem solving, by getting involved in a range of extra-curricular activities. These activities include school clubs, and skills or entrepreneurial competitions at local, regional or national events.

Providing workplace experiences

Nothing beats hands-on experience, and your business can also benefit in a number of ways. Opening your doors to young people is an opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of your organisation and industry, and help students transition into the workplace. In the longer-term you could have a future employee. Activities include hosting short workplace visits or longer industry placement opportunities for older students.

Work-based learning

Helping an individual learn whilst they work in your business is a great way to develop a motivated, skilled, and qualified employee. You can adapt these training programmes to meet the needs of your organisation and fill gaps within your workforce. Managing students also offers professional development for existing employees.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Ways to get involved



Professional development for teachers

Employers can give teachers first-hand experience of their industry through professional development opportunities such as presenting at careers events, site visits, short placements for teachers, or longer-term part-time working arrangements between the institutions.

Supporting high-quality teaching

Your input into classes will ensure that teachers can share up to date knowledge, and gives you the opportunity to shape the skills being taught around your business needs. You could help design a course, give teachers the opportunity to find out about current industry practice by hosting a site visit, teach a masterclass, or donate some equipment or workshop time for students.

Providing expert guidance

Nobody knows your business like you do. Sharing your knowledge and expertise with government, and with the education institutions around you, will help to influence what is taught so that it is relevant to your business. You could work with a college to design a course relevant to your business or be a school or college governor. Or you might contribute to the expert employer panels that shape technical education nationally or locally.

Contribute to national, regional or local skills planning

Employers can provide essential labour market intelligence to inform planning for education and skills provision at local, regional and national levels.

Enterprise adviser

As an employer, you could partner with a local school or college to help them improve their connections with industry and develop and implement their careers strategy. Enterprise advisers may also be asked to get involved in delivering careers events.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Technical education

What is key?

Employers are at the heart of our system for technical education. Groups of employers are setting the standards for different occupations. Each occupational standard describes what a person needs to know and be able to do for a particular role. These standards are grouped into 15 technical education routes; from agriculture to catering, to health and science. Geography and geographers are embedded in many of these. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education works with panels of employer experts to make sure that these standards stay up to date.

Apprentices are employed and learn through on and off-the-job training. An apprentice develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the employer designed standard for their occupation. They are assessed against this standard so employers can be sure individuals can do the job. Most of the apprentices' training is on-the-job working with a mentor, with additional off-the-job training provided by a training organisation. Depending on the occupation, an apprenticeship can take between one and six years to complete.

T Levels are two-year courses that launched in September 2020. They will be the main college-based technical option for students at age 16, sitting alongside apprenticeships and A Levels. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning and on-the-job experience during an industry placement of around 45 days. The content of T Levels has been developed with employers, using the occupational standards as their reference. Alongside their technical knowledge, T Level students also build maths, English and digital skills. So you can be sure that these new qualifications meet the needs of industry and prepare students for work, further training or study.

Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) are specialised post-18 training at higher levels 4 and 5 (A Levels and T Levels are at level 3). Employer expert panels decide which qualifications meet the employer designed occupational standards. Only level 4 and 5 qualifications that do this are approved by the Institute as a Higher Technical Qualification. These qualifications will be awarded a quality mark so you can be sure they will develop the knowledge and skills needed by employers.

In England at age 16, young people have a range of options for the next step towards their career. The academic path - with GCSEs, A Levels and undergraduate degree courses - is well understood. But not everyone is familiar with our technical education system and the many ways that the Government has been working with businesses to ensure this system meets employer needs and helps individuals gain good jobs.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Case studies

How does the Society support employers to engage with schools?

CASE STUDY

Bespoke outreach work: Knight Frank



Knight Frank, a global real estate consultancy and estate agency working across residential and commercial property location and management, planning and sustainable place-making, have partnered with us to support careers work with schools.

The partnership is centred on events and the development of teaching resources. Aimed at A Level students keen to find out more about the careers offered to geographers, the kick-off workshop was led by Knight Frank's Research Analytics team to showcase how geographical skills and knowledge are used throughout their projects.

