

Geography Career Chat



Office of Career Development

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Office Hours: Weekdays, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm and Wednesdays 7 – 9 pm

Steps In Choosing A Career

First Step: Self Assessment: “Know Thyself”

1. Understand and relate your personality traits to career choices
2. Define your personal values
3. Determine your economic needs
4. Explore longer-term goals
5. Understand your skill base
6. Identify your preferred skill base
7. Express a willingness to improve

Strategies for self-assessment may include meeting with a Career Counselor, taking interest inventories such as the Strong Interest Inventory or the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, or working through the exercises in any one of a number of books in the CDO library, including *What Color Is Your Parachute*.

Second Step: Research Career Options

Once you have established a base of self-knowledge, the next step is to create a knowledge base of opportunities available and begin the your interests to a career.

Strategies for researching career options include:

- Informational interviewing and networking with professionals in areas that may be of interest to you
- Talking with Vassar alumnae/i and utilizing V-NET
- Utilizing job listings through eRecruiting and in the CDO
- Surfing the Internet for career options and information—including Spotlight on Careers, CareerSearch, and Vault.com
- Participating in internships or job-shadowing experiences
- Scanning job listings for positions that sound interesting
- Joining and attending professional organizations or association meetings, conferences, and networking opportunities
- Reading trade journals

Next Step: Job Search

A job search involves:

- Creating a strong resume and cover letter
- Developing lists of contacts and target organizations
- Applying for positions
- Interviewing
- Doing follow-up

Career Counselors here at the CDO are ready and available to assist you through the entire process. The Career Development Office library and website also contain various handouts, books, articles, journals, etc. that could aid you in this process.

Job-hunting takes time and energy! This varies, of course, depending on the field, preparation, and dedication of the job seeker. Geographic flexibility also significantly impacts one's job search. Many occupations today require a college-educated individual who can write and speak well, solve problems, learn new information quickly and work well with others on a team. This means that college graduates use their education in a wide variety of fields, and your future career may relate more to your personal career interests, work values, and transferable skills than any specific academic major.



What About Graduate School?

<http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

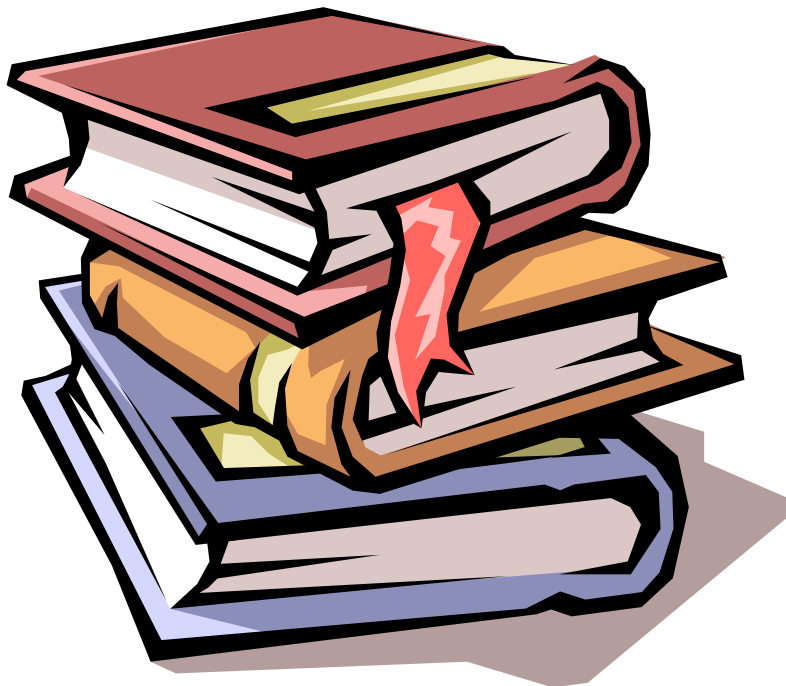
The reasons for continuing one's education in graduate school can be as varied and unique as the individual. Many continue their studies at an advanced level because they simply find it difficult to end the educational process. They love what they are learning; they want to learn more and continue their academic preparation. Others go on to graduate school for purely a practical reason: their area of interest requires an advanced degree.

