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Jobs using Languages

“What roles can I do that use my languages?”

The answer is unsatisfyingly vague. You can do a huge range of roles from retail buyer, app developer or intelligence officer to lawyer, orchestral tour manager or international development field worker. Work out what career you would like to do first based on your skills and interests and then find a working context that uses your languages.

This booklet gives an overview of the range of opportunities that use languages in careers. If you would like to know more about any of these career areas they are covered in more depth at:

www.careers.cam.ac.uk/sectors/languages

Search in Vacancies & Opportunities using your language as the search term to see the huge range of opportunities using languages. Look in the archive for more inspiration.

For the majority of roles, language skills alone won’t get you the job. Language skills in addition to a good set of complementary skills may well give you the edge and secure the job.

‘Language skills’, ‘fluency’, ‘working knowledge’ and other terms relating to language abilities are subjective and difficult to define precisely. Most vacancies do not require formal academic qualifications in a language. You do need to be able to demonstrate your proficiency (possibly at interview). Some roles require strictly oral language skills, while for others written capabilities may be needed. Research the specific language requirements on a job by job basis.
Careers Service Language Resources

- **Podcasts** - recordings of previous Careers using Languages Careers Panel events. Speakers from a broad spectrum of careers all of whom use their languages.  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/podcasts/podcastsIndex.asp

- **Information on language careers** including destinations of graduates.  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/sectors/languages/

- **GradLink** - our database of Cambridge graduates - contact them about their jobs and experiences including their use of languages in their role. Search using degree subject or your language as a keyword.  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/gradlink/

- **Vacancies & Opportunities** - search using your language as a keyword. All roles are archived for two years as a research and inspiration, not just for job hunting.  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/CamCareers/Vacancies.aspx

- **GoinGlobal** - accessible via the Careers Service website (the Careers Service holds the subscription). Includes advice on CV’s for different countries, job searching, and lists vacancies for you to use.  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/library/GoingGlobal.asp

- **Europe Language Jobs** - lists jobs all over Europe. Sign up for free.  
  www.europelanguagejobs.com/

*At the Careers Service*
There are many files in the Careers Service Library that will assist you in seeking work using languages:

- Overseas Files
- Books on work abroad and on individual countries
- Information on Translation & Interpreting
- Feedback on job and vacation work from students and graduates

*Websites/Email lists*

- Jobs and Working Abroad, Prospects  
  www.prospects.ac.uk (‘Jobs’ & ‘Working Abroad’)

- Careers A-Z Languages Pages  
  www.careers.cam.ac.uk/sectors/languages

- Europe Language Jobs  
  www.europelanguagejobs.com

- TARGETjobs  
  www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/working-abroad

- CamCareers emails – choose to get emails about careers areas of interest to you. Sign up at www.careers.cam.ac.uk/CamCareers/Emails.aspx
Advertising and Marketing Communications

“Knowledge of languages would be an advantage” is a phrase often seen on job specifications for roles in the communications industry.

The international reach of clients or target markets means that not only the language but also an understanding of different cultures can be a real advantage in Advertising and Marketing Communications.

The spectrum of opportunity in this sector is vast from in house brand manager to advertising agencies, market research, PR, Marketing Consultancies and more. Each will have its own need (or not) for languages so search in Vacancies & Opportunities, ticking the Communications search field and keyword language for ideas and inspiration.

The Chunichi Shimbun Group – Newspaper - Japan
www.chunichi.co.jp/

A highly regarded newsgroup, publishing four newspapers with a combined daily readership of over four-million. Their network covers the world, providing political, economic and cultural in-sight from 13 international bureaus.

Job title: Assistant Correspondent
Location: London
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: Desirable - French, German, Dutch

Numberley – Interactive marketing and advertising
www.numberly.com

Providing a multi-platform, multi-device, multi-format (video, display) solution to meet business goals.

Job title: Assistant in Digital Marketing
Location: Dubai
Degree: Any discipline, Marketing experience an advantage
Languages: Arabic a plus
Business and Corporate Services

Few posts in the commercial sector are advertised with a foreign language as an essential requirement, but it will often be regarded as an asset. In dealings with overseas clients, although English is often the language of business meetings, it is increasingly expected that communications will be in the clients language.

Research organisations thoroughly in advance to find out how much they value languages and also how much you will use them as this varies widely. Once in an organisation, exploit your languages and put yourself forward for opportunities to use them where ever possible.

Purchasing and Buying
Many companies source raw materials, components and equipment globally, contacting suppliers to obtain quotations, negotiate prices, draft contracts etc.

William Morris London Ltd – Online retailer
www.williammorris.co.uk
A globally recognised brand distributing its optical frames throughout the world. Glasses are no longer a necessity but are entrenched as a fashion accessory with as much importance for choice in fashion trends.

Job title: Export Executive
Location: Hatfield Heath
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: preferably Italian, Spanish and French

Law
Larger law firms, particularly those in the City, are international with offices throughout the world. Staff with language skills are better placed to be deal with international cases or get overseas postings.

