

For YPs,
by YPs

The Low Oil Price Survival Guide...

For the Eager & Unemployed

How to be proactive while searching
for a job and avoid unnecessary time
gaps on CVs.

How to deal with the stress of
expectations unfilled.

**A practical (and light-hearted) guide
to remaining positive!**

PES GB
Young Professionals





The oil price has taken a tumble **DIVED OFF A CLIFF** leaving many Young Professionals worried about redundancy, as many, including graduates, are finding themselves without employment. After investing vast amounts of time, effort and money in academic (20+ years!!) and professional development, it is easy to lose sight of career goals if things have not gone to plan...

This guide is designed to give advice and tips on what you can do in the meantime, and at the very least we hope that this guide will give you a laugh!! ☺

You can't stop the waves but you can learn to surf

Jon Kabat-Zinn



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Travel...Gap YAH?

Keep on looking

If you are an MSc graduate or have been made redundant and you decide to keep looking for employment in the industry don't let the current job market affect your confidence and belief in your success. **Think about your skill set and how you can apply your knowledge to different areas within the industry or in different industries that also require your skills.** Your career may go backwards, forwards, sideways or be teleported to a new dimension. As long as you keep learning and developing existing and new skills, the oil and gas industry will be waiting when the market improves. You may accidentally find your dream job somewhere unexpected – see testimonials at the end of the guide for some inspiring stories!

For employment think:

- ◆ Internships that may lead to full employment
- ◆ Service Companies and Consultancy Companies
- ◆ Research Assistant at a University
- ◆ Lab Technician
- ◆ *The Dark Side* (Business, Economics and Finance industries)

Further Education

(a few more letters after your name could look good - collect the alphabet!?)

Many government-funded bodies and organisations provide postgraduate (MSc & PhD) scholarships and funding. In addition most universities will have internal funding which they can allocate to students deemed worthy – see preferred university websites for more information. Perhaps draw on your academic and industry experience and present a proposal!

Below are some bodies that offer geoscience grants and funding and are easily found on the google machine.

- ◆ UK: NERC, PESGB, BGS, Geological Society, The Wellcome Trust, SEG
- ◆ IRELAND: PIP, iCRAG, PAD, Geological Survey of Ireland

If you decide to pursue further education or full time employment the following pages provide ideas about how to stay in touch with the industry, build your network and keep your knowledge current. If you decide to travel...we are INSANELY jealous!

Let's Go! and come back when the oil price has recovered. This really could be a once in a lifetime chance to go and travel the world.

Volunteer abroad: teach English (TEFL: tefl.org.uk), build a school (volunteerhq.org) or save a turtle (operation Wallacea: opwall.com). You don't have to be as rich as the people in the YouTube video that we are (clearly) referencing to make this option a reality. Volunteering can cut the cost of travel by providing flights, accommodation, and/or living expenses. Some programmes will provide a salary for which to fund further travelling or buy that hat you have always wanted (campamerica.co.uk).

Look at these websites for more information:

- ◆ statravel.co.uk
- ◆ planmygapyear.co.uk

You could also raise money for charity and run a marathon, climb Mt. Kilimanjaro or organise a skydive.

HELP! I'm unemployed!

What should I do in the meantime with all of my free time...

Professional Memberships

PES  GB

£45 (£20 student)

This includes main PESGB activities and YP activities

- ◆ Monthly Magazine hardcopy and online version
- ◆ PESGB Blog (pesgbblog.org.uk)
- ◆ Map of the structural elements of the North Sea
- ◆ Annual membership directory **(aka the holy grail for the unemployed)**
- ◆ Annual training directory
- ◆ MSc Scholarships (£10,000 awarded to >10 students annually)
- ◆ Monthly lectures in Aberdeen and London followed by networking opportunities
- ◆ Exclusive PESGB social events: Oil Finders Luncheons, Aberdeen Party and President's Evening to name a few
- ◆ Member registration rates to conferences run by the PESGB, including PROSPEX and PETEX
- ◆ Reduced cost training courses on a variety of technical areas
- ◆ Member-only field trips
- ◆ Young Professionals Special Interest Group – woohoo that's us!
- ◆ PESGB Geophysics, Africa and Data Management Special Interest Groups; regional branches such the Surrey Group
- ◆ Discount on publishing houses

The PESGB Young Professional Committee is a special interest group within the PESGB and is run by members of the industry with <10 years' experience for members with <10 years' experience. In addition to the PESGB benefits you also have access to:

- ◆ Regular YP Seminars which aid in knowledge exchange between experienced professionals and young professionals
- ◆ Undergraduate mapping sponsorship
- ◆ We assign YPs with mentors from the industry with experience and relevant background
- ◆ Events run through the year: Technical Conferences, GeoPubTour, Geo-lympics, House of Commons lecture, Christmas Table Quiz, Field Trips, networking events

Keep an eye out for upcoming events on social media!!

