



HERODOT
Network for Geography
in higher education

THE EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES OF GEOGRAPHERS

GEOGRAPHY AND EMPLOYMENT

Geography graduates have a long and successful track record in gaining employment in a wide range of different professions. These include: spatial planning (eg urban, rural and regional policy), environmental management (eg hydrology, conservation and real-estate) and services (eg teaching, tourism and transport). In addition to these overtly geography-related opportunities, many geography graduates use the generic skills acquired through their courses to compete successfully in the wider labour market for positions in fields such as finance, health, retailing, the media, government and in general administration and management. Geographers are, therefore, equipped to make valued contributions in an unusually wide variety of professions and sectors.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL ADVANTAGE

While all higher education disciplines help to develop students' generic skills, the breadth of geography (spanning the natural and social sciences) produces students with a particularly wide skills range including critical thinking, effective communication, time management, information presentation and report writing. Geography fieldwork and projects also develop students' research, data analysis, team-working and project management skills.

Moreover, as indicated below, the benefits of being a geographer are increasing:

- Internationalisation is giving a competitive advantage to students who have a global perspective
- The growing importance of environmental challenges (eg climate change, resource depletion, green consumerism) are enhancing the value of the geographer's



HERODOT
Network for Geography
in higher education

knowledge of environmental problems and policies. The world of government and business needs geographers because they are “sustainability literate”.

- The increasing pace of economic and technological change means that employers prefer graduates who are flexible and who can respond to new challenges and opportunities. As a result of the breadth of their knowledge and skills, geographers are particularly adaptable and can lead as well as respond to change.

THE GEOGRAPHER’S TALENTS AND EXPERTISE

Naturally, the precise attributes developed through the study of geography vary between courses and indeed between countries. However, a typical geographer offers employers the following portfolio of abilities which make them distinctive and special:

1. to engage in integrative thinking and problem solving (the capacity to make connections and join things up)
2. to operate in multi-disciplinary teams (facilitated by geography bridging the social and natural sciences)
3. to think spatially and use Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
4. to evaluate locations, places, landscape and environments
5. to contribute to policy formulation and evaluation at a variety of scales
6. to operate effectively in an increasingly international world, connecting the local and the global
7. to recognise the importance of cross-cultural respect and empathy
8. to promote and undertake initiatives in sustainable development and in environmental analysis and management.



HERODOT
Network for Geography
in higher education

9. to be sensitive to ethical issues and the importance of citizenship and social responsibility

10. to be flexible and adaptive to change (facilitated by the geographers' wide range of knowledge and skills)

Geographers, therefore, combine the ability to handle ideas, concepts and values with the practical skills needed to make things happen and achieve results. Given globalisation, the sustainability agenda and the pace of change in the modern world, they are very much attuned to the times we live in. As a result of their knowledge, skills and adaptability, they are, therefore, exceptionally well equipped to meet the professional and employability challenges of the twenty first century, and to add real value to the organisations for which they work.