Human Rights Watch – Human Rights NGO
www.hrw.org
An international human rights monitoring and advocacy organization

Job title: Associate - Children’s Rights Division
Location: London or Berlin
Degree: Human rights, international relations, social sciences
Languages: Fluency in other languages (particularly French, Spanish, or Arabic) is highly desirable
Patents and Trademarks
As well as a technical, scientific or engineering background it can be useful to have languages at a conversational level. The European Patent Office requires a good knowledge of at least two official EU languages (English, French, German).

Hoffmann Eitle – Patent and trade mark attorneys
www.hoffmann-eitle.com
A large patent attorney practice.

Job title: Trainee Patent Attorney  
Location: London  
Languages: German and/or French

Accountancy
Large accountancy firms audit and advise international clients sometimes requiring the work to take place in foreign locations and in foreign languages. In the public sector, the National Audit Office (www.nao.gov.uk) is responsible for the audit of the Diplomatic Service including embassies and high commissions abroad.

KPMG – Accountants and business advice
www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/graduates
A leading provider of professional services in the UK, including audit, tax and advisory specialisms

Job title: Early Offer Opportunity - China Graduate Scheme 2019  
Location: China  
Degree: Any discipline  
Languages: Chinese

Insurance
Many larger insurance companies have overseas departments. Overseas postings once qualified are a realistic ambition. Larger firms of insurance brokers advise on and arrange insurance worldwide particularly in areas prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters.

AXA Investment Managers – Insurance
www.axa-im.co.uk/en/
A multi-expert asset management company within the AXA Group

Job title: Commercial Real Estate Debt Analyst - Internship. 
Location: London  
Degree: Any discipline  
Languages: French
Banking
Some major banking groups have a branch network overseas and assist trade across national boundaries. Investment banks with international interests are based mainly in Britain, Europe, the USA and Japan. Specialist departments work to invest the bank’s funds in international ventures. Language skills are very much sought after in this industry as you will deal with a range of international clients.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch – Global Investment bank
www.rothschild.com
A large Global Investment Bank.
Job title: Global Quantitative Strategies Off-cycle Analyst Program
Location: London
Degree: Quantitative discipline
Languages: A second European language or fluency in Russian, Arabic or Mandarin may also be required for some roles

Information, Heritage and Culture

Unless you are working in a specialist area of the information, heritage or culture sector where knowledge of a language is vital e.g. working on international cultural partnerships or subject specialist for modern languages in an academic library, opportunities to use your languages is likely to be limited.
There are roles that will use languages from time to time e.g. Orchestral Tour Manager or curator of international art exhibitions negotiating exchange of art works. Research each opportunity thoroughly to make sure it matches your expectations.

UNESCO – Specialized organization
www.en.unesco.org
Job title: Editorial Assistant
Location: Paris
Degree: Preferably a Master’s Degree in related subject
Languages: French is desired

Creative Artists Agency – Marketing Solutions
www.caa.com
A full service entertainment, media, and sports agency.
Job title: Sports Sales Assistant
Degree: Any relevant discipline
Languages: Mandarin
Leisure and Hospitality

Travel and Tourism
Although many visitors to the UK speak English there are still many opportunities for language speakers in managing their visits, from international websites, marketing throughout the world to liaising with them in the UK. These jobs are often seasonal but can be good ways to develop transferable skills for other roles. Staff with language skills are often in demand in transit points such as airports or ports.

The larger hotel chains may also require language skills although these would be used occasionally.

Chene Bleu – Winery and hospitality
www.chenebleu.com
Luxury wine and hospitality company based in London and Provence.

Job title: Bilingual PA
Location: London
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: Fluency in French

SpaDreams – Tour Operator
www.spadreams.com
A leading specialist tour operator in health & wellness travel.

Job title: Intern / Online Marketing
Location: Hamburg, Germany
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: Fluency in German
Media

Languages are obviously an asset should you aspire to becoming a foreign correspondent. However, there are also other roles within the media that require languages.

Media Researcher/Co-ordinator
Many films and programmes have international reach. The content, locations, logistics and feasibility have all been researched thoroughly and then negotiated before the filming starts.

Thomas Heneage Art Books – Art Bookshop
http://www.heneage.com/
The UK’s largest and one of the World’s leading art bookshops

Job title: Art Bookseller / Gallery Assitant
Location: London
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: German, Italian, French, Spanish or Chinese.

Publishing
A large proportion of books produced in the UK are exported (particularly educational books). The digital era has meant that publishing to an international market is now the norm. Working in this international field can be similar to marketing and good communication and business skills are a must. Foreign language dictionary publishers employ lexicographers.

OR Media – Documentary production company
www.ormedia.co.uk
An independent TV production company.

