

Careers after a languages or linguistics degree

Your options after a languages or linguistics degree are much broader than teacher, translator, academic. These are all great jobs but ideally you should develop a sense of a **range** of different careers that you could pursue. This is designed to help you develop that knowledge.

A few questions to consider before you get started:

- Do you want to 'decide' your long-term career before you leave university or are you open to experimenting?
- What aspects of your languages/linguistics are you best at and do you most enjoy? E.g. reading/writing/speaking/ listening to a language, doing qualitative or quantitative research in linguistics, survey design, statistics? Understanding the history or cultures associated with different languages?
- How important is it that you use the above skills in your first job? Or do you want to learn new skills as part of your work?
- Do you want to travel as part of your work a little / a lot / not at all?
- Where do you want to work? Your home country / somewhere else?
- If you speak languages, do you want to use them every day, every week or are you not bothered?

As the world becomes more and more globalised and your generation becomes more entrepreneurial it is possible that many of you will have 15+ employers over 4 or 5 different careers in your lifetime (including in jobs that you don't even exist yet). Do your research and be open-minded to the opportunities which come your way.

My internship... strongly influenced my current career path in project management – I definitely feel I wouldn't have got my job if I hadn't shown I'm already able to adapt quickly. It's led on to bigger and better things!

Languages graduate now working in Siemens

If you're interested in doing research and getting your hands on data and you don't mind what the data is about then market research is a great option. UX, or user experience, is another field that uses research skills.... The Civil Service, think-tanks, and charities also advertise research-related jobs.

Linguistics graduate now working in NatCen

The easiest way to figure out what you want to do is by trying stuff out. For example, you could organise a half day shadowing someone who's work sounds interesting or volunteer for a charity where you will get to do cool stuff. You'll soon figure out what you like and what you don't like. Come and see us in Careers & Enterprise if you want a hand.

Andrea Cox, Careers Consultant for SLLF

5 JOBS YOU MIGHT NEVER HAVE CONSIDERED AFTER A LANGUAGES OR LINGUISTICS DEGREE...

Graduates always surprise me in what areas they find to work in...

1. Self-employed accent coach (for actors)
2. Investigation specialist for Amazon – requires you to investigate suspicious activity in another language
3. Creating new languages (and their corresponding syntax, semantics, phonetics) e.g. Dothraki and Valyrian in Game of Thrones
4. Archaeologist specialising in ancient languages and cultures
5. Part-time language blogger – living in a different country and talking about cultural differences e.g. Not Even French

Possible job roles for languages and linguistics graduates

	For those with a language	For those with linguistics	Languages or linguistics
Commercial (working for a company)	<p>Bilingual Lexicographer compiling foreign language dictionaries</p> <p>Business with an international focus</p> <p>Global Market Research understanding how consumers behave in different countries</p> <p>Global Recruitment Consultant</p> <p>Jobs in Hospitality and Tourism</p> <p>Interpreter* (see below)</p> <p>Investigation Specialist e.g. work for Amazon investigating suspicious activity in different languages</p> <p>Translator (see below)</p> <p>Subtiter for films/TV</p>	<p>Computational Linguist* developing language tools for computers e.g. around speech recognition</p> <p>Data Analyst using quantitative analysis techniques</p> <p>Lexicographer compiling dictionaries</p> <p>Market Researcher collecting and analysing data about the market and presenting to clients</p> <p>Social Researcher investigate issues in society (see below)</p> <p>User Experience Researcher* research how an audience reacts to a system e.g. website / service</p>	<p>Working with any business that trades internationally e.g. Airbnb, ASOS, Lidl plus many you've not heard of! Specialisation areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account management (representing clients) • Communications • Events • Human Resources (HR) • Logistics • Marketing • Public Relations (PR) • Sales or Business Development <p>Computer Programmer*</p> <p>Editorial Assistant in publishing</p> <p>Law</p> <p>Marketing Assistant or Copywriter Understand how a brand appeals to different audiences</p> <p>Recruitment Consultant</p>
Government and public sector	<p>Investment consultant promoting UK or other countries for tourism/ investment</p> <p>Language Analyst for government/police e.g. MI5, GCHQ</p> <p>Public Service Interpreter* working with clients in court or immigration services</p>	<p>Audiologist* treating those with hearing loss</p> <p>Forensic Linguist working for government agencies or law firms to analyse speech and writing samples</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapist*</p>	<p>Any role within Civil Service (government) including Foreign Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development, via Fast Stream graduate programme or Civil Service job search</p> <p>Mental Health Support Worker*</p> <p>Public Librarian</p>

