What to do with a degree in ... History

If you are questioning your career options or what others like you are doing with their degree this guide is a good place to start. It will provide you with industry specific information on careers, schools, associations, labour market information, and more.

Career & Leadership Development Centre

dal.ca/cldc
Overview of Major and Job Options

Why take History?

History is about change. Studying the past reveals the continuing, fundamental changeability of our world, and of the many ways we perceive, adapt to, and often shape change. Studying the past thus lets us explore how and why things developed as they did; it also helps us see the present differently, and imagine different futures. History also reveals an exhilarating variety of social worlds—many of them radically, exotically different from our own, even as they are fully comprehensible as human. [Dalhousie History Department]

Though a degree in history can lead to employment within the field of history, it also develops a number of transferable skills that can be used across multiple jobs. These skills include:

- Research
- Written/Verbal Communication
- Critical reading
- Bibliographic skills
- Persuasive communicator
- Meeting deadlines
- Synthesizing ideas
- Organizing materials
- Numeracy skills

A history degree gives you the perfect foundation to pursue a wide range of careers. The career options available to you will likely depend on what transferable skills you have developed both inside and outside of your education and your career interests and goals. When considering where to start keep in mind any significant projects you were involved in, internships, personal strengths, past employment, and other background information that may guide you.

Though you can end up in a variety of jobs with this degree the skills you have developed may make you competitive in the following areas:

- Archivist
- Conservator
- Museum Curator
- Editor
- Event Planner
- Historical Researcher
- Curriculum Consultant
- Creative Writer
- Tour Guide
- Biographer
- Speech Writer
- Documentary Editor
- NGO Staff
- Historian
- Genealogist
- Records Manager
- Art Dealer
- Foreign Service Officer

Many history graduates seek additional education after their degree. By doing so they can better target a specific area of employment that pairs well with their degree. Whether you seek a graduate degree, undergraduate degree or certificate program additional education can open up a variety of other options. Many graduates complete MBAs after their degree as history can provide good training for professionals in business. Here are some options available to a history graduate who has completed additional training:

- Librarian
- Teacher
- Professor
- Web Developer
- Executive Director
- Lawyer
- Consultant
- Counsellor
- Accountant
- IT Manager
- Public Health Nurse
- Researcher

With the plethora of options a history graduate can go it can be hard to know where to start when looking for a career. It would be of value to try out as many different jobs, positions, and experiences to help discover what you are good at and enjoy. This will help point you in the right direction when looking for a career path.
Developing your skills, experience and network

Opportunities in Your Program

The Stokes Seminar - A weekly seminar that gathers faculty, graduate students, and senior undergraduates to highlight current research by Dalhousie historians and visiting scholars from across Europe and North America.

Study Abroad - Take a summer class in Czechoslovakia

Opportunities at School

Involvement in extra curricular activities will make you a more competitive candidate for positions in your field. It will also give you the chance to focus on any specialties you are interested in. There are many different avenues you can pursue to help you develop these experiences. Consider joining a program like DALConnects or a Dalhousie society like the ones listed below:

- Dalhousie Undergraduate History Society
- Dalhousie Arts and Social Sciences Society
- Dal Action
- Dalhousie Graduate History Society

The Dalhousie Co-curricular record (CCR) is a great way to track your extra-curricular involvement and display it for employers. Visit dal.ca/ccr to learn more.

Summer Jobs and Volunteer Work

Summer jobs and volunteer work are another great way to develop experience. They also give you the chance to develop specialties and discover what you like in a job and what you dislike. Even if your summer job doesn't directly relate to your field you can focus on building transferable skills. Check out these great resources:

Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
A program that provides post-secondary students with experience related to their field of study.

Talent Egg
This website provides postings for internships, co-ops, volunteer opportunities and entry level jobs.

Volunteer Halifax
A posting board where non-profits in Halifax post their volunteer opportunities and positions.

Fusion Halifax
A resource linking local organizations with young people.

Professional Associations & Conferences

Professional associations and conferences are a great way to meet, learn from and network with professionals in your field of interest. This is especially true for graduate students. If you would like to pursue a membership student discounts are often available.

