



Employability

At University level

How is employability (knowledge, skills, experiences and attributes) encouraged, developed and embedded through your student experience at Leeds?

The University's employability strategy states that the term 'employability' is used to:

“Describe the achievements and capability, for each individual student, which are formed through the integration of knowledge, skills, experiences and attributes from the academic curriculum and co-curricular activities which are needed to gain graduate employment and successful career options.”

The University strategy focuses on the following aspects of your student journey as you consider your career options:

decide what you want to do

plan to secure the skills and attributes which will lead to your chosen career

Compete in order to get the career you have planned for.



Where to look for advice and help across campus

Careers Centre

Advice on all aspects of career planning and preparation is offered by the Careers Centre, and the Centre also hosts a wide range of workshops, employer visits and careers fairs.

skills@library

A comprehensive range of workshops, seminars and drop-in sessions are available to all students to assist not only with study skills, but also to develop and improve the kind of transferable skills which employers look for.

Alumni Office

The Leeds Network offers an opportunity to make contact with and receive advice from alumni who are working in the job or sector that you are interested in. After graduation, all students become Leeds Alumni with continued access to many of the University's resources.

A LeedsforLife Opportunity

Leedsforlife is an online resource which prepares students for the future by helping them recognise the value of all their academic and co-curricular experiences. Career planning is aided by personal tutoring reports and a 'living CV', and the resource advertises a huge range of opportunities and activities, both curricular and co-curricular.

Employability at the School of Geography level

We focus on student employability through our curriculum design, personal tutoring, co-curricular activities and careers advice and guidance, working closely with colleagues in the Careers Centre and other central units.

Here is a summary of 15 employability opportunities that we offer at School level.



1. Key skills development through curriculum design

The development of transferable skills through individual modules is viewable through the LeedsforLife website (follow the links from each module for which you are enrolled).

2. Level 2, Career Preparation for Geographers

We offer a level 2 vocational module taught by Careers Centre colleagues and external employers, which aims to help you recognise the skills and attributes you have developed, and to be aware of the range of career opportunities open to geographers and how best to access these.

3. Level 3, Co-operative Work placement

This module offers the opportunity to undertake a work placement or project work with an external organisation, and to present a 'deliverable' to the organisation, as well as an academic report which sets the placement work in an academic context. Teaching placements in local primary and secondary schools are one option within this module; and an important aspect to the module is the opportunity to develop skills in self reflection through the keeping of a log book.

4. Employer participation in modules

In modules such as GEOG3010: Advanced Retail Planning, we regularly invite external organisations to give talks about their organisations.

5. Careers Consultancy

Our Careers Consultants, Sue Holdsworth and Lynda Hall (based at the Careers Centre) work with us to promote career planning. They contribute to start and end of year meetings; lead the Career Preparation module; visit the department for 'drop-in surgeries' three times per semester; and organise bespoke events targeted at Environment students (e.g., careers fairs and careers talks). Sue and Lynda are available by appointment at the Careers Centre for one-to-one consultancy with students at any level.

6. Year in Industry placements

The opportunity to take a year out between levels 2 and 3 to undertake a paid placement with an external organisation is open to students on all geography programmes. Many suitable opportunities are advertised by the department; occasionally employers visit to present their Year in Industry opportunities; and we work with the Careers Centre to help students secure a placement. We hold briefing sessions to introduce the programme, and for those who secure a placement, preparatory sessions, on-placement visits and reintegration sessions on their return to level 3 study. Year in industry placements in Europe are also encouraged, and supported financially through the Erasmus Work Programme.

7. Careers Fairs

The Faculty of Environment hosts an annual careers fair, either in the School of Geography or the School of Earth and Environment, to which employers of environment students are invited.

8. Promotion of graduate career opportunities

These are regularly circulated to level 3 students and listed under 'opportunities' on the LeedsforLife website. We have an Employability board and web page where we advertise appropriate vacancies. We also encourage level 3 students to sign up to our alumni facebook page. Here, we regularly post graduate jobs so that we can continue to help our students with their career planning post graduation.

9. Promotion of opportunities for development of skills and experience (co-curricular activities)

These are promoted through the School, and also listed under 'opportunities' as a permanent source of reference on the LeedsforLife website. We regularly promote opportunities for short-term volunteering or project work abroad (which can be supported by our Edith Benten travel bursaries); also opportunities through RGS, including the Ambassadors programme; other paid or voluntary opportunities in Leeds or further afield; and opportunities for taking part in school-based activities such as Open Day hosting; hosting school pupil visits and summer schools; acting as Student Course Representatives.

10. Study abroad

A further very important opportunity which also develops skills and attributes and adds to the value of your CV, is the chance to study abroad through one of our many study abroad partnership links.



11. Working with Alumni

Our recent (and not so recent) geography graduates are an invaluable resource for the School and you as its current students in terms of providing inspiring case studies, mentoring support, and networking links. Working with the central Alumni Office, we sometimes put students in touch with recent graduates who have gained some experience in a particular industry or sector, and are able to give advice and tips to students who wish to follow a career path in the same sector. Our regular Alumni magazine is available to all students to read, and provides a valuable source of information, inspirational case studies and fascinating facts about our Alumni community.

12. Personal tutoring

In addition to our Careers Consultants, your personal tutor is responsible for helping to guide you in your thinking about future employability and careers options. This guidance begins at level 1, when you are asked to start identifying the skills and attributes you already possess at that stage, and to begin planning and building on these skills. The LeedsforLife website is available as a resource for both you and your tutor, so that your one-to-one meetings throughout the year have a structure.

- At levels 2 and 3, your tutor continues this process with you, helping you to identify curricular and co-curricular activities and opportunities which you have taken part in, which all contribute towards a 'living CV'. By the end of level 3, you should have an up to date CV, details of all the relevant opportunities you have taken part in whilst at University, and a high level of self-awareness with regard to skills and attributes. In addition, you should have had opportunity to think through career options, even if you are still undecided what to do next.
- It may come as news to you that your access to LeedsforLife stays live for five years after you graduate, so you can continue to build your CV and gather together details of activities which have helped you develop skills and attributes.

13. Student case studies, profiles and input through Employability sessions

We ask our current students at various stages of their university programme, as well as recent Alumni, to contribute profiles, case studies, and advice on placements, internships and graduate jobs in order to inspire current students.

14. Further study

One of these options is to continue on to further study (Masters, PhD, PGCE, Law Conversion, etc.). We promote our own Masters courses and PhD opportunities through briefing sessions and open days, but we also draw your attention to suitable courses elsewhere – particularly those with funding attached.

15. Reference writing

And finally, we continue to support you after you graduate through the provision of references. We ask for an up-to-date CV (which can be the LeedsforLife living CV); or you may return the departmental reference form to us to save in your file after graduation. Normal practice is to ask your tutor (or DSG mentor) for a reference, but second references may be obtained from others who taught you and knew you reasonably well, or from Head of School as Chair of the School.