Students discovered how geographical information systems (GIS) and locational data can be analysed to inform planning and place-making decisions, and how both GIS skills and geographical understanding of connections, impacts and solutions can be used to inform decision making.

Following the student workshop, the Society's Education team developed a set of teaching resources in partnership with Knight Frank, to support A Level geographers with interpreting, analysing and evaluating different types of data presentation. These teaching materials are available to all schools for free through the Society's [website](#).



CASE STUDY**Bespoke outreach work:
Knight Frank**

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Outreach matters because it bridges the gap between classroom learning and career possibilities

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Ian McGuinness, Partner and Head of Analytics at Knight Frank, said:

“Geography sits at the heart of what we do at Knight Frank, so when the opportunity arose to support the Society’s work, it was an easy yes. Our work connects themes, places, and people, and this was a chance to show students how those skills translate into real-world impact.

For my team, it was hugely rewarding to step away from client projects and see the same spark of curiosity that drew us into the profession. To any organisation considering it: don’t underestimate the value of giving your people the space to share their expertise. The return, in inspiration and pride, is immediate”.



CASE STUDY

Professional Ambassadors

With a focus on real people and jobs, our Professional Ambassadors run school workshops, assemblies, after school club sessions and more – both in-person and online. Professional Ambassadors are also available to support the Society's careers events for students, teachers and undergraduates. Ambassadors are invited to showcase their career pathway and educational routes, as well as how they use their geographical knowledge and experience in the workplace.

Professional Ambassadors Isobel McFarlane, a member of Defra's net zero strategy team, and Lily Roberts, a Water Security Technical Officer at CDP, joined us on a green careers panel to celebrate National Careers Week and International Women's Day with St Dominics Sixth Form College. Lily said:

“

As a Professional Ambassador, you share insights and experiences that students can't find in textbooks. Whilst they may not remember everything you share, they do remember the enthusiasm, encouragement, and real-world examples you give them. By getting involved in school outreach, you're giving students an insight into possible job pathways that geography can take them on, opening doors for them, and shaping the way they see the future”.

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CASE STUDY

Professional Ambassadors

Professional Ambassadors can have a profound impact on students' personal development and increase their chances of remaining in education or seeking employment in their later teenage years.

For employers with larger numbers of geographers keen to take part in this initiative, the Society provides bespoke Ambassador training and support.

Hazel Hendley, Chief People Officer at Ordnance Survey (OS), is keen to encourage colleagues to participate and share the work of OS through outreach activities:



“

Ordnance Survey employees are experts across a variety of domains including cartography, marketing and AI. As you might expect from the national mapping service for Great Britain, many of our colleagues are also passionate about geography. We want to inspire children and young people by sharing our career journeys, and how we use geography and geospatial insights in everyday work. We encourage all employers to get involved in the Professional Ambassador scheme – sharing real career stories, and showcasing the application of geographical knowledge, can spark futures, support local communities, and be good for business.