If you are an undergraduate keep your eyes open for any undergraduate conferences around Halifax. Below is a listing of professional associations and conferences that may be worth examining.

Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society http://rns.hs.ca/
Canadian Historical Association http://www.cha-shc.ca/
Undergraduate Program

Professors in the History Department will inspire you to develop the tools to understand, analyze, and assess the discipline’s many aspects, experiences, and interpretations. Your understanding and assessment of these factors will in turn inform and shape your own arguments about history. As historians must be able to communicate such analyses and arguments clearly and convincingly, Dalhousie’s History faculty are especially committed to teaching our students the necessary skills – in both written and oral expression – to make their research results accessible, clear and persuasive.

At Dalhousie a number of informal clusters are linked by their research and teaching interests. Themes of these teaching/research clusters include: Violence and the Past, Sectarianism and Society, The Atlantic World (16th-19th c.), Visual Sources and History, Lawyers and Comptrollers, Dissent and the State, and Slaves and Slavery Institutions in Human History.

Graduate Program

Dalhousie offers both master’s and doctoral degree programs in a range of geographical and thematic areas of research. Small enough to provide individualized attention and large enough to be known internationally, the programs are characterized by a vibrant intellectual environment.

Master’s Program

Dalhousie’s master’s program is a thesis-based degree. Students take two four-month courses, a seminar on historical method, and then embark on thesis research and writing. Master’s students typically take 12 to 16 months to complete the program and produce a thesis of roughly 120 to 140 pages in length.

Doctoral Program

Our doctoral students pursue three fields of study (two major and one minor). Students complete comprehensive examinations 12 months after beginning the program, present a thesis proposal before the department, and then engage in dissertation research and writing, with the expectation of finishing at the end of their fourth year of registration. [Dalhousie History webpage]
There are many other established history programs in Canada and abroad. A great resource for examining post-secondary programs is Career Cruising. Career Cruising can be accessed through your Dalhousie MyCareer profile or by visiting the Career & Leadership Development Centre. Below are some notable history programs as identified by 2013-2014 QS world University Rankings:

**University of Toronto #19**
Location: Toronto, Ontario  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: Aboriginal Societies, Ethnicity, Fascism, Labour, Politics, Revolution, Rock 'n' Roll, Slavery, Women's studies

**York University #51-100**
Location: Toronto, Ontario  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: American History, Canadian History, European History, Aboriginal History, Religion, Slavery, War and Revolution

**University of British of Columbia #34**
Location: Vancouver, British Columbia  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: Asian History, Canadian History, European History, Latin American History, American History

**McGill University #51-100**
Location: Montreal, Quebec  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: Canadian history, British & European history, East Asian History, History of Medicine, History of Science, History of Gender and Sexuality, History of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, Global History

**Laval University #101-150**
Location: Quebec City, Quebec  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: Archeology, Archival, Ethnology and Heritage, Classical Studies, Art History, History of Science

**University of Western Ontario #101-150**
Location: London, Ontario  
BA, MA, PhD  
Subject areas: Canadian History, Modern Europe, History of Business and Commerce, Wars that Changed the World, 20th Century Popular Culture, American History
Labour Market Information

Given the broad array of directions you can take a history degree it is difficult to choose a specific sector to analyze the job outlook. So to begin it is important to first identify the sectors that history students work in. Looking at LinkedIn statistics on Dalhousie alumni it appears that most alumni end up in the following fields:

- Education
- Media and Communication
- Legal
- Research
- Community and Social Services
- Operations
- Sales
- Entrepreneurship
- Consulting
- Marketing
- Information Technology
- Administrative

Projections

The following Labour Market Information (LMI) was taken from jobbank.gc.ca. It represents the 2013-2015 projection period. For more LMI on other jobs within your field click on 'Explore Careers'. If you search by occupations or education program then click on outlook for specific LMI.

Good Outlook ★★★ (3 out of 3 stars)

The best career outlooks for individuals with a history degree are in the health sector, sales or IT. In the health sector jobs such as LPNs, RPNs, and patient service associates are given a good outlook. In the IT sector, jobs such as software tester, and systems tester are given a good outlook while network technicians and support technicians are given a fair outlook. Sales positions with a good outlook include retail salesperson, sales clerk, wholesale trade representative, and retail trade supervisors.

