

HISTORY CAREER SNAPSHOT

Study Opportunities

Considering studying History at JCU?
Then check out [History - JCU Australia](#)

Clarify your study goals

Prepare yourself for the new world of work by exploring the careers that match your skills and interests.

[The Good Careers Guide](#)

Graduate Opportunities

Having a career in history is not just about rooting around in dusty archives or becoming a museum curator (although a popular choice and a noteworthy career!).

There are a number of specialisations, for example: art historian, cultural historian, economic historian, geographical historian, history teacher in secondary schools, and academic historian in tertiary research and/or education.

Historians assemble historical data by consulting sources of information such as historical indexes and catalogues, archives, court records, diaries, newspaper files and other materials. They organise, authenticate, evaluate and interpret historical, political, sociological, anthropological and linguistic data, as well as undertake historical and cultural research into human activity, and prepare and present research findings. Historians formulate archives and library policies and express opinions on such issues as public policy.

The [Professional Historians Australia](#) say that the practice of history is a professional skill: it requires training and experience in critically assessing the evidence and events of the past and placing them into context.

A career in history may offer opportunities to be employed in the public service or private organisations, or as contractors or consultants.

Opportunities for short, medium and long-term contracts and consultancies arise in government bodies, museums, and archives, in heritage practice and native title.

Students with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in History are acknowledged for their general research and analysis skills. They can be employed in organisations that may not be an obvious choice to a history graduate.

Some examples of common career pathways include:

- Information management in archives, museums, libraries
- Curating/Public Programs in museums
- Research in universities, research institutes, cultural institutions, consulting firms, tourism
- Policy advising in the public service, non-government (NGOs) or non-profit, organisations, special interest organisations
- Intelligence work in the public service
- Teaching/educating in secondary schools, universities, cultural institutions
- Journalism and communications in media organisations, corporate in-house communications, consulting firms
- International relations or diplomacy in the public service and international NGOs
- International development and humanitarian work in the public service (AusAid), international NGOs
- Indigenous history in Land Councils

Retrieved from [The University of Melbourne, Careers in History](#), November 2021.

Please note, postgraduate or additional study may be required for some positions.

Further Study Options

Honours

An Honours year is available to high-achieving BA History major students. It consists of extra study and the development of a personal research project and thesis.

An Honours degree enables you to explore a topic in greater depth and demonstrates to employers, academic achievement and advanced research and writing skills.

Visit the [Bachelor of Arts handbook](#) for eligibility information.

Postgraduate

Graduates interested in a career in research and/or academia generally undertake an Honours year in the field of study in which the graduate has majored.

This is typically followed by further graduate research study, either Masters or PhD. Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs) comprise of a program of supervised original research in a chosen discipline.

Completing a JCU HDR will give you an internationally recognised research qualification and advanced transferable skills enabling you to contribute to original knowledge in your field of research.

Visit research.jcu.edu.au/portfolio/find-an-advisor for information on research interests of JCU staff and HDR advisors.

Employment Data

The [James Cook University LinkedIn page](#) provides detailed information on current and past employers and positions held by JCU BA History graduates.

The main employers listed by JCU History alumni are:

- James Cook University
- Queensland Department of Education
- The University of Queensland
- NSW Dept of Planning and Housing
- Charles Sturt University

The main areas JCU History alumni are working in are:

- Education
- Research
- Arts and Design
- Community and Social Services

Retrieved from [JCU Alumni LinkedIn](#), January 2024.

Employer Expectations

Researching job vacancy listings will give you an understanding of the range of employment opportunities for Arts graduates with a major in History. Vacancy listings will also increase your awareness of employer expectations.

It is important you work towards gaining the skills, attributes, knowledge and experience you identify as expected by employers, to ensure you are competitive when entering the graduate labour market.

Professional Associations

Students are encouraged to investigate Professional Associations relevant to the discipline of History and to consider student memberships.

Membership of a professional organisation is a clear signal to employers about commitment to a students' area of interest and professional development.

The benefits of membership include access to industry news, professional development, networking, and job vacancies.

The following Professional Associations are worth investigating:

- [The Australian Historical Association](#)
- [Professional Historians Australia](#)
- [World History Association](#)

Work Experience

An industry placement is an option in the final year, SP2 core subject, [BA3000: Arts Edge](#). Industry placements are designed to offer students practical experience to enhance their knowledge and skills, gain exposure to the breadth of services offered by the employer and develop professional networks.

Gaining career relevant experience whilst studying can improve your job prospects and confidence.

To gain a competitive edge, Bachelor of Arts students may seek to undertake additional internships, cadetships, vacation work and other forms of work experience during their studies. Opportunities are advertised on employer websites and social media sites, online job boards and graduate directories. [Prosple](#), [Queensland Government](#), or Google search for more opportunities.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to form professional networks, develop work skills and stand out from the crowd. Many employers value evidence of volunteer work.

Volunteering enables students to experience different work environments plus demonstrate their values and the causes they care about. Students are recommended to consider:

- Volunteering for opportunities presented through their degree
- Becoming a JCU Student Mentor
- Becoming involved in community organisations, particularly in areas related to history.

Opportunities are advertised through:

- [Cairns Museum and Historical Society](#)
- [Museum of Tropical Queensland](#)
- [Townsville Museum and Historical Society](#)
- [Cairns Art Gallery](#)
- [Townsville Community Directory](#)
- [Cairns Community Directory](#)

Job Opportunities

For job opportunities check:

- [Queensland Government Graduate Portal](#)
- [Australian Government Graduate Portal](#)
- [JCU CareerHub](#)
- [Seek](#)
- [LinkedIn Jobs](#)
- [Queensland Government Jobs](#)

Graduate Programs

While the majority of graduates will find employment with small or medium size employers (SMEs), a number of BA graduates enter **Graduate Programs** offered by large organisations and government departments.

Graduate programs are **paid structured professional development positions** offered to recent graduates. Successful applicants are provided on the job training, mentoring and professional development within the organization.

Many larger organisations will run several different graduate programs in different parts of their business. It's worth keeping an open mind; the core business of an organisation may not appear to have relevance to a history major, however they may highly value skills you have gained within your studies such as research/analysis.

Organisations generally recruit students through **their final year of study** for commencement of employment in the following year. Students must check graduate program portals from the beginning of final year to ensure they do not miss out.

Graduate programs are advertised through employers' websites and social media channels (e.g. the [Australian](#), [Queensland](#) and other state government graduate portals). Also, through the graduate recruitment sites: [Prosple](#) and [GradConnection](#).

JCU Careers Resources

As a student, consider accessing JCU Careers resources and be job ready by developing your Employability skills.

[Careers and Employability - JCU Australia](#)

Build your employability skills and fine tune your Application Skills

- Resumes
- Application Documents
- Interviews
- LinkedIn

For further ideas access [Career Ready Plan](#)