PES  GB
Young Professionals



Membership Cost: Undergraduate: £15, MSc: £28, PhD: £41, Age 27 and under: £70.00, Age 28-33 : £130.00, Age 34-59 : £198.00

- ◆ Monthly magazine "Geoscientist"
- ◆ Free monthly lectures
- ◆ Discounted publications and free society journal
- ◆ Access to Library at Burlington House and online Lyell Collection
- ◆ Chartership
- ◆ Online Continuing Professional Development Scheme
- ◆ Regional and specialist groups
- ◆ Newsletter



Membership Cost: £73.42 (£6.99 student paid by Chevron upon request)

- ◆ Student-driven chapters in London and Aberdeen
- ◆ Training courses and events
- ◆ AAPG Publications and access to AAPG datapages
- ◆ Discounts when registering for events and purchasing products
- ◆ Online forums



Membership Cost: Fellow £159, Member £122, Affiliate £105, Technical Member £70, Graduate £56, Post-Grad £21

- ◆ Free subscription to one of the EI's monthly magazines
- ◆ Chance to be selected to join EI College and contribute to the Energy Barometer report
- ◆ Opportunity to influence energy policy and exchange knowledge within the industry through government consultations
- ◆ Free Branch and Special Interest Group membership
- ◆ Discounted access to training, events, seminars and conferences
- ◆ Free career advice and professional development support



Membership Cost: £66.42 (CGG and Statoil pay for students)

- ◆ Access to SEG Digital Library
- ◆ Discount on SEG's Exposition and Annual Meeting registration
- ◆ SEG training courses and networking opportunities
- ◆ Employment assistance, including SEG Employment Referral, Annual Meeting Career Center, SEG Resume Posting/Search area in SEG Online
- ◆ Research & innovation opportunities

Societies are a perfect way of keeping up to date with the current goings on in industry.
In addition to great perks and freebies, being involved with societies helps forward your career by...

Showing an interest in your field and keeping you relevant by attending technical talks from experienced industry professionals

Building your professional network, which is very important when you're applying for jobs and for your own professional development. You may introduce yourself to your next boss

Meeting other Young Professionals at social events, sharing ideas and providing advice



Industry

Whilst looking for a job in a low oil price environment it is important to maintain a connection with the industry as much as you can. Your career may go backwards, forwards, sideward or ascend to the fourth dimension. This may not have been in your original "5 year plan" and can seem unfair and super frustrating after years of time and cost intensive academia.

So what can you do?

Apply for paid/unpaid **internships**. From what us YPs hear through the grapevine: industry feels uncomfortable taking on interns for little or no pay – it seems unfair and so, many companies will avoid it. This is a catch 22 as many unemployed YPs would kill for unpaid experience as it is invaluable when looking to avoid time gaps on your CV. Be aware that you may have to over-emphasise your eagerness for experience and convince them that you are willing to work for cost/free. Highlight that the experience is invaluable to you. When a job becomes available you will be the first on their interview list!

Apply to **present posters at conferences** – as geoscientists we have all completed independent research during undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Apply to present your work at conferences and seminars. Presenting a poster/lecture usually allows you to attend the event for free, providing an opportunity to learn, network and showcase your abilities.

Keep up to date with **topical industry news** so that you are informed and can impress the people you meet at events with your savvy opinions. Follow Energy Voice, Energypedia, Oil Voice etc. for up to date hard-hitting articles. If you are one of those people who is glued to your phone make it productive!

Build your profile and network on LinkedIn – social media is the new business card. If you are so inclined – start your own blog and comment on issues in the industry that excite or offend you. Your next employer may be your first follower!

Look to **write articles** for the PESGB blog and geological magazines such as GeoExpro and Geoscientist. Writing articles for reputable magazines gets your name out into the industry. The YP committee also look for event reviews that are published in the monthly magazine – get involved! You are a brand – market yourself!

If you are sure that the Geological world is the only one for you, look into **careers in other areas** - shallow geology studies for engineering foundations, soil science for agriculture, aquifer studies for environmental agencies/governments. There is also the mining industry to consider but the sector is not so hot right now either. Nevertheless, what goes up must go down and vice versa.

Alternatively, think outside the industry - venture to *the Dark Side*

- ◆ YPs may not be aware of the employment opportunities in the business and financial industries. Investment houses such as PWC employ geoscientists for technical advice involved in market prediction and risk. Geoscientists are also sought after by banks for the abilities of critical thinking and analysis.
- ◆ You could also consider sales and marketing. These skills are useful to the oil industry and many geoscientists will be involved in an aspect of sales at some stage in their career.
- ◆ The point is that your skills are applicable and can be developed within other industries and VICE VERSA. Experience will stand you in good stead if you decide to return to the light when the oil price improves!

