



REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL



RGS Careers

Route to Studying Modern Languages 2017 – 2018



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RGS GUIDE TO MODERN LANGUAGES AND RELATED CAREERS

Many language students simply are not aware of the careers they could go into if they decided to complete a degree in Modern Languages so we have decided to put together this booklet to show you some of the exciting opportunities available for linguists.

From solicitor to retail buyer, language skills are in demand and can be used in almost any career. With a language degree you will be a highly sought-after graduate with many of the skills that employers are looking for. Having an additional language can make a huge difference when it comes to employability. For some roles, without fluency in the required language you will not even be considered. For other roles, an additional language can give you a significant advantage over other applicants, particularly if the company has international dealings or clients.

If you know you enjoy languages, but are unsure what career path you want to follow, why not embark on a language degree or a joint honours language degree now, get work experience in different areas and then decide on a career in a few years time. Employers will want you!

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A MODERN LANGUAGES DEGREE

Most courses require that you have a language A Level in order to apply for them. This means you will need an A*, A or B in your A Levels, but entry requirements vary depending on which university you choose. There are many universities which offer the opportunity to study a language from scratch or **Ab-Initio** alongside your other language.

It is also important to consider studying languages as part of a **joint degree** as languages lend themselves very well to being studied alongside other subjects. They can be teamed up with a whole variety of subjects that you probably never thought possible.

Courses can differ hugely depending on where you decide to study, so it is important to do your research. That said, language courses do tend to be interesting, varied and fun. It is important to remember that you will not just be learning the language and your course could involve modules in – grammar, translation, linguistics, history, art, literature and culture.

Most language degrees last four years, the third year is spent abroad. The **Year Abroad** immerses you in the language and improves your cultural understanding, as well as being an incredible experience. You could have the opportunity to study at a foreign university, become an assistant or complete a paid placement in a company to gain work experience.

SKILLS YOU WILL HAVE GAINED

- ◆ Reading, writing and speaking foreign languages
- ◆ Gathering, assessing and interpreting information
- ◆ Leading and participating in discussions and groups
- ◆ Conveying meaning precisely and attention to detail
- ◆ Cultural awareness
- ◆ Presentation
- ◆ Responding to others – from discussions in oral classes
- ◆ Boost in personal confidence and independence
- ◆ Listening to other people

LINGUISTICS

Studying a **linguistics degrees** means that you will learn about language through a wide range of diverse disciplines, in an attempt to understand how language works.

You may call upon humanities disciplines such as modern languages to analyse differences and relations between related and unrelated languages, history to map out the evolution of language over time, or philosophy to get to grips with the concepts of meaning. Social sciences also come into play, with subjects like psychology and sociology exploring how we actually put language to its main use of interacting with each other.

Entry requirements for linguistics degrees vary, but for leading universities in the UK you may be expected to have a minimum of two As at A Level, with an A in English (literature or language or both). Good grades in related topics are also looked favourably upon. Examples of related topics include other modern languages (for instance French, Spanish, German or other), sociology, psychology, history, mathematics and philosophy.

TOP 10 LANGUAGE COURSES - UNIVERSITY ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

NB: The top 10 Universities for Languages do vary depending on which languages you decide to study.

Cambridge: A Level: A*,AA

Required by all Colleges: A Level in at least one of the languages you want to study

Whilst it's always helpful to be able to demonstrate linguistic aptitude, many combinations of A Level subjects provide a strong basis for linguists.

It's also helpful to be able to demonstrate critical engagement with the literature and culture of the societies where the languages you want to study are spoken. This may emerge from curricular studies in history, media, literature or the society of the country/countries; or it may come from extra-curricular study. An entrance test is required

Oxford: A Level: AAA

Candidates would usually be expected to have the language to A Level Beginners' courses are available for Italian and Portuguese.

All candidates must also take the Modern Languages Admissions Tests (MLAT) as part of their application.