It is important to carefully consider your reasons for going to graduate school. Graduate school involves additional time away from the employment market, a high degree of critical evaluation, significant autonomy as you pursue your studies, and a considerable financial expenditure. For some students in doctoral programs, there may be additional life choice issues, such as relationships, marriage, and parenthood that may present real challenges while in a program of study.

Think about the following questions when making this decision:

- Are you postponing tough decisions by going to school?
- Have you done some "hands-on" reality testing?
- Do you need an advanced degree to work in your field?
- Have you compared your expectations of what graduate school will do for you with what it has done for alumni of the program you are considering?
- Have you talked with people in your field to explore what you might be doing after graduate school?
- Are you excited by the idea of studying in the field you have in mind?

Graduate school is NOT a career choice—it is a tool to reach or advance your career goals. Be sure to ask yourself why you are going to graduate school and what you want to do with the degree.



Geography Alumni Career Choices

Here is a sampling of the many career paths Vassar alumnae/i have pursued with their undergraduate degree in Geography (may have pursued further education). Some of these career choices are closely related to their major, while others are not. If you would like to talk to alumnae/i and ask them questions about their careers, feel free to use the V-NET database through the AAVC website at <http://www.aavc.vassar.edu>.

- Agribusiness/Farming/Ranching**, Campaign Director at Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Class of 1988
- Education – College/University**, Program Manager at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado – Boulder, Class of 1997
- Education – College/University**, Geography Professor at California State University – Long Beach, Class of 1993
- Engineering**, Systems Engineer/Project Manager at Charter Systems, Class of 1996
- Environmental**, National Trail Program Coordinator at East Coast Greenway Alliance, Class of 1991
- Federal Administrative Government**, Interpretive Ranger at U.S. National Park Service, Class of 2000
- Graphic Arts/Design/Photography**, Cartographer at Carto-Graphics, Class of 1964
- Historic Preservation**, Historic Preservation Contract Work at Akros Inc., Class of 1973
- Merchandising/Retailing**, Manager of Geographic Information Systems at Buxton, Class of 1994
- Social Service Assoc/Foundation/Research Org**, Urban Planner at Regional Plan Association, Class of 2000
- State/Local Administrative Government**, Associate Director for Management at the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, Class of 1992
- State/Local Administrative Government**, Community Development Planner at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Class of 1985
- Utilities/Energy**, Principle GIS Analyst at the Las Vegas Valley Water District, Class of 1991
- Voluntary Service**, Community Development Mobilizer with the U.S. Peace Corps, Class of 2003

CDO Library Resources for Geography Majors

The following books and many more can be found in the CDO Library:

- 100 Jobs in the Environment* by Debra Quintana, 1996.
- Big Green Internship Book, The – Internships and Summer Jobs for the Environment* by Career Education Institutes, 2003.
- Careers for Environmental Types and Others Who Respect the Earth* by Mike Fasulo & Jane Kinney, 2002.
- Complete Guide to Environmental Careers in the 21st Century, The* by the Environmental Careers Organization, 1999.
- Directory of National Environmental Organizations, The* by John C. Brainard, 1994.
- Earth Work* by the Student Conservation Association, 1994.
- Eco Guide to Careers that Make a Difference, The* by the Environmental Careers Organization, 2004.
- Environmental Career Directory* by Bradley J. Morgan & Joseph M. Palmisano, 1993.
- Environmental Careers in the 21st Century* by The Environmental Careers Organization, 1999.
- Environmental Engineering Selection Guide* by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers, 2001.
- Green At Work – Finding a Business Career That Works for the Environment* by Susan Cohn, 1992.
- Guide to Graduate Environmental Programs, The* by The Student Conservation Association, 1997.
- Northeast Field Guide to Environmental Education, The* by Antioch New England Graduate, 1991.
- Opportunities in Environmental Careers* by Odom Fanning, 2002.
- Resumes for Environmental Careers* by VGM Career Horizons, 1994.
- Working with the Environment* by Tim Ryder & Deborah Penrith, 2004
- World Directory of Environmental Organizations* by the International Center for the Environment and Public Policy, 2001.