Charities	Foreign Aid Relief Worker working abroad	Work in a Speech/ Hearing Related Charity e.g. Stroke Association or AFSAIC	International Aid/ Development Charities or those working with people speaking different languages / from a variety of cultures
Education	Foreign Language Teacher* (for children/ adults)	Museum Curator of exhibitions related to old/endangered languages	Academic Researcher as a PhD then postdoctoral or eaching position followed by lectureship* English as a Foreign Language Teacher Youth Mentor

***requires additional training**

Deep dive – spotlight on 4 careers after a Languages and Linguistics

What is a.... social researcher?

Social researchers design, manage and undertake research projects to investigate social issues such as employment, gender, health, education and social policy.

Skills required:

Qualitative and/or quantitative analytical skills e.g. writing case studies, narrative methods, statistics experience. It's also useful to have presentation skills, IT skills, written communication skills so you can write professional reports for clients as well as research skills so you can carry out a 'Rapid Evidence Assessment' (a literature review, similar to what you might do before writing an essay).

Pros and cons:

Pros = use of research skills especially analysis, survey design. Cons = high competition for entry positions

Who can I work for?

Local authorities, central government, health authorities, independent research institutes such as NatCen, NFER (education), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (welfare) or Kantar Public UK

How do I get in?

Those with undergraduate or masters degree can apply for Research Assistant roles. People with a PhD can apply directly for Researcher roles. Practical experience really helps to clinch your first role. Consider doing research-related work experience, a research intensive dissertation or pick a masters course that has a lot of hands-on research.

Work experience:

- Participating in QConsult would be an excellent introduction into how to understand clients' needs and write reports
- Ask one of your lecturers if you can assist in their research over the holidays
- Any work experience which involves research
- Volunteer to carry out research for a university society e.g. analyse their social media presence using Twitter or Google Analytics

Further information:

Social Research Association <http://the-sra.org.uk/>

What is a.... translator or interpreter?

A **translator** translates texts from documents written in a 'source' language to another 'target' language (usually your native language) to ensure that you capture the real meaning of the text. An **interpreter** translates speech, live, in real-time from source to target language. This could be at conferences, business meetings, criminal justice proceedings or community events (these last two are known as public service interpreting or PSI). Interpreting can happen by phone or online but it usually involves a lot of travel.

Skills required: An excellent command of two or more languages. The official languages of the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) are most in demand.

Translators have to use convey the meaning of a text in a way that is true to the original, while being accessible and relevant to the intended reader. This often requires a lot of extra reading and thorough research of legal, technical and scientific phraseology. You will also need to learn to use translation memory software, such as Wordfast, or memoQ to ensure consistency of translation within documents. You need to learn these skills either through a masters or lots of relevant work experience.

Pros and cons:

Pros = flexible, can work from home, freelancing opportunities Cons = not very creative, can be unstable, loneliness?

Interpreters require an ability to work quickly and under pressure. You need to be able to listen and translate almost immediately so you don't miss the next part of what someone is saying. Gain these skills either through a masters or lots of relevant work experience. There are different types of interpreting:

- simultaneous interpreting (SI) where you sit in a sound booth and immediately convert what's being said. Listeners hear the interpretation through an earpiece
- consecutive interpretation (CI) where the speaker will pause after each sentence or point while you translate what's being said
- sign language interpreting

Pros and cons:

Pros = flexible, can involve travel and thinking on your feet. Cons = high pressure, freelancing can be unstable .