Durham: A Level: AAA (normally)

Grade A at A Level or equivalent in a modern foreign language is required to study one or more modern languages at an advanced level. A Level or equivalent in French or German is required to study French or German, but A Level or equivalent in any modern language is accepted for Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

Southampton: A Level: AAB

Queen's Belfast: A Level: ABB

Surrey: A Level: AAB

Warick: A Level: ABB

Leicester: A Level: ABB

St. Andrews: A Level: AAB

NB. If you choose to take a year abroad this is a 5 year course.

Leeds: A Level: ABB

CAREERS DIRECTLY RELATED TO A LANGUAGE DEGREE

TRANSLATING

These are highly skilled linguists specialising in the written word. As a translator you will normally only be required to translate into your mother tongue. Translation work tends to be commercial, legal, scientific or technical and accuracy is imperative. You may also go into literary, tourism or film translation where nuances and style are more important.

In order to meet the requirements to start a Translation postgraduate course you will need good A Levels including A*, A or B in your language. You will likely require a First Class degree in Languages. You will then have to sit examinations from professional organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Linguists (IOL) or the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) or the Translators Association of the Society of Authors (for literary work).

Translators need to be able to write impeccably in their mother tongue. They also need to be inquisitive and enjoy researching commercial and technical issues. You should master at least one foreign language and have good understanding of that country's culture. Work tends to be carried out individually and is often freelance.

Most international organisations require translators. The European Commission and United Nations are the best paying employers of senior translators.

INTERPRETING

These are highly skilled linguists specialising in the spoken word. You could be involved in simultaneous or consecutive interpreting. Once again you will normally only be required to translate into your mother tongue.

Simultaneous translators tend to work in soundproof booths, listening through headphones and relaying an instant translation into a microphone. With consecutive interpreting, the speaker will pause allowing you to translate what has been said.

In order to meet the requirements to start an Interpreting undergraduate

course you will need good A Levels including A*, A or B in your language. To go in at postgraduate level you require a First Class / 2:1 degree and must be able to demonstrate significant linguistic and cultural awareness. As with Translation, you will then have to sit examinations from professional organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Linguists (IOL) or the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI).

Communication is key and therefore you must be confident and articulate. A readiness to keep up to date with technical advancements, a good memory and being able to concentrate for long periods is also important.

RELATED CAREERS

The obvious careers for languages students and graduates are as interpreters and translators. Careers in the diplomatic service and telecommunications also often require an aptitude for languages.

Language students' interest in their degree subject often goes beyond a simple desire to understand the language and includes a passion for foreign cultures as well. This could be a great advantage in the business world. Many blue-chip multinational recruiters want employees who have a global outlook and are sensitive to cultural differences.

Many linguists, with additional training, elect to move into the following areas, so you may wish to consider these too:

- ◆ Accounting
- ◆ Bilingual secretary
- ◆ Business
- ◆ Distribution or logistics management
- ◆ Human resources
- ◆ Interpreting
- ◆ Journalism
- ◆ Law
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Public relations
- ◆ Publishing
- ◆ Politics
- ◆ Teaching
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ Translation

CASE STUDIES: What are language graduates doing?

Luke

“After reading French with Italian and spending most of the Year Abroad in Lecce, I went and taught English at a French university - *Université de Franche-Comté* for a year. After that I went into **journalism** for a few years. I now work for a company that does **petrochemical price reports**, so I spend time chatting on the phone in French and Italian and finding out how much people are paying for their petrochemicals and what's impacting the markets, which is much more fun than it sounds! In my previous job my company sent me to Rio for three months to learn Portuguese as I already knew about language learning”.

Rebecca

“I completed a degree in French, Spanish and Italian. During my Year Abroad I worked in **Disneyland Paris** – which was great fun. Following on from my degree I worked on a **Place in the Sun** for Channel 4, using my language skills to set up shoots in France, Spain and Italy. This then led to other jobs e.g. making documentaries for the **History Channel, National Geographic, BBC Panorama** and working with celebs such as Sir Trevor McDonald, James May and Gok Wan!”

Isabella

“Studying languages helped me become a **wine taster** - travelling around Europe sampling blends and coming up with brands. I have also devised a language-learning TV show for children, which led to work at **CBBC**”.

Nicholas

“I completed a degree in Economics (with French in my first two years). I then got a training contract from a London **Law Firm** and was sponsored to complete a conversion course. I am now a **solicitor** specialising in property law and regularly use my language skills. During my training I was posted abroad for six months”.

