

What can I do with a major in...

Geography

Career Advisor: Joseph W. Nicholas, 540-654-1470, email: jnichola@umw.edu

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Geography is the study of the earth and its peoples, their inter-relationships and spatial variations.

Geographers describe, analyze, interpret, and predict human and biophysical patterns according to the attributes of locations, density, extent, and succession. Their collective frame of reference includes the past, present, and future. As such, geography is identified by its methods, by a set of basic concepts and theory, and by the kinds of questions that are asked about human and biophysical phenomena. The subject matter of geography may be material or non-material, objects or ideas. In short, geography is both an analyzing and synthesizing discipline. All phenomena that occupy space or that influence the character of places fall within the scope of geographic analysis.

Because geography has such a broad scope, individual geographers tend to emphasize different topical or problem areas--some specialize in biophysical geography by studying such patterns as climate, vegetation, soils, and landforms, while others focus on patterns produced by human activities and characteristics. For example, urban, economic, and political geographers investigate such problems as the way land values and transportation shape urban or regional land uses, trade and marketing, how cities expand and interact with their surrounding region, factors that influence the settlement patterns of minorities, the structure of health care delivery systems, and school redistricting. Cultural and resource geographers address problems such as the spread of culture and technology, human mobility and migration, perception of environment, the way religious systems and institutions organize space and modify their environments, resource evaluation and management by different societies, and human adjustment to natural and man-made hazards.

Growing numbers of geographers are also projecting the techniques of spatial analysis ahead in time, assisting in the planning of cities and regions which will constitute the geography and geographic problems of the future, and directing the commercial activities of firms, especially international corporations, which rely on regional and worldwide markets and resource inventories.

A bachelor's degree is usually sufficient for entry-level positions in cartography, GIS, planning, high school teaching and economic development. Graduate study is generally required for professional research and administrative positions in government, industry, research and consulting firms.

The job titles and hiring institutions that follow are meant to give you an idea of the careers available to geography majors; however many other possibilities also exist. You are encouraged to explore all career paths that interest you.

POTENTIAL JOB TITLES

Aerial photo interpreter	Land developer	Remote sensing analyst
Cartographer	Landscape architect	Site researcher
College/high school teacher	Location analyst	Surveyor
Economic development coordinator	Map analyst	Systems analyst
Environmental planner	Map curator	Transportation planner
Fish & game warden	Map editor	Urban/regional planner
GIS technician/analyst	Meteorologist	Zoning investigator
Geospatial analyst	Planner	
Industrial planner	Project manager	
	Public utilities specialist	

REPRESENTATIVE HIRING INSTITUTIONS

Engineering & architectural firms	Healthcare planning consultants
Central Intelligence Agency	Manufacturing firms
Defense Intelligence Agency	Non-governmental organizations
Hydrographic Center	Parks
Nat'l. Imagery and Mapping Agency	Real estate companies
Nat'l. Oceanographic/Atmospheric Admin.	Regional, county & city planning offices
National Park Service	State and federal offices
U.S. Geological Survey	Textbook and map publishers

WHERE DO UMW GEOGRAPHY MAJORS GO?

EMPLOYERS/INTERNSHIP SITES

- Island Institute (Maine)
- Peace Corps
- American Immigration Lawyers Association
- Library of Congress, Geography & Map Division
- Marstel-Day LLC
- Climate Institute
- US Geological Survey
- First Nations Development Institute
- Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission
- Amnesty International USA

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

- Rutgers University, Master of Science in Environmental Geography
- Towson University, Master's degree in Geography and Environmental planning
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Master of Urban and Regional Planning

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

1. American Geographical Society: www.amergeog.org
2. American Planning Association: www.planning.org
3. Association of American Geographers: www.aag.org
4. Natl. Council for Geographic Education: www.ncge.org
5. Nat'l. Recreation & Park Association: www.nrpa.org
6. Urban Land Institute: www.uli.org

**The Office of Career Services also maintains a resource library with a variety of books and other printed material where students can access additional information about their major or field of interest. Visit us in Lee Hall, Room 308 to learn more.*