Who can I work for? Most translators and interpreters work as freelancers for translation agencies (otherwise known as Language Service Businesses, or LSBs such as Absolute Translations) or directly for clients. A few organisations employ in-house translators e.g. United Nations / EU/ MI5 or local councils (as a public service interpreter) but it is rare. Being a freelancer means that you have to pitch yourself to companies for work so involves building up a great reputation for yourself. See next page for working as a freelancer.

How do I get in? It is highly unusual to gain paid work as an interpreter without a professional qualification so an MA or Diploma in Interpreting is definitely advisable. For translation it's possible to work without further qualification if you build up a good reputation and client base, but consider studying for an MA or MSc in Translation or Translation Studies or a Diploma in Translation (DipTrans).

If you have a degree and can translate or interpret into your main (target) language (normally, your mother tongue) from two other official EU languages (source languages), you might consider applying for a paid traineeship with the European Commission. There are also the European Union Traineeships for Linguists which range from 10-12 weeks to 3-12 months.

Much of UK public sector translation and interpreting work has been outsourced to a company called **Capita**. All translators and interpreters must have at least two references from previous projects, be professionally qualified and, for translators, have previous work experience in the type of material they will work on.

Work experience:

- Find a summer job or Year Abroad position where translate/interpret all the time e.g. working as a cabin attendant on Eurostar, volunteering with non-English speakers
- Aim for C1 and C2 language proficiency and practice with native speakers e.g. use meetup.com for language exchanges in London
- Look for UN internships <https://languagecareers.un.org/dgacm/Langs.nsf/page.xsp?key=Internships-How>
- Work as a proofreader/transcriber during your holidays. There are freelance opportunities with rev.com or you can often just pitch the idea to a company whose website is badly written in one of your target languages
- Ask a freelance translator/interpreter if you can shadow them for a day or a week to get a feel for what the job is like

Further information:

CIOL – Chartered Institute of Linguists <https://www.ciol.org.uk/>

ITI – Institute of Translating and Interpreting <https://www.iti.org.uk>

University of Oxford guide on translating and interpreting <https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/translating-interpreting/>

MI5 listening exercise to practice interpreting <http://tinyurl.com/j5vz6m8>

Working as a freelancer

Freelancing as a translator/interpreter or a private language tutor can be challenging to start with. But it can be very fulfilling and afford you a lot of flexibility in how you work. Things you need to know:

- Working on a freelance basis you are running a small business and you will need to do HR, do accounts, pitch to prospective clients to get work, marketing as well as your translating/tutoring work
- You need to convince translation agencies or recruitment agencies that you can do the job. What helps is having a portfolio of your previous work and client testimonials. It doesn't matter if this work was voluntary it will just help convince a prospective client to spend their money on you
- Know how much to charge – talk to other freelancers in your field to find the market rate. Tools like ProZ (for translators) can help
- Some freelancers find, particularly towards the start of their careers, that they supplement their income with regular paid part time work, whilst they build their portfolio and client base

What is a.... Speech and Language Therapist?

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) provide treatment, support and care for people who have difficulties with communication, eating, drinking or swallowing. One day you might be helping a child overcome their stammering another day you'll be helping adults with speech difficulties as a result of head, neck or throat cancer. You might also encounter people with autism-related communication difficulties or stroke patients.

Skills required:

Excellent communication and listening skills, patience, problem-solving to be able to diagnose people's conditions and creativity in coming up with a workable care plan, sense of humour, driving licence is ideal. Knowledge of community languages (e.g. Bengali, Somali) could be an advantage.

Pros and cons:

Pros = meeting a variety of people with very different conditions, making a difference, using linguistics in an applied way

Cons = Cost and time of further study, in NHS you can have very heavy case loads

Who can I work for?