Whether trying to get your foot in the door with your first job or looking for a new position, you must make sure you are maximising every advantage you have, especially in this low oil price environment. The first step, and arguably the most important, is your Curriculum Vitae. Competition is fierce with more applicants for a single position than ever before. In addition, many applicants will have similar education and experience. Due to widespread company redundancies it is likely that experienced professionals will apply for more junior roles and represent tough competitors. Make sure you stand out as much as possible and include any skills and experience that may set you apart from the crowd. This is where internships, society involvement, volunteering at conferences and initiatives to improve your own skills have ginormous value.

TAILOR your cover letter and CV to the role that you are applying for and the company you are applying to. It is better to send one tailored job application than ten generic ones. Remember – you only need one job. Your cover letter is a chance to provide more detail on your most relevant skills and experience – do not just repeat the information that's on your CV, elaborate on it.

Your CV should be no more than two pages with a one page cover letter. No spelling and grammar mistakes – this cannot be emphasised enough. If you are not bothered putting in the effort why should anyone bother giving you a job? Your CV will be scrapped immediately if spelling mistakes and grammar are evident!

Make every word count and cut the waffle. It is important to put the most relevant information on the first page where the recruiter will instantly see it. Utilise the page space effectively, use columns and text boxes to break up the space but ensure that the information is easy to read, looks good on the page and looks professional.

Use the STAR technique and shine– Situation, Task, Action, Result. For every skill that you list think of how you implemented it in work/university, the objective, what YOU did and the outcome. Interviewers use this technique or similar so be prepared!

It is a good idea to subtly use company keywords and values incorporating them in to

descriptions of your own experience and skills, demonstrating that similar values are important to you. Your name and contact details should be at the top of the first page where they are easily accessible if a recruiter wants to contact you.

Before sending the application seek out a recruiter or contact within your desired company and find out who to address and send the cover letter to and send it to them directly. Make use of the PESGB directory (remember...the holy grail) that you receive free with your membership!

There is conflict of opinion regarding which format to send your CV in. We think PDF format looks more professional and in addition can easily be opened on computers/tablets/phones. Perhaps express that you can send on the word doc, if required. Large companies will have online application procedures and will tell you which format they want. Some people appreciate receiving a job application in the post, perhaps if you are applying to a small company and have a contact. A letter may command more attention than an email and you could follow up with an email. Again the idea is that you tailor your application to give the best chance of success - your call on this point!

Seek oil and gas recruiters that may be able to help you – this is especially relevant if you are willing to work abroad. Their help and advice is often free of charge as their clients pick up the bill when the role has been filled.

There are many free online sources that will also give you sound CV advice. In addition, many Universities offer CV workshops for alumni through their careers services. If you have contacts in the industry ask them to review your CV, apply for a PESGB mentor that can help you. Failing that you can ask friends and family and failing that you can pay to have your CV formatted.

Don't underestimate the time and effort required to perfect your CV and give yourself the best fighting chance!

CV

Short Courses

Educate Yourself

Foreign Language

Do not underestimate this

We are all consciously aware of how limited our language skills are and yet those few people who can confidently speak a foreign language often make themselves indispensable employees. With more and more UK based companies expanding their operations abroad, speaking an additional language can really set you apart from the crowd.

Think of where the largest portions of O&G activity takes place today, and what languages are spoken there. In order to gain the trust of local governments, workers and organisations it is imperative for companies to have employees able to communicate efficiently with the locals. The best part of learning a new language is it doesn't have to cost a penny! For those of you looking to learn vocabulary slightly beyond that offered by Dora the Explorer, spend half an hour of your evening looking through the exercises on the BBC site (www.bbc.co.uk/languages) or our personal favourite, Duolingo (www.duolingo.com) with excellent graphic-based exercises. Download the Duolingo app for free and learn Italian during your breakfast coffee! For people wanting to go slightly more exotic beyond European languages then Busuu (www.busuu.com) can teach you both Russian and Arabic, still the heavyweight regions of the hydrocarbon industry.

Learn to drive

Picture it, you, the car, the open road...

Crucially another way of setting you apart from the crowd and can show an employer that you are flexible with regards to travel. You wouldn't want to lose out on an internship because you couldn't get there! See it as an investment, as crash courses (not literally haw haw) are available from £255 for a week of learning. Get off your bike and book a lesson! And no, setting track records with a Ferrari on the Xbox does not count!

Modern businesses are increasingly demanding when it comes to graduates. As well as a geosciences degree, many companies now ask for proof that you can be a team player, prove string theory and walk a tight rope while carrying a llama. A short course can complement your degree and make you a more well-rounded candidate. The Open University offers modules for £1300 each, to maybe study towards an MBA. While local colleges offer courses at £3-6k (eek!).