Lucy

“I studied French, Spanish and Italian at university. The year abroad was an amazing experience and gave me the opportunity to explore a few different career paths. I worked in an **international Law firm** in Paris for six months and then worked in Milan for four months at a **publishing house**. Following on from my degree I completed a TEFL (teaching English to foreigners' course) where I discovered a love for teaching, a career I have been following ever since”.

Jen

“I worked at the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg for a while and as one of very few native English speakers with a law degree and fluent French and German, worked on a number of projects advising member state governments on human rights issues, for example the constitutional courts of Croatia and Hungary on the protection and furtherance of the constitutional rights of minorities. Most work was evenly balanced between French and German and there was definite extra kudos being a native English legal/linguistic expert. It led to me presenting at symposiums in Italy about minority rights and I ended up doing a Masters in German at the University of Münster, Germany, about **international law** and human rights with a focus on Germany's protection of minority rights. This involved me doing most of an undergraduate law degree in German together with a dissertation of my choice, also in German. At the same time, as a native speaking law/languages graduate, I was invited to teach some modules of English law at the University too, so I can say I have also worked as a law lecturer. As a result of that I was invited to work in Italy as a researcher at a human rights institute which I did for a while (main languages French, German and English but I learned Italian there too) before coming back to the UK to work as a **solicitor**. I would certainly recommend teaming languages with law as it opens so many doors and opportunities”.

Will

“I studied French and Spanish at University. After which I went to **teach** English in China for a year. Then I spent three awesome years working for **Dragoman** (www.dragoman.com) around the world. I've been at **Jaguar Land Rover** as a buyer for 2 years now. If I had my time again I would choose a different degree, maybe engineering with languages and a year abroad”.

Stephanie

“My reason for choosing languages was two-fold. Firstly I loved languages and secondly I felt it would give me a range of transferable skills in addition to competency in languages, making it a good one for my future career path - since at the time I had no idea what that would be! This has proved correct as while I rarely use my languages at work beyond social use, I certainly apply the softer skills of an arts degree - writing, presenting, etc - every day. I work as a **senior marketing and business development manager** for a

global engineering consultancy in London, so these skills are essential. Would I have done a languages degree if I had my time again? I think so - it's always been a help not a hindrance, but perhaps I would have done it in partnership with something else. I would definitely recommend a course with a year abroad to anyone - in many ways it was the making of me and set me up for real life!"

Laura

"I can honestly say that my languages degree was essential to my current career, and quite simply without my languages degree I would not have got the jobs I did. I started working in the **Maserati** press office in the UK (they needed an Italian speaker) and then got relocated to Turin to **CNH Industrial** – the fourth largest capital goods company in the world, and then part of the Fiat Group to work in **Internal Communications** – they needed a mother tongue English (company language is English) who spoke fluent Italian. Then I moved into commercial training for **New Holland Agriculture** (put simply teaching salesmen to sell tractors – I was responsible for sub 100hp tractors and engine technology – both of which I knew nothing about – the learning curve was steep!). I then got relocated back to the UK and I am currently the Global Corporate Communications Manager for CNH Industrial – the global holding for 12 agriculture, commercial vehicles, construction and powertrain brands. I look after communications for our senior executives. I now **travel** extensively, attend lots of interesting press and company events, and this job would simply not be possible without the practical language skills, cultural mediation and skills acquired through an arts degree".

WHAT OLD REIGATIONS STUDYING LANGUAGES HAVE TO SAY

Rhys Appleyard left RGS in 2013. He is studying an IMML BSc (International Management and Modern Languages [French]) at the University of Bath. He kindly answered some questions for us:

Course Synopsis

There are Management modules in English, French modules in French (naturally), and modules which combine both, which are business modules taught in French.

What attracted you to the course?

The idea of either studying or working abroad whilst becoming bilingual was a massive factor. In addition to the fact that I have the opportunity to improve my CV and knowledge of business at the same time. Bath is also ranked in the top 10 universities, especially in regards to student satisfaction.

What have you covered?