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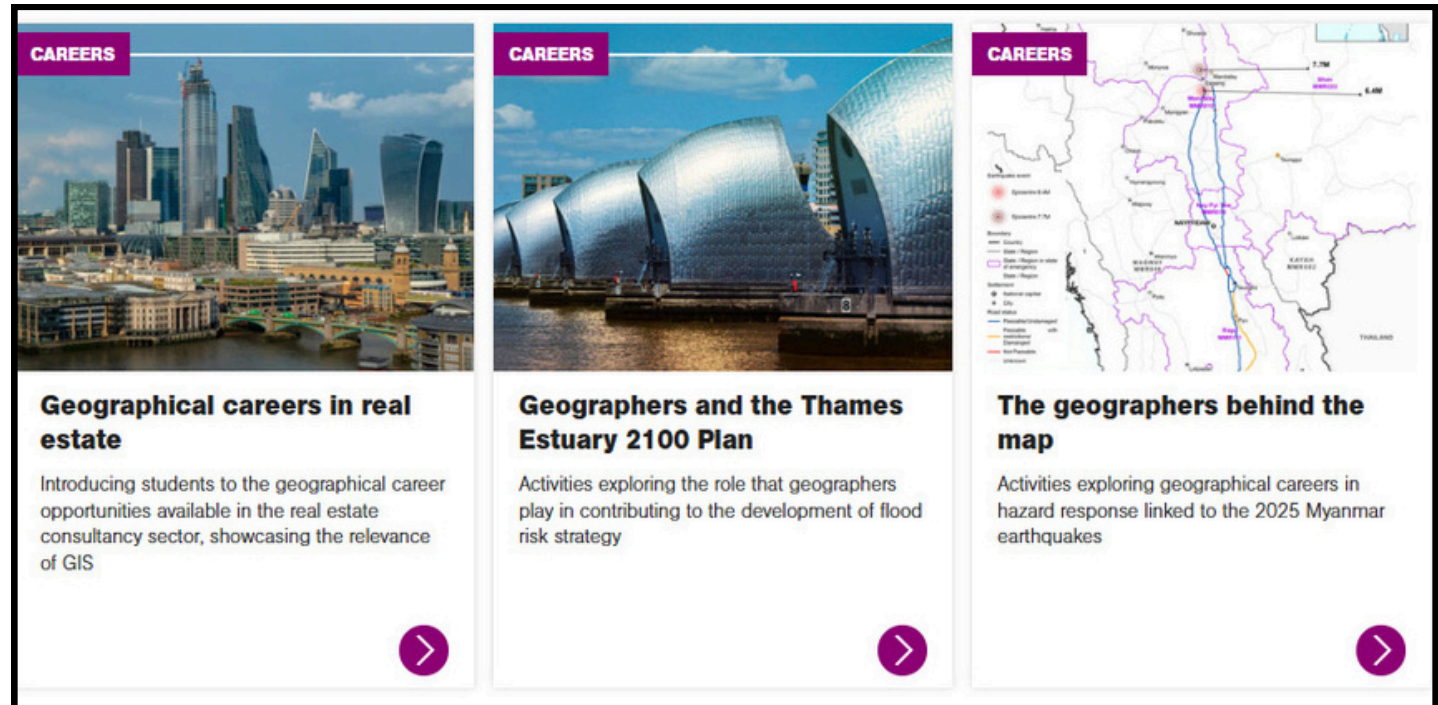
CASE STUDY

Curriculum-led careers teaching materials

Embedding careers education into the curriculum is a valuable way to ensure students can understand how the geography they learn in the classroom relates to the real world.

The Society produces a wealth of curriculum-led teaching materials linked to real people and real jobs – highlighting roles, sectors and employers that value the knowledge and skills that geographers bring to the workplace.

Our teaching materials spotlight a range of job profiles, adverts, salary information and skills overviews. The resources provide activities for teachers to work through with their students to embed an understanding of why geography is relevant and useful, and where studying the subject can take you.



Examples of these materials include activities exploring geographical careers in hazard response linked to the 2025 Myanmar earthquakes. The roles of Geospatial Coordinator and Humanitarian Training Specialist are introduced, along with the work of MapAction. The Society also works directly with employers to produce bespoke careers materials linked to the work their geographers do. Knight Frank are one example of this collaboration; their geospatial work, which looked at locating office space in a town, informed a resource for A Level students to use GIS data to analyse spaces and recommend ideal locations.



The Society's careers teaching materials are available to all schools for free via www.rgs.org/resources

CASE STUDY

Careers events for students and teachers



Encouraging your professional geographers to get involved in the Society's careers outreach with schools is a great way to showcase your organisation. It is also important to ensure students are aware of the work you do and the skills you are looking for from the future labour market.

We have a range of free careers events for both students and teachers at school and university:

What do geographers actually do?

These events are held online and after school, making them as accessible as possible to all students and teachers. They showcase four professional geographers from a range of sectors and backgrounds, with each introducing their education and career pathway and how they use their geographical knowledge and skills in their job.