For people not looking to spend money on business courses, Future Learn (www.Futurelearn.com) provides a range of free online courses, provided by various businesses, Colleges and Universities (Also see Coursera.org-- open.edu/openlearn-- Alison.com). There are certified courses covering all topics from the science of soils to ethnic basket weaving. More useful perhaps would be courses covering maths, business and language skills that typically take several hours a week for 3-10 week periods with a certificate issued upon completion. Khanacademy.com is a very accessible website for tutorials on economics, maths, science and computing. Think about how good your LinkedIn profile would look with certificates in: advanced maths, business, finance and Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical art in Europe, listed among your completed courses. Independent study demonstrates to potential employers that you have the initiative, self-motivation and interest to spend your down-time self improving.

Learning a new technique will be more valuable than learning a new piece of software as companies have their own processes and procedures for doing technical work, so look to use any freely available data/software to further your own geoscience capabilities.

Spending some time to learn about a technique or area you've not studied/ worked on before, will have multiple benefits – such as being able to expand your CV; you can talk about a new area more confidently at interviews and you can unlock new networks. Learning a new software is something you can use to differentiate yourself with potential employers and could help maintain a ‘geoscience way of thinking’, when not in work.

Warning: take care when searching online for free data and/or software, as some websites & programmes may be malicious.

FREE Geoscience E&P data

Data imports to keep you busy

◆ **Department for Energy & Climate Change -**

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/oil-and-gas>

Government sponsored 2D seismic over UK Rockall Basin and Mid North Sea high available to EVERYONE, see OGA website.

◆ **Norwegian Petroleum Directorate -** <http://www.npd.no/en/>

For example the NPD Factpages includes access to comprehensive well information, including Completion Reports & Comp Logs <http://factpages.npd.no/factpages/>

◆ **OpendTect Free Seismic Surveys -** <https://opendtect.org/osr/>

This is a source of freely available seismic data, including 3D.

◆ **USGS -** <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/>

◆ **Virtual Seismic Atlas -** <http://www.seismicatlas.org/>

FREE software

Platforms for your data

Geophysics

◆ Open Source Seismic Interpretation Platform -

<http://www.opendtect.org/>

◆ Seismic Response Modelling - <https://www.modelr.io/>

◆ Segy Analyser (SeiSee) - <http://www.dmng.ru/en/freeware.html>

Petrophysics

◆ LAS reader / editor - <http://www.geoloi.com/index.shtml>

GIS

◆ ArcGIS - <http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/explorer>

◆ Grass GIS - <https://grass.osgeo.org/>

◆ WMS layers available from BGS, One Geology and GEBCO

Other

◆ GoogleEarth - https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/

◆ Inkscape - <https://inkscape.org/en/>. Graphics software is something many geos will have experience of using when creating various technical presentations.

◆ GIMP image manipulation programme - <https://www.gimp.org>

◆ Crain's Petrophysical Handbook – <https://www.spec2000.net/01-index.htm>

◆ Learn to code and impress your friends - www.codecademy.com

I completely understand how difficult it must be for people trying to get their first job or for those facing redundancy in this uncertain environment. My main message would be to focus on making yourself as marketable as possible by acquiring skills, technical or otherwise, that will enhance your CV. That is not just essential now but throughout your career. Ideally employers want to have high quality people working for them who are attractive to other employers but choose to stay with them. It is important not just to keep up-to-date in your technical field but to show that you continuously learn and acquire other skills or useful experience with energy, initiative and drive. You can demonstrate that even if it is not in exactly the position you want to do for the rest of your life, you can go out there and find jobs or assignments; whether paid or unpaid, that will enhance your profile and make you that bit more interesting than you were before. A challenging not-for-profit experience could illustrate your leadership ability, resilience and perseverance. Will it make you stand out from the crowd if an employer has a list of candidates to choose from? It's your future - go for it

Gill Gordon, UK HR Manager - Schlumberger

Future employers will look for the following: that someone is employed in another role outside of E&P; being in a job of any sort is better than no job at all. It can be paid or volunteering, but looks good on current CV. Additionally – try and secure a mentor [for example from the PESGB YP Mentoring Scheme, or from the company that you may be leaving] – e.g. someone more senior to guide you through any job applications and preparation for interviews, etc.

Vincent Sheppard, Chief Geophysicist - Petrofac

If you are laid off at least have a look at other industries. You will either conclude that this alternative industry is what you want to do (and stay there) or that they are not (and only stay until the oil price comes back up).

Robert Fitzpatrick, Geologist/BD - Petrofac

Any industry experience matters.... be it offshore or onshore, lab, yard, manual or office - it counts. Being able to distinguish a BOP from a Moon Pool, a V door from slips will mean you have learned some "Oilfield Language" and that always helps. It may not be subsurface or Geology but that may not be where you get a start.