There are many aspects of the course, as Management is a broad topic, as is French, so I have covered many things, from accounting, to European law, to French grammar, to marketing, to operations management. The list could go on.

What do you enjoy?

I very much enjoy the marketing side of the course, as well as European law, which is taught in French.

What do you not enjoy?

I did not enjoy the accounting side of the course as it was taught by a very dull and unengaging lecturer, but that is no longer a compulsory module, so that has been dropped thankfully.

What A-levels are needed?

AAB for French, with an A in French, although Bath has still accepted people with a B in French with consideration given to the rest of their application.

What other skills are needed?

Organisational skills, commitment to mastering the language (lecturers don't stray from speaking French at all in the French modules), motivation to work, good interpersonal skills and confidence (a must for the year abroad; to speak to French natives and make French friends requires self-confidence and a desire to branch out).

What are your year abroad plans?

I am currently on my year abroad in Paris, coming towards the end of my stay. I will have worked a total of 13 months abroad by the end, having spent 6 months at TBWA followed by 7 months at Thales.

What careers are you looking at?

Marketing is looking most likely, or perhaps trading

Any further advice?

For those wanting to study French, don't be disheartened if you don't understand every little nuance of the language after 2 years of studying at university. The year abroad is by far the best way to learn the language if you are willing to make extra effort to speak in French. In Paris especially, it can be easy to fall into a trap of speaking English all the time as most people here speak great English, so it is necessary that you almost force your French on others to be able to learn the language to the level you really want.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL MODERN LANGUAGES APPLICATION AND ADVICE FROM RGS

1). You have been studying languages for several years, so it is crucial that you show the admissions department that you are really interested in this subject. Having a general understanding of the culture, literature and history of the country (much of which will have been developed through the A Level course) is essential. That said, you should also do some independent research and develop your understanding of areas that really interest you.

2). Do work experience. It does not have to involve languages, although this is advantageous, but it will show you as a committed individual. Reflect upon this work experience in your personal statement, and make sure that you refer to anything specific that you achieved while on work experience. Completing work experience abroad is also highly recommended (through Halsbury: <http://www.workexperienceabroad.co.uk/>) and the Modern Languages department can advise you on this.

3). Make sure that you have been on at least one course. There are several free one day Language courses at London Universities: <http://www.london.ac.uk/tasters>. Be aware that these will book up fast. Students should seek permission from Mr Jones if they need to miss a day of school. Finally, the Careers Department put any information about any courses that we hear about on the 'Taster Course' link on: www.rgsinfo.net

4). Talk to any Linguists that you know. Find out what they enjoy about the job, and what they consider the main challenges to be.

5). Linguists need to be good communicators. Try to provide evidence of your effective communication, such as feedback received or an outcome that

resulted from your communication.

6). Evidence of teamwork is also very important. Examples must be given and it is a good idea to stress what effect your contribution to the team had. Examples to support these areas could come from sport, Drama, Music, Duke of Edinburgh, lessons or from anything else that you can think of.

7). Most admissions tutors want to see that you are well-rounded, so do refer to extra-curricular activities, but make sure that you don't just give a list. State what you have learnt from them.

8). Research the web-sites of the individual universities that you are applying to, to see what they are looking for in an applicant. By all means ring up admissions tutors to find out what they are looking for.

9). If you plan to take a Gap Year, this is no problem. Indeed some universities are very encouraging of this, but do try and gain work experience whilst on a gap year and visit the countries that speak the language you will be studying.

WHAT IS RGS DOING TO HELP?

The Modern Languages Department is your first port of call, so do contact them or the Careers Department with any concerns about Modern Language applications.

Through *Network Reigatian* we can put you in touch with former students, who are studying Languages, so that you can find out from them first-hand about their course. Contact Mr Buzzacott for further information on this.

In the summer term we put on UCAS Days to help students to prepare their UCAS applications. As part of this we will invite some former students in to take your questions about university life.

We are gathering a database of work experience offers, so we will help with placements if we can. Contact Mr Buzzacott about this.

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.ucas.ac.uk for details on all courses and links to individual university web-sites

www.unistats.com to help you to compare courses based on data



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