Choose Geography: Careers in...

These events, held online, showcase three professional geographers from a specific sector (e.g. hydrology, energy, planning, natural hazards). They aim to show a range of job roles that exist related to that geographical theme so students and teachers can understand the different jobs and employers on offer. These are directly linked to specific elements of the geography curriculum.

How can you get involved?

The Society is keen to hear from professional geographers who would like to get involved in these events. We are also happy to explore bespoke jointly-branded events with organisations and companies that showcase specific areas of work and that help boost your organisation's profile.

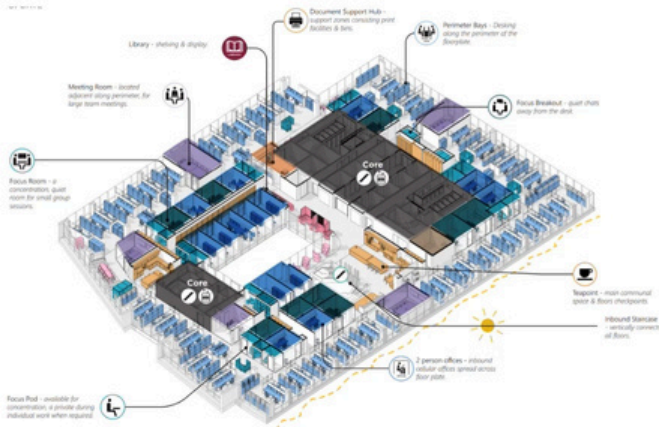
CASE STUDY

Careers events for students and teachers

Seven | 18 June 2025

But what do I actually do...

My day and using my geography skills



Grace Milner, a Geospatial Analyst at Ecometric, recently spoke at one of our online career events on what geographers actually do, and said:

“Outreach into schools feels especially important because not everyone has access to the networks or role models that show what’s possible. For anyone considering getting involved, I’d say it’s very low-pressure and incredibly rewarding! It’s easy to forget what it was like starting out, but offering even a small insight or bit of encouragement can make a lasting difference for someone just beginning their geography journey”



Offering even a small insight can make a lasting difference for someone beginning their geography journey



All our online careers events are recorded, and copies of each event can be accessed by students and teachers at www.rgs.org/resources