Job title: Production Coordinator/Researcher/Translator
Location: London
Degree: Any discipline, an aptitude for Middle Eastern history and politics.
Languages: Working knowledge of Farsi, Knowledge of Arabic is a plus.
Science, Tech and IT

If you have a Science, IT or Engineering degree then your technical experience rather than your languages will be the main attraction for any employers. However, you could be in a multicultural team working on international joint ventures or winning contracts abroad. Your languages might be useful in explaining complex detail or managing an international team. However, languages may not be on the job description as an essential criteria.

There are always exceptions and some companies, perhaps expanding to a new market in Asia for the first time, would value language expertise rather than having to rely on translators and interpreters.

ClusterTech Limited – Cloud Computing
www.clustertech.com/hk/welcome

Job title: Data Scientist
Location: Hong Kong
Degree: Computer Science, Engineering, Statistics or related discipline
Languages: Chinese

Abcam – Life Science Research
https://www.abcam.com/

Job title: Customer Service Specialist
Location: Cambridge
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: Spanish, German, and French
Translation and Interpreting

One of the first careers that comes to mind when thinking about using your languages is translation or interpreting.

A translator converts written material from one language to another (you usually translate into your native language), ensuring it is as clear and accurate as the original. Practitioners can translate legal, scientific, technical, commercial and literary texts, business reports, insurance claims, political documents as well as information for websites and films.

The majority of translators/interpreters have a postgraduate qualification in translation/interpreting and gain work freelancing via agencies. There are permanent salaried roles in organisations such as:

• **Government Communications Headquarters - [www.gchq.gov.uk](http://www.gchq.gov.uk)**
  Demand for particular languages changes year on year. It is possible to enter with one language and then train in another.

• **The Security Service (MI5) Language Unit - [www.mi5.gov.uk](http://www.mi5.gov.uk)**
  Translation in overt and secret information obtained in many languages.

• **Other UK Civil Service Departments - [www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment)**

  All the EU institutions employ translators - recruitment for particular languages tends to be tri-annual. The European Commission employs around 900 interpreters (about half of which are freelancers).

Some international organisations have in-house interpreters and translators.
Teaching

Teaching in Schools
French is still the most popular choice of language taught in UK schools followed by Spanish, German, Italian, Russian and Japanese. Some schools do offer other languages.

Specialist language colleges offer a much wider choice of languages such as Mandarin and Chinese.

Whitgift School
http://www.whitgift.co.uk/

Independent day and boarding schools for boys.

Job title: Teacher of Arabic
Location: South Croydon.
Degree: Any relevant discipline
Languages: Arabic

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
TEFL is a worldwide industry with opportunities in Britain and abroad. To teach English as a foreign language it isn’t necessary to speak another language but it can be an advantage and can increase opportunities available to you.
Transport and Distribution

Management jobs in transport and distribution companies value languages enormously. Increasingly, as less is produced entirely in the UK and more components are moved around the world in the course of production there are distribution centres in mainland Europe.

Shipping Services - The Baltic Exchange
www.balticexchange.com

Is the world centre for matching cargoes with ships. Some shipbroking firms also act as ships’ agents through their representatives abroad. They deal with local operational matters on behalf of the ship’s owners. Knowledge of multiple languages (particularly Greek, Norwegian and Japanese) is helpful although English is the language of international shipping.

British Airways plc - Airline
www.britishairways.com

An international airline company

Job title: World Cargo Graduate Programme
Degree: Any degree discipline (2:1 min)
Languages: Depends on location

ICAP - Financial markets interdealer broker
www.icap.com

ICAP is the world’s premier voice and electronic interdealer broker and provider of post trade risk and information services.

Job title: Shipping Researcher - Oil and Tanker Analyst
Location: London
Degree: Any discipline
Languages: Proficiency in Greek, Chinese, Russian or Arabic would be looked upon favourably.
Voluntary Organisations and Charities

Whilst there are many organisations pursuing charitable aims abroad across many sectors - health, education, agriculture, construction and more - a major objective is often to enable local people to take on roles in management and project development. There are opportunities for language speakers to help set up these projects, provide local training and act as links to the head office. French is the most useful language as the majority of the countries requiring such aid are French speaking. Spanish is also widely spoken.

Most permanent staff employed by voluntary organisations (as opposed to volunteers) have administrative or international experience prior to recruitment. Within the UK there are a range of charities and other NGO’s (non-governmental organisations) where languages are required, particularly those working with refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants.

Human Rights Watch – Human Rights NGO
https://www.hrw.org/

Job title: Associate
Location: Brussels
Degree: social sciences, international relations, or related studies
Languages: French are required; fluency in other European languages, particularly Italian or Polish, is highly desirable.

European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE) – Human Rights
https://www.ecre.org/

A pan-European alliance of 95 NGOs protecting and advancing the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

Job title: Refugee Advocacy Fellow
Location: Brussels, Belgium
Degree: Any discipline, a refugee background
Languages: Knowledge of other languages is a strong advantage, especially: French, German, Persian, Pashto, Dari or Arabic