Matt Betts, UK Vice President - Haliburton

Seems like startlingly obvious advice perhaps but if I was looking to employ a graduate I'd certainly be looking for someone who has shown commitment (found a job doing something else while they search for what they really want to do), shown initiative (used industry institution memberships, studied local trends, etc). Having your CV with reputable recruitment companies is obviously going to get your CV around but going direct is going to ensure your name becomes known. Suggest looking at DECC or the OGA websites for new licensing news and trends. Who has been awarded licences this year? what are their work commitments? These companies with obligations will have, by definition, work to do. Definitely worth writing to exploration/asset managers of these companies to see what happens. Even if they are not recruiting they may be looking later, you could even ask about unpaid work experience.

Rob Chatwin, Principal Geologist - Petrofac

**Consult the elders
experts...**

I am a strong supporter of enhancing language skills – oil and gas languages, Spanish/Portuguese or French probably the recommended choices for the non-English speaking world. From a techie view-point learn a computer language. Read around your subject – wider understanding of the history and context of the development of the science is important context for many discussions and debates. Watch TED.

Hamish, Deputy Chief Geophysicist - BP

Do something appropriate to your target employment area. For example if you are a graduate geoscientist, possibly with a masters in petroleum geoscience, then do some of that. How, you ask? Contact one or more of your university lecturers and ask for some work/research. You will still be able to arrange access to your e-university's electronic library system, your former lecturer has almost certainly got ideas that need exploring and so it is quite likely they could give you something to do. You may even get some payment. In my experience university staff are outstandingly good at finding bits of money to support good former students. And when you have done the work, get it in print, make something of it, add it to your CV. At interviews try and relax, be enthusiastic (not too much). Talk about what you know, what you have achieved and initiated (like the above work/research you made happen). Your mapping and dissertation projects are often good for this. Use experiences from outside of your academic discipline to illustrate points – team leadership, initiative, persistence but don't overdo it. Read-up on influencing people; paraphrase the questions received when answering; mirror your interviewer (be subtle); be confident with your speech (avoid the umms and errs) and there are other techniques which may be difficult to apply in an interview. The techniques and skills you have learned will be directly useful in a number of other industries; geothermal, environmental, mining, geotechnical engineering and if it ever takes off, carbon capture and storage.

Professor Jon Gluyas - University of Durham / PESGB Past President

I can say that becoming a police officer made me stand out from the other interviewees when I got my first job at Mobil. Another trick is to follow your colleagues or your old boss (if he considers you are any good of course) to new start-up companies. I see this every year at PROSPEX where the same guys stick with who they know, the company name may change but the people are the same!

Clive Johns, Technical Assurance Advisor - ENGIE

In hard times all companies are at minimum staff levels but they all have projects to complete. If you have a spare month then offer your services to complete that project as an intern. The tide will change and you will be in first place.

Matt Betts, UK VP - Haliburton

My main comment for the more experienced people in your YP group is to stay positive. I remember the impact redundancy has on self-confidence and you need to combat that. The other piece of advice is to continue to maintain and build networks as most of us geoscience managers like to employ people who come with a recommendation from a trusted source. I strongly advocate going to the PESGB monthly meetings and any other networking opportunities out there.

Jim Munns, Manager Subsurface Technical Assurance - ENGIE

Keep active within the industry and keep current with industry news and modern geoscience techniques. Ensure that you remain as employable as you were when you graduated or when you were made redundant. It is important to keep your profile within the industry active. Strike up a correspondence via email/LinkedIn. If there are no openings perhaps they will be able to offer advice. Build and maintain a strong network. A geoscientist's ability to analyse large volumes of data and extract the relevant information is a skill that is coveted in other industries. The ability to analyse risk is very relevant to finance and investment industries. Remember to highlight this skill when venturing into other industries.

Chris Bulley, Executive Director - Hannon Westwood

At last year's recruitment we had loads of candidates all with perfect A levels, Firsts at first degree and obviously on their way to Distinctions at MSc. I ended up looking for people who had shown that they could use their summer vacations well by doing something industry-related (however tenuously), or at least geoscience-related. I would apply the same criterion for someone taking a whole year. The skills argument is a good one too – if you're going to do volunteer work, at least get something out of it which is useable by us, e.g. a new language.

Richard, Deputy Chief Geologist - BP

Lewis Beasley



*Undergraduate Study: BSc Geological Sciences, University of Leeds, 2011-2014
Postgraduate Study: MSc Integrated Petroleum Geoscience, University of Aberdeen, 2014-2015
MSc Engineering Geology, University of Leeds, 2015-2016*

I was faced with the onset of low oil prices around two months into the MSc IPG (November 2014), around which time I was being interviewed by numerous oil companies and service companies to be told further down the line that, "due to unforeseen circumstances, this position is no longer available". Moving further into 2016 it became clear to me and the rest of the MSc IPG class that given the current climate of the oil industry it would be almost impossible to enter into a subsurface role in the oil industry. After this realisation I decided to put a pause on job applications and focus on the MSc course. After returning from a field trip to Utah in May I considered the possibility of undertaking another master's course that would open up another industry. Having studied at Leeds I was aware of the MSc Engineering Geology course, and the good employment prospects upon completion. I told myself that one more year of study was negligible in comparison to the number of years I will likely be working, and would provide me with the necessary skills to enter into a career I would enjoy. I therefore made a late application to the course and, thankfully, was successful in gaining a place. I am now six months into the course and applying for jobs in the civil engineering industry.