Fair Outlook ★★★ (2 out of 3 stars)

Jobs for history majors in Nova Scotia with a fair outlook include; archive technicians, librarians, translators, terminologists, interpreters, authors and writers. Public relations and communications jobs also share a fair outlook. Education, social services and legal fields have fair outlooks within Nova Scotia. Education related career paths include college instructors, education counsellors, education policy researchers and consultants. Career paths for Computer and Information Systems Managers also has a fair outlook in the province. For legal careers jobs include lawyers, paralegals, legal assistants, legal advisers, and barristers.

Limited Outlook ★★☆ (1 out of 3 stars)

For fields with a limited outlook within Nova Scotia jobs include: conservators, curators, journalists, editors, and technical occupations related to museums and art galleries.

Out of the possible occupations a history graduate could pursue, additional jobs with a limited outlook in Nova Scotia include: senior government managers, government program officers, and secondary school teachers.
Resources

Online

MyCareer - https://mycareer.dal.ca/
A resource for Dalhousie students to connect with jobs, employers and career related events on campus.

TalentEgg - tallentegg.ca
A great website to find internships, student jobs, and entry level positions. You can also find great advice and career guides. In addition to this, TalentEgg has challenges to help young people build transferable skills.

Tiger Society - https://tigersociety.dsu.ca/
This site lists all Dalhousie Societies and information about them. You can register to join a society through this site.

Career Beacon - careerbeacon.com
Provides job listings and corporate profiles with a strong presence in Nova Scotia and other Maritime Provinces. It can be a great resource for identifying what jobs are in your field and what skills employers are looking for.

Career Cruising - careercruising.com (log on available through MyCareer)
A comprehensive website that provides information to help you make informed choices about your career path.

Employment and Social Development Canada - National Occupational Classification
Contains occupational information and is used to find jobs that exist within Canada’s labour market.

Print

* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

Creative Careers in Museums (2008). Jan E. Burdick
* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

The Canadian Student & Grad Job Search Directory. Senor Media inc.
* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

What Color is your Parachute: A practical manual for job-hunters and career-changers (2014)
* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

How to Find a Career With Your Humanities Degree in 126 Days (2009). James Mulvey

Other

Career Counselling - Dalhousie - Student Union Building 4th Floor
This free service is a confidential and collaborative process in which you work with a career counsellor who assists you in your educational and career decision-making

Career & Leadership Development Centre - Dalhousie - Student Union Building 4th Floor
This resource centre can provide you with all the career tools and resources you need. Drop in for assistance with resumes, cover letters, interviewing and more.

DALConnects - Leadership Program - dal.ca/dalconnects
This program will connect you with leadership opportunities and workshops.
Archivist
Position: Full Time - Salary: $ 62,000-72,000 - Hours: 40

the Archivist is responsible for the conservation and cataloguing of archival materials; handling public inquiries and assisting researchers; coordinating internal and public access to archival materials, including the maintenance of related systems, indices and equipment; and assisting with volunteer administration and co-ordination.

Duties

- Care and conservation of the archival collection.
- Cataloguing and maintenance of municipal records.
- Handling public inquiries and requests for archival information.
- Conducting research for Museum and Archives publications.
- Assisting in the development and mounting of exhibits.
- Co-ordination of volunteers in the Archives.
- Assisting in the development and delivery of educational programs.
- Conducting tours.
- Share in the management and oversight of the day-to-day operations.

Qualifications & Skills

- Undergraduate degree in history or related field.
- One to three years’ archival training and experience.
- Familiarity with legislation governing copyright, Freedom of Information and public access to information.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in the care and conservation of archival materials.
- Excellent research, writing and public relation skills.
- Interpersonal skills with a team-player attitude
- Knowledge of local government and community considered an asset.
- Experience in the use of computers and office equipment.
- Criminal reference check will be required.
- Experience working with volunteers.

You may want to list a class that you developed these skills in.

May want to focus attention on any major written work you have put together inside or outside school.

Skills you will have developed throughout your education and can further develop at a summer job.

Experience can be developed through volunteer work.
For more information, comments, or questions please contact:

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