University departments vary widely in their approach to development studies. Modules during your first year could include:

- Introduction to political ideas such as liberalism and conservatism
- Introduction to economic analysis
- Colonialism and its impact on the world.

Some development studies degrees are more specialised, such as International Development with NGO management. In this course you would learn about project evaluation and the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Oxfam or Save the Children.

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**Why study development studies?**
This diverse and evolving field is an entry point for many careers including government and aid work, as development studies explores long-term solutions to some of the biggest challenges encountered in different global settings. What happens in developing nations is a major concern for policy makers worldwide, as their progress can have a global impact in terms of immigration, climate change and political unrest. Many development studies courses are flexible and allow you to mix with other departments, and there’s also the chance of work placements abroad to get first-hand experience.

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**What will I study at university?**
Around 20 departments across the UK offer a development studies degree. These include single honours degrees but the majority combine development studies with another subject such as:

- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Politics
- Environmental studies
- Economics
- International relations
- Law
- History
- Languages

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**Development studies focuses on world issues including poverty, civil war and human rights abuses.**

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**Why can foreign aid hinder developing countries? How do you solve humanitarian crises? Does gender equality exist in the Middle East?**

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“The fact is that ours is the first generation that can look disease and extreme poverty in the eye, look across the ocean to Africa, and say this, and mean it... we do not have to stand for this.”

Bono,
Musician and humanitarian
There is no set career path. Development studies graduates are employed in a range of jobs in a variety of organisations, such as:

- Civil service
- Think tanks and lobbying firms
- Conservation
- Teaching
- Government agencies
- Charities and not-for-profit organisations
- Refugee agencies
- Consulting

Top tips from employers

- Be flexible: you’ll need to change direction when development priorities shift in your areas of interest
- Get experience: do volunteer work during your degree
- Learn a language that’s in demand: this can get you a position with an international organisation.
Further resources

- The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is based at the University of Sussex. It is a global charity for international development research, teaching and communications and hosts postgraduate courses as well as producing useful resources such as policy documents. The goal of IDS is to improve human wellbeing.
  www.ids.ac.uk

- Development Studies Association (DSA) was set up to promote the advancement of knowledge on international development. They have over a thousand members including institutions from the academic and NGO sectors. Their focus includes representing members in consultations and highlighting their work for prospective students, partners and donors.
  www.devstud.org.uk

- The Centre for the Study of African Economics (CSAE) carries out economic research with a particular focus on Africa. The aim is to improve economic and social conditions in the poorest societies. CSAE is based in the Department of Economics at Oxford University and produces policy recommendations including those addressing political and economic issues.
  www.csae.ox.ac.uk

- BRAC was set up in Bangladesh in 1972 as a development organisation dedicated to alleviating economic hardship through empowering the poor. BRAC spreads antipoverty solutions to Bangladesh and ten other developing countries including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti and Afghanistan, with a focus on creating opportunities for people in these areas.
  www.brac.net

- Studying Development is an initiative set up by a small group of former London School of Economics (LSE) development students. The website provides an online directory of courses in international development aimed at prospective students or those already working in International Development. The directory is international and covers professional training, as well as university degree courses.
  www.studying-development.org

- The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK government’s fight against world poverty. It runs long-term programmes to help stop the underlying causes of poverty, responds to humanitarian emergencies and is responsible for honouring the UK’s international commitments. Other targets include achieving the Millennium Development Goals and making British aid more effective by improving transparency, openness and value for money.
  www.dfid.gov.uk

- European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) is a Europe-wide network of institutes, researchers and students of various disciplines in the field of development studies. It organises activities and offers facilities for the international exchange of knowledge and experience in the professional field. EADI runs a conference devoted to a topical issue every three years.
  www.eadi.org

- DevNetJobs advertises jobs in the international development sector including aid agencies, NGOs, research institutes and management consultancies.
  www.devnetjobs.org