I would advise current students on petroleum related MSc courses to stay motivated and not let the low oil prices/poor job prospects affect your studies, as difficult as it may seem! Try and push yourself to achieve a Distinction (First Class) grade. The analytical and transferable skills gained on these courses are applicable to many graduate positions in various industries and a strong Merit or Distinction will greatly increase your chances of being successful, especially with the increasing number of people who have Masters Degrees making it more and more competitive. Do some research into other industries and apply to as many companies as possible. Even if it is for jobs you don't find interesting, it will give you time to re-evaluate your options whilst earning some money.

My advice for graduates and YP members (and current students) would be to consider, as I did, the option of continuing your education at MSc level or PhD. I would advise that if you were to take this route that you ensure the course is relevant and will set you up to enter into industry. Not only will this open more doors but it will also keep you busy, doing something worthwhile, while the petroleum industry recovers.

... And if you
don't believe
them,
read these
survivor
testimonials

Genny Keillar



*Undergraduate: Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, (2009/2013)
Postgraduate: MSc Integrated Petroleum Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, (2014/2015)*

I currently work as a Business Analyst in RBS and have been there for 3 months. The falling oil price has meant that job opportunities in oil and gas industry are few and far between so I decided to use my transferrable skills in a different industry. This role has opened up new opportunities for me and I am really enjoying it. Don't be afraid to look for opportunities in other sectors when there is uncertainty in the oil and gas sector.

Alexandra Jackson

Undergraduate Study: BSc Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, (2009-2013)

Postgraduate Study: MSc Integrated Petroleum Geoscience, University of Aberdeen, (2014-2015) sponsored by Talisman Sinopec Energy

Although it was tough, I was lucky enough to gain some experience in interviews and assessment centres but unfortunately no job offers. I was always juggling with the fact that I studied two great degree courses in Aberdeen for 5 years but couldn't see myself settling there for another 5 years. I made the decision to leave and explore different opportunities in London and base myself temporarily on the South coast. A month after completing my MSc research project with Talisman-Sinopec, I headed out to California with the University of Aberdeen Research group. I spent one month as a Technical Field Assistant helping with research into sand injectivities for 10 major oil & gas companies. Oil prices were dropping month by month and I found it increasingly difficult to find Graduate Geologist roles in London. Alongside applying for jobs I started to plan a trip to New Zealand and Australia, this was a perfect opportunity to leave the job worries behind and explore a little more of the world. Returning back to the UK in

March 2015, I had a little more perspective on life. I took a step back and really asked myself what I wanted. I knew I wanted to head to London and I knew I wanted a job. So I started to broaden my horizons and use my technical and academic skills set to do something else. Within 3 weeks I had a job as a Business Analyst in a small FMCG consultancy in Richmond called Acumen. Although this was "worlds away" from being a Geologist, I was able to work with high caliber graduates, learn about how small businesses work and meet some great people along the way. A big advantage was I gained experience with in-house software and learning about a whole new industry! During my time at Acumen I was approached by TGS; an Oil & Gas Service Company. I had submitted my CV to them back at PETEX in November 2014 so ... as you can imagine I was very surprised to receive a call. After a phone interview and a second round interview/ presentation, I had an offer as a Geological Intern working on a Central North Sea Project, UK and Norway. I couldn't turn the offer down and left Acumen after 7 weeks. Initially the contract was for 3 months but was extended to the end of 2015 for another 4 months. TGS were hoping that oil prices would recover or stabilise enough, so they could take me and my fellow intern as Graduate Geologists. With the instability, I sourced new opportunities and stumbled across an advert on Milkround

for an Energy Analyst at a small LNG and natural gas consultancy in Central London. As soon as I saw the job description I was sold! Straightaway I could see myself in the role but also I could fulfil my passion for energy/ geoscience in a commercial role. I applied and soon after I had a phone call for a first round interview. Two rounds followed where I met with Managing Consultants and the CEO. I had a job offer within 10 days and was ecstatic. For the first time in a year I could see my future opening up and I was excited! As an Analyst my job can vary day to day, in my first 4 weeks I have had experience with worldwide LNG and natural gas pricing, with exposure to key statistical websites and trading software, I have helped with the Middle Eastern Gas to Power proposals, client research and gaining knowledge across the whole LNG/ natural gas value chain. I haven't stopped and I know when I go in every Monday I'm excited and passionate about what I am doing!

Keep up your interests / activities: join a hockey, football, triathlon club or perhaps undertake free art-classes. When I wasn't working I had a gym and swim memberships giving structure and purpose to my week. Happiness is important, be positive, live in the moment, don't feel sorry for yourself and enjoy having the time off!