Geography Related Websites

Vassar College Department of Geography: <http://geologyandgeography.vassar.edu/>

General

American Geographical Society: <http://www.amergeog.org/>
American Meteorological Society: <http://www.ametsoc.org/>
American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing: www.asprs.org
Association of American Geographers: <http://www.aag.org/>
Bureau of Land Management: <http://www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm>
*Environmental Career Opportunities:
<http://www.ecojobs.com/colleges/collegecontents.asp>
Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/students/careers.htm>
Geo Job Source: <http://www.geojobs.com/regionindex.htm>
GeoSearch, Inc.: www.geosearch.com
Geospatial Information & Technology Association: www.gita.org
National Council for Geographic Education: <http://ncge.org/>
National Geography Society: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>
*National Environmental Employment Report:
<http://www.environmentalcareer.com/neer.htm>
Occupational Outlook – Atmospheric Scientists:
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos051.htm>
Occupational Outlook – Environmental Scientists:
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos050.htm>
Occupational Outlook – Surveyors, Cartographers, Photogrammetrists, and
Socially & Ecologically Responsible Geographers: <http://www.geography.uc.edu/>
Surveying Technicians: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos040.htm>
*The Job Seeker: <http://thejobseeker.net>
U.S. Geological Survey: <http://www.usgs.gov/ohr/student/>
Women in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics:
<http://womeninscience.org/pages/resources/resources.asp>

Real Estate

American Real Estate Society: <http://www.aresnet.org/>
American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association: <http://www.aresnet.org/>
Real Estate Resources – University of Cincinnati:
<http://www.business.uc.edu/realestate/careerpaths>
Real Jobs: <http://www.real-jobs.com/>

Urban and Regional Planning

American Planning Association: <http://planning.org/careers/>
Occupational Outlook - Urban and Regional Planners:
<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos057.htm>
Rural Development: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/other_sites.html
Urban and Regional Informational System Associations: <http://www.urisa.org/>

Economics Related Websites cont.

Economic Development

American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association: <http://www.aresnet.org/>

Economic Development Resources: <http://faculty.oxy.edu/gsecondi/dev.html>

Economic Development, Technological Change and Growth:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/WebEc/webeco.html>

Geo-Economic Consulting:

<http://faculty.washington.edu/%7Ekrumme/resources/consult.html>

International Economic Development Council:

http://www.iedconline.org/?p=Job_Center

CDO Resources: <http://careers.vassar.edu/resources/>

*Please refer to the updated CDO password sheet to access the site.

Graduate School Information

CDO Website for Graduate Schools: <http://careers.vassar.edu/advice-graduate-school/>

CDO Graduate School Career Briefs: <http://careers.vassar.edu/downloadable-handouts/>

Gradschools.com: <http://gradschools.com/>

GradProfiles: <http://www.gradprofiles.com/>

PhD Info.org: <http://www.phdinfofind.org/>

Peterson Guides to Graduate and Professional Schools: <http://www.petersons.com/>

*Foundation Center Grants To Individuals: <http://gtionline.fdncenter.org/>

Internships

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

*National Internships.com: <http://internships.com/accessPremium.cfm>

*Internships USA: <http://www.internships-usa.com>

National Science Foundation: http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.cfm

*Please refer to the updated CDO password sheet to access the site.

General Career Websites

*Career Search: <http://www.careersearch.net/vassar/>

eRecruiting: <http://vassar.erecruiting.com/er/security/login.jsp>

You must attend an eRecruiting orientation with the CDO before you can access the site.

*Going Global: <http://online.goinglobal.com>

*LACN (Liberal Arts Career NetWORK) Job/Internship Database:

<http://www.lacn-group.org/>

*MonsterTrak: <http://www.monstertrak.monster.com/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Princeton Review's Guide To Your Career: <http://www.princetonreview.com/cte/>

Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

*Spotlight On Careers: <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org/>

Vassar College Career Development Office: <http://careers.vassar.edu/>

*Vault.com: http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=397

Venture: http://www.theventureconsortium.org/public_interest/exploring.php

Wetfeet: <http://www.wetfeet.com/>

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