

Options with Religious Studies and Theology

Your skills

Religious studies/theology students explore the beliefs, practices and doctrines of people around the world. The course involves gaining specific subject knowledge and skills related to religious studies and theology as well as transferable skills, which are highly valued by employers.

These include:

- ability to research, analyse, interpret and synthesise different types of information;
- analytical ability and the capacity to formulate questions and solve problems;
- organisational and time management skills;
- presentation skills;
- IT skills - including word-processing, accessing information from electronic sources and using the web;
- teamwork and communication skills gained through tutorials and group work;
- writing skills, including accurate referencing and clarity of expression;
- ability to analyse texts and understand the meaning of complex written documents;
- empathy and imaginative insight while being tolerant to diverse positions;
- ability to work methodically and accurately;
- independence of mind and initiative.

If you took language modules, you may also be able to read texts in a different language.

Additionally, it is important to remember the skills, knowledge and experience acquired through work experience or extracurricular activities. Work experience - paid or unpaid - demonstrates that you have initiative and can apply the skills learned in your course to the workplace. It also shows that you're motivated, hard working and reliable. Activities like sport or being on a committee also prove that you can work in a team and have good communication and social skills.

Consider the skills developed on your course as well as through your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you really are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile. Take a look at [job application advice](#) for some useful tips.

Job options

Jobs directly related to your degree

- **Higher education lecturer** (in theology/religious studies) - teaches academic or vocational subjects to undergraduate and postgraduate students from age 18 upwards. May also undertake research activities.

- **Further education lecturer** (in theology/religious studies) - organises and teaches one or more subjects in a general or specialist college of FE, a tertiary college or a sixth form college.
- **Primary school teacher** or **secondary school teacher** (religious education) - develops work and lesson plans and teaches in line with curriculum objectives.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- **Youth worker** - promotes the personal, educational and social development of young people aged between 13 and 19, although in some cases this may be extended to those aged 11 to 13 and 19 to 25.
- **Advice worker** - provides free, impartial and confidential advice to clients on a wide range of issues. Some advice workers offer general guidance in several areas, such as debt, housing, employment, welfare and education, while others specialise in a particular area.
- **Social worker** - works with people who have been socially excluded or who are experiencing crisis. Provides support to enable service users to help themselves and maintains professional relationships with service users, acting as guide, advocate or critical friend.
- **Charity officer** - involves working for a charitable organisation. The role may involve project management, business development, finance, marketing, PR or a combination of tasks.
- **Newspaper journalist** - researches and writes stories for publication in local, regional and national press.
- **Civil Service administrator** - contributes to the delivery of services of the different departments that make up the Civil Service, through duties such as research, compiling reports, working on policy documents.
- **Archivist** - acquires, manages and maintains documents and other materials that have historical importance for individuals, organisations and nations.
- **Broadcast journalist** - responsible for investigating, gathering and reporting on news and current affairs. Presents this information in a fair, balanced and accurate way through news bulletins, documentaries and other factual programmes for radio, television and online broadcast.
- **Editorial assistant** - provides assistance in all stages of the publication of books, journals, magazines and a broad range of publicity materials. Supports senior editorial staff with the administration of the commissioning, planning and production.

Other options

Although some graduates go on to work in religious ministry, there is a wide range of other career options available to theology and religious studies graduates. Research the career area you are interested in thoroughly. Some careers, for example, teaching or journalism, will require further vocational or professional training. For careers in areas such as marketing or human resources, it may be useful to take a postgraduate course to develop specific skills and knowledge.

It is important to get relevant work experience to boost your employability prospects. Talk to professionals in the field you are interested in and consider work placements, paid evening/weekend work, voluntary work or work shadowing. This experience shows employers that you are committed and also helps you decide on whether a particular career is right for you.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Remember that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or login/register with My Prospects to find out [what jobs would suit you](#), a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

Explore [types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Religious studies/theology graduates develop specialist knowledge and a wide range of transferable skills. These are useful for careers in teaching, law, management, administration, publishing, broadcasting and government jobs (local and national), as well as social, youth, community and advice work.

A 2010 HESA survey of 2009 graduates indicates that six months after graduation, 45% of religious studies graduates were in full or part-time employment. Of these, around 17% were in associate professional and technical occupations, 12% were pursuing work in education, around 9% were commercial, industrial and public sector managers and 6% were social and welfare professionals. The remainder entered a wide variety of other professions and occupations. Other graduates opted instead for postgraduate study or to pursue voluntary work.

Where are the jobs?

Religious studies/theology graduates work in a variety of different roles in every employment sector. Schools, colleges and universities employ many in teaching positions. Public and private sector organisations such as the National Health Service, universities, financial firms, legal organisations and government agencies employ graduates in administration, financial and general management positions. Additionally, religious studies/theology students may find opportunities in advertising, human resources (HR), marketing and sales. Libraries, charities, television companies and publishing houses also employ religious studies/theology graduates in different roles.

For an insight into potential employment areas see:

- [education](#) - includes work in schools, further education and higher education;

- [social care](#) - includes opportunities through the government and the private sector;
- [charity and development work](#) - also known as the voluntary sector.

See [industry insights](#) for further information on possibilities in other employment areas.

Statistics are collected every year to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, because the data is collected within six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [What Do Graduates Do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

Further study

A consistently high proportion of religious studies/theology graduates choose postgraduate study. A 2010 HESA survey of 2009 graduates indicates that six months after graduation, 30% of religious studies/theology graduates were pursuing further study. Some graduates enrol on teacher training courses for primary or secondary education. Some graduates want to deepen and increase their knowledge of religion/theology by taking directly related postgraduate courses. Typical subjects include contextual theology, biblical studies, and the history of religion.

Other graduates choose to broaden their skills and knowledge base by enrolling on management and business-related courses. Graduates who want to enter particular fields opt for conversion qualifications in subjects such as law or IT.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#) and [search courses and research](#) to identify your options.

Look at [funding my further study](#) for details relating to finance and the application process.

Contacts and resources

Jobs and work

- [The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills \(Ofsted\)](#)
- [Teach in Scotland](#)
- [Training and Development Agency for Schools \(TDA\)](#)

Study

- [Higher Education Academy - Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies](#)
- [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service \(UCAS\)](#)



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