Matt Shea **Mudlogging Coordinator - Halliburton**

Although the current climate in the Oil & Gas industry continues to become more and more challenging, it also continues being an exciting and rewarding environment to work and develop a career. With uncertainty, prospects and opportunities have become limited over the last 18 months as the Brent crude oil price falls, however, being prepared for an opportunity and finding the door into the industry is still possible. In fact, it's even more crucial to have as much background knowledge as you can and an awareness of what is out there in terms of employment opportunities. First of all, it may surprise you, but there are more companies in North Sea Oil & Gas other than BP and Shell! As a 4th year student finishing a degree in Petroleum Geology, I was naïve to think that there were only 3 or 4 Oil & Gas operators in the UK. Realistically, it could be 10 times that amount. I was also naïve in thinking that these companies were the only route into the, at the time, booming industry, with oil prices up towards \$100 a barrel. It wasn't until leaving University I realized that not only are there more options out there, but also that trying to become a Graduate geologist at the likes of BP and Shell is entering an incredibly competitive market. This is not to say you should avoid it, but it's something to be aware of. Potentially hundreds of students with Bachelor, Master and PhD degree's from across the world will be going for 1 job on an operator's graduate scheme.

Although I was aware of Halliburton, I didn't realise the type of work and the scope of work they carried out in the UK and globally. I was completely unaware that they were one of the largest service companies to the Oil & Gas industry. I went online, did my research and applied for an entry level job as a logging geologist. I got the job and now almost 5 years down the line, I'm in the position of a Halliburton Mudlogging Coordinator, far removed from the Geology path I had made myself, but an opportunity that wouldn't have developed had I not gone down the route of the Service Company.

One of the huge benefits of working for a service company in this industry is that with a range of expertise under one roof, picking a route to further

your career is very much a viable one. Developing skills and interest in other areas within the company are encouraged and helps with a much wider appreciation of what other services are out there, out with your specialist areas. Moving between departments in Halliburton is not uncommon. If another branch of the business begins to interest you and you want to make a change, the company has always done its best to accommodate those changes.

As a student looking to get their first job in Oil & Gas it's always important to stand out, to make yourself interesting and appealable to the employer. With jobs limited and opportunities dwindling, I would encourage anyone to put in the ground work now to make them stand out from the crowd. Having a concise, relevant CV is a great start. Work on it throughout your studies. Keep it to 2 sides – beyond that employers will lose interest. They also don't really want to know what you got in your standard grade Math's test – keep it relevant. Research the job market, know what the companies do, what their ethics are and try to pick up any details you think may impress them, potentially in an interview situation. Furthermore, in my experiences over the past 3 years where I have been involved in the employing of graduates, it's not just what's on the paper we look at but who is sitting opposite. A lot of focus goes in to hiring a person who can fit into a vastly varying team. Personally, being able to form a preliminary relationship with a person during a 40 minute interview shows signs of an individual who can adapt to the working environment that is in place. It can seem to be a daunting time trying to enter the Oil & Gas industry as a graduate but things will change, opportunities will grow in time, but until then, the limited opportunities mean that preparation is key to every proposing student. My overwhelming message would be, get a grasp of the industry on the whole. A degree opens many doors, not just Total's or Chevron's. Service companies are vital for the success of the larger operators that you see across the media and often have the better job prospects and routes for progression within the industry. The North Sea is down but she's certainly not out. There are many careers she can still mould in the future.



James Van Tuyl



Undergraduate: MSci Exploration and Resource Geology, Cardiff University, (2010/2014)

Postgraduate: MSc Integrated Petroleum Geoscience, University of Aberdeen, (2014/2015)

Since graduating from the University of Aberdeen, I have returned to Cardiff University, to pursue a PhD focusing on the evolution and reservoir potential of Miocene carbonates in the Browne Basin, North West Shelf, Australia. Graduating during the middle of the downturn, job opportunities were sparse with graduate programmes and positions being pulled almost as soon as they went up. This considered I took the opportunity to pursue a personal enjoyment from research. While my PhD is based in Cardiff, it comes under the umbrella of the NERC Oil and Gas CDT. This doctoral training programme, provides regular workshops delivered by top industry professionals and academics. These workshops help develop expertise that can be used across the wider energy and environmental sectors at a time of economic challenge and pressure for responsible environmental management. It also gives an opportunity to interact with PhD students (and likely future industry colleagues) from across the country, each with different specialties and backgrounds, as well as current industry talents.

My advice for anyone looking to pursue a career in the hydrocarbon industry is to stay current, knowing from personal experience that the current industry climate makes the opportunity to walk straight into a job tough and highly competitive. Keep yourself in the hydrocarbon circle, whether through internships, MSc degrees or my route through a PhD, so when that interview finally comes you have an answer for the inevitable ‘so what have you been doing since graduating...’