NHS, nursing homes, schools, universities, charities e.g. Stroke Association

How do I get in?

Complete a two-year postgraduate degree (MSc in Speech and Language Therapy) and then register with the HCPC (Healthcare Professionals Council). After that you can apply for a Speech Language Therapist role which starts around £23k in the NHS. As you become more specialised salaries rise to £30-40k. Competition for these entry-level roles is fierce so it's important to be geographically flexible.

Work experience:

Essential for getting into postgraduate courses. You could...

- Arrange a shadowing session at your local speech and language therapy service or nursing home / school
- Volunteer with children and adults with learning disabilities. Check <https://www.qmsu.org/volunteering/> or <https://do-it.org/>
- See if you can get temp work in the holidays as a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant or an SEN assistant in schools

Further information:

RCSLT – Professional body for SLTs in UK <https://www.rcslt.org/>

Maxxima - specialist recruitment agency which handles SLT vacancies <https://www.maxximagroup.com/>

WHAT IS A GRADUATE SCHEME?

A structured one to three year programme that combines work and training which can lead to a professional qualification. They are generally offered by larger organisations and can involve working in different departments of the business.

Only 10% of graduates do graduate schemes, the rest apply for specific, one-off entry-level roles or complete further study.

There are lots of graduate schemes for European/global organisations as these tend to be the largest companies e.g. Cargill European Graduate Programme, O2 Graduate Development Programme, Veolia Business Leaders and TK Maxx. There are also governmental programmes such as the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream. Not all of these organisations require a second language but they will look for evidence of a global outlook and a willingness to relocate abroad if required.

Other graduate schemes which have a more community focus include Police Now, NHS Graduates, CharityWorks and the National Graduate Development Programme (The NGDP) for local government

Marketing and communications graduate schemes or graduate internships exist in organisations from banks to law firms, manufacturers and energy providers. These could provide excellent platforms to gain experience before continuing a career in communications or moving to publishing or journalism.

Most commercial graduate schemes begin recruitment in the autumn term, nearly a year before the job starts. There are usually multiple application stages including psychometric tests and assessment centres. Note deadlines well in advance and allow time to work on applications (see other handouts in the Careers & Enterprise Centre for help)

Make the most of work experience opportunities:

1. Discuss your expectations with the employer at the start, so you have the same understanding of what the experience will involve.
2. Always be polite, motivated and interested. Work experience can sometimes involve boring tasks, but being flexible, helpful and willing to get involved will make a good impression and maximise your chances of getting further opportunities.
3. Be inquisitive and learn everything you can about the way the organisation works. How do they hire? What key skills are they looking for? What are the main issues affecting the organisation at the moment (e.g. Brexit)?
4. Talk to people who work at the organisation and find out what they do and how they got there. You might uncover job roles and employers that are new to you as well as pick up some helpful tips, which will help you make decisions about your options. Keeping in touch with people you meet can be a great way of finding out about future opportunities.
5. Ask for feedback at the end of the placement to identify your strengths and the skills you need to develop further.

Networking Keep in touch with anyone you meet through work experience or at events using social media and email, as you never know when they might be able to help you. Consider how you can use social media to build your digital presence and support your job search. Twitter and LinkedIn are valuable tools for following industry trends and developments, as well as for hearing about events, news and jobs.

Think about how you will introduce yourself to new contacts. Make a good impression by having an elevator pitch prepared – a quick outline of who you are, what you do and how it relates to the contact. If you meet someone interesting at an event or during work experience, follow up an initial meeting with a short email afterwards. Students have found work experience by introducing themselves to employers at events, but make sure you do this diplomatically so you don't cause offence!

Use your Twitter feed to make interesting and insightful contributions to ongoing discussions. Don't just focus on obvious self-promotion or job-seeking – the more engaging/entertaining/informative you are, the more followers you will attract and the broader your network will become. Once you've interacted with someone online it will give you an opening to talk to them in real life.

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December 2019

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