CASE STUDY

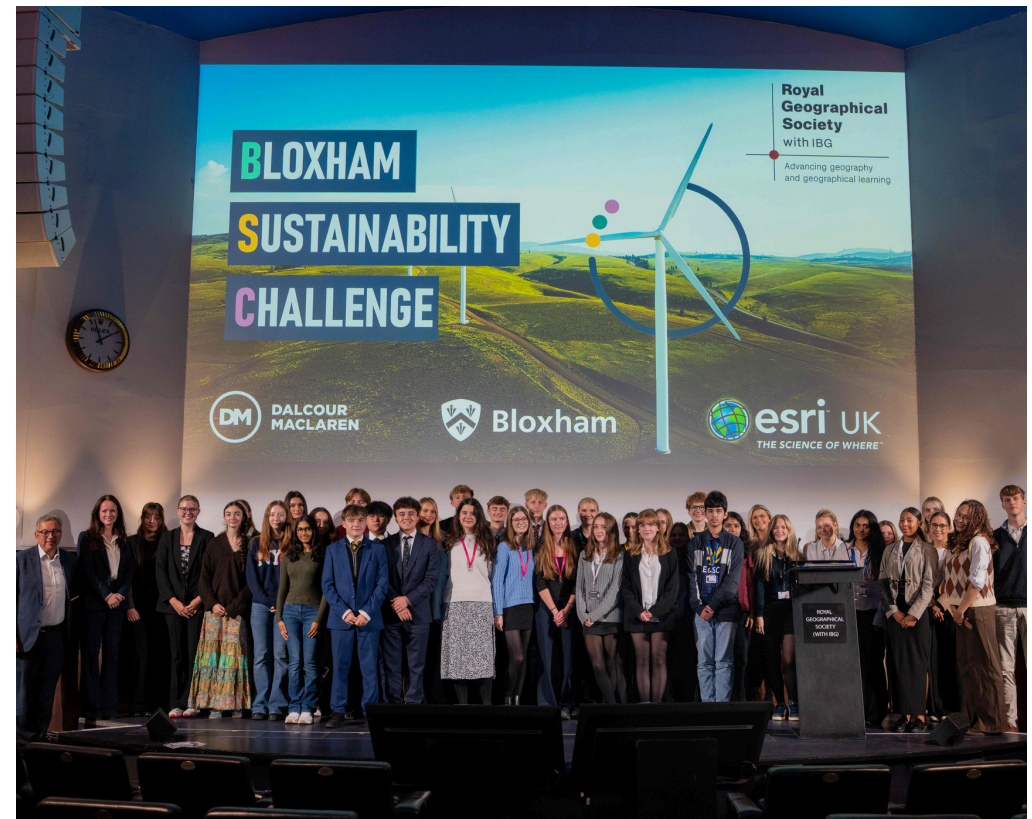
The Bloxham Sustainability Challenge

The Bloxham Sustainability Challenge (BSC) is a collaboration between Bloxham School, Dalcour Maclaren, and Esri UK. It equips young people with geospatial skills, showing how GIS can address social, environmental, and economic challenges.

Each year, Year 12 students tackle a live industry brief. This year, the students are assessing the siting of an onshore wind farm using real data from Vattenfall. Acting as consultants, students weigh trade-offs such as biodiversity and community engagement. Using ArcGIS, they produce professional outputs, including an Environmental Impact Assessment and a presentation to industry specialists.

The BSC embeds real-world experience and climate education into the curriculum, aligning with the DfE's Sustainability Strategy, the Gatsby Benchmarks, and the UK's Invest 2035 Industrial Strategy. With up to 725,000 clean energy jobs projected by 2030, it responds to urgent skills needs.

Inclusive and hands-on, the challenge mirrors a university placement year. Students gain technical and soft skills through mentoring and webinars with experts from organisations including Ordnance Survey, University of St Andrews, The University of Manchester, and Esri UK. By harnessing location intelligence, the BSC empowers the next generation to lead with purpose and shape a sustainable future.



Education system at a glance

There are plenty of reasons why businesses should get involved at all stages of the education system. The starting point is understanding the landscape:

	Age	Phase of education	Where this is provided	Description
	18+	Further education for adults (19+) Higher Education (18+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges • Universities • Institutes of technology • Training companies • Employers 	Higher education is education and training at a standard beyond A Levels and T Levels. HE programmes are offered by universities or colleges and vary in size and type. HE can include: Higher Technical Qualifications (including Higher Nationals and foundation degrees), undergraduate degrees, higher apprenticeships and postgraduate courses. Many adults also continue to improve their skills by studying Further Education (FE) courses - from basic skills to technical courses.
Key stage 5	16-18	Further education (16+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges • School sixth forms • Training companies • Employers • Charities 	At this stage young people may undertake a full-time course at college or school sixth form, such as A Levels or a T Level, or start an apprenticeship or traineeship. They also combine work or volunteering with part-time study or training. Education or training is compulsory until the age of 18 in England.
Key stage 4	14-16	Secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary schools 	Secondary education starts at age 11 and continues until age 16. Students are usually studying GCSE courses, and/or other courses as appropriate (e.g. a technical qualification). Some regions also have middle schools, and a small number of students attend specialist secondary school settings.
Key stage 3	11-14			
Key stage 2	7-11	Primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary schools 	Primary schools generally have students aged 4 to 11 years, with infant and junior classes. Government has set out a national curriculum for all subjects across key stages 1 to 4, and there are national tests and teacher assessments for students at the end of both key stage 1 and 2.
Key stage 1	5-7			
	0-5	Early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurseries • Primary schools 	Government sets standards for learning, development and care of young children to age 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This can take place in state nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes within primary schools, but also in voluntary pre-schools, privately run nurseries and with childminders.