Lauren

Undergraduate: BSc Geology, University of Liverpool, 2014

Postgraduate: MSc Integrated Petroleum Geoscience, University of Aberdeen, 2015

I am currently a Constable for Police Scotland. With the minimal amount of petroleum graduate jobs available due to the current economic climate, I suffered, along with many of my fellow students, rejection after rejection. Facing unemployment, I had a serious think about my future. The reality was that the oil price wasn't going to recover any time soon and neither were the chances of employment within the Oil and Gas sector. As the year went on, I became increasingly frustrated and so made the decision to look outside the energy industry. I expanded my job hunt and branched out into the world of PhDs (even though I always thought research wasn't my cup of tea) and public service sector. I was offered a PhD on Chondrites and the position with the Police at the same time, which again was a much deliberated decision. I came to the conclusion that my heart wasn't in the PhD and that I wanted to pursue an exciting career in the Police.

My advice for fellow geologists is to take the downturn as an opportunity for change. By all means, try to gain employment in the Oil & Gas industry, but do not treat it as the be all and end all. Yes, it's a great career, as some of my friends will tell you, but the skills you have gained from your degree are hugely applicable not just in geology. You never know, you might discover a new career which you enjoy just as much. I certainly do with mine.

Sarah-Jane Flaws

BSc Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, 2009-2013

MSc Integrated Petroleum Geoscience, University of Aberdeen, 2014-2015, Sponsored by the PESGB

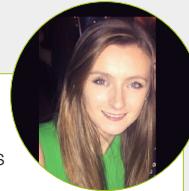
Around two months into my MSc the oil price started to drop, at this point I did not realise how severely the industry would be affected and go on to change in the next two years to follow. Although the oil price continued to deteriorate throughout the year, I applied for the available graduate geoscience roles with large operators and service companies; consequently they started to be pulled early in to Q1 of 2015. I managed to get to the final stages for one company to then have this position fall through at the last minute due to cost reductions being implemented. My main focus was then to get the most out of my MSc and achieve a good grade.

Post MSc was a daunting experience, I was out in the 'big bad world' with the industry closing its doors to most graduate geoscience roles. Despite the flourish of rejections I decided to hold tight and pursue a career in oil and gas by looking at the wider business to see where I could use my technical knowledge in a more commercial role. I attended SPE Offshore Europe in September 2015 and met the University Affairs coordinator for Halliburton when I was informed they were looking for interns. I then applied and managed to secure a place on their internship program which started in October. I was placed within the account managers and consulting team within the Landmark department, who are a technology solutions provider of data and analytics, science, software, and services for exploration and production. The internship was to undertake a research and analysis project to measure the business model as a market leader and in the eyes of its current and potential customers. Being a more commercially orientated role, it has allowed me to experience and learn a new side of the business that I had not had much exposure to previously. I am trying to make the most out

of my time at Halliburton by approaching and introducing myself to technical professionals who have kindly took the time to provide me training on Landmark's software. Following this I was then asked to help deliver software training with one of the technical consultants to MSc students at the University of Aberdeen. My internship was meant to end in December 2015, but I have managed to continue with them in to 2016.

In November 2015 I was elected to be a committee member for the PESGB Young Professionals in Aberdeen, a position I saw as an opportunity to give back to the society that had sponsored and supported me through my MSc. It has given me the chance to be more involved and up to date with industry and work alongside the other committee members to run the society here in Aberdeen. In my spare time I am also undertaking research for a start-up consultancy, which is aiming to use the down turn to its advantage. This has given me a further insight in to the commercial aspects of the oil and gas industry as well as keeping me relevant and active whilst broadening my network with others who are involved. I have found staying busy and proactive has been key to remaining positive, by doing things I enjoy.

Although you may not get your dream position right away, stay positive, motivated and be constructive with any time off to figure out your next step. Get more involved with any sports you're involved in or start a new one, volunteer if you're able to with companies currently struggling with the downturn with low staffing numbers and take the opportunity to do free training to stay relevant. My key advice would be to expand and grow your professional network, use events through the many societies as mentioned in this booklet as this is where many of my opportunities have arisen - meeting someone makes all the difference. The oil and gas sector may not be where you start off your career, but you can gain valuable transferrable skills through other industries to bring back to industry when it does pick up again. Hang on in there!



Notes



Who we are

The PESGB Young Professionals committee was established in 2010 specifically for those members with less than 10 years experience in the oil and gas industry. The committee consists of hard-working, deeply intelligent and good-looking YPs like yourself!

We aim to support fellow young professionals and help them to develop a strong network within the oil and gas community.

We achieve this by;

- ◆ Hosting AWESOME seminars, lectures, quizzes and networking events (it's not just the free beer and pizza YPs come for)
- ◆ Providing keen YPs with experienced mentors to help them on their respective paths to greatness
- ◆ Undergraduate mapping sponsorship if you like rocks!

