

Transport planning

September 2016
Leaflet



Transport and logistics

Transport planning is about managing and improving our transport systems - road, rail and so on - and making them safer and more sustainable. Most professionals working in transport planning are graduates; some hold postgraduate qualifications. There are also opportunities for support staff, who can progress through to professional qualifications.

The nature of the work

At some time, we've all been stuck in a traffic jam or experienced delays on a train journey. So we know the importance of well-planned and efficient transport systems, allowing us to get to where we want to go as fast as possible, safely and without disruption. Business and industry also depend on good transport links to get their goods and services delivered without delays and extra costs. However, probably few of us give much thought to the work involved in managing our transport systems and planning for their future development.

The work of transport planners includes the long-term development of transport systems, research into traffic accidents and congestion, and assessing the economic and environmental effects of different transport schemes. This can be at a local, regional, national or international level - from proposing a new cycle route to forecasting the impact of an airport expansion.

The job role of a transport planner varies greatly, depending on the employer. However, all planners need an understanding of town and city planning, economic development and environmental issues. Specific work that transport planners may be involved in includes:

- identifying the ways in which transport can help to achieve the goals that will improve our quality of life, and assessing how individual transport schemes can help to reach these goals (i.e. undertaking appraisals of schemes)
- using computer-modelling techniques to predict future transport trends
- helping to develop transport policy on a local, regional or national level
- assessing the impact on traffic flows of proposed new developments such as retail parks, housing developments, hospitals or schools
- undertaking traffic surveys - designing the surveys, analysing the data, then writing and presenting reports
- using statistical and mathematical modelling to analyse problems such as accident rates, traffic congestion blackspots etc, and proposing possible solutions

- analysing the effects of suggested new traffic management schemes
- liaising with a wide range of interested parties, including local authority planning and highways departments, local councillors, building developers and public transport providers, as well as, for some jobs, the public, through public consultations, exhibitions etc.

What it takes

Transport planners need well-developed skills in:

- communication and presentation
- numeracy
- analysis
- negotiation
- problem solving
- people and project management
- ICT.

Employment opportunities

Transport planners work for both public and private sector organisations. In the public sector they may work for local authorities, looking at local traffic management issues, and in central government departments they may have a national remit. In the private sector many work for transport planning consultancies, providing consultancy services to both public sector and private sector clients. Transport planners are also employed by research establishments, public transport providers and other organisations concerned with transport infrastructure and systems, traffic management or transport policy.

Support staff

There are some opportunities to work in transport planning at assistant level; for example, helping to prepare and implement transport assessments, assisting with data collection and analysis, and in research. Job titles include assistant transport planner and transport planning technician.

Entry and training

Transport planners come from a variety of backgrounds and there is no set entry route. However, transport planners are usually graduates. While the work is open to graduates of any discipline, relevant degree subjects that will help your chances of entry include civil engineering, planning, geography, environmental science and economics.

There are transport-related first degrees, but these mainly focus on managing transport operations for logistics companies, and related work. Some degree courses, however, offer transport planning topics as part of the course. For example, the University of Leeds offers a combined degree in geography with transport studies, which includes various topics related to

transport planning alongside the study of human geography. The degree at Leeds can be taken over three years or over four years as a sandwich programme or with a year studying abroad. For entry to a degree course, you need A level or equivalent qualifications. **Entry requirements vary, so check carefully with individual institutions.**

Many transport planners hold relevant **postgraduate** qualifications. There are a number of masters courses in transport planning and related subjects, such as transport planning and engineering, transport with sustainable development, and transport planning and the environment. These can be taken through full-time study or part time while in relevant employment. Entrants often need a relevant first degree subject; however, a wide range of first degree subjects may be acceptable.

Transport planning is a rapidly developing field, and there are continual changes in policy and legislation. Therefore, once in employment, keeping up to date is important. The Transport Planning Society (TPS) offers a **Professional Development Scheme (PDS)** aimed at those who are new to the profession. The PDS covers the wide range of activities that transport planners get involved in, through a structured personal development plan. It is the accepted industry standard and is transferable between employers. You can find out more on the TPS website, listed under further information. The PDS offers a certificate of completion that will help transport planners achieve the **Transport Planning Professional (TPP)** qualification.

The TPP offers high-level professional recognition for transport planners, and is awarded jointly by the TPS and the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT). Transport planners seeking the TPP need to provide evidence of their professional competence, knowledge (which can be demonstrated through having gained a TPP-approved masters qualification or the PDS) and proficiency (demonstrated through work experience), as well as commitment to professional development. TPP qualification routes are described in more detail on the TPS website.

Some large employers offer structured training programmes for new graduate entrants. For practitioners there is a range of short training courses on specific topics, some of which are listed on the TPS website.

Some transport planners are professionals who have moved into the work from other backgrounds, including civil or highways engineering, planning, sustainable development or logistics.

Support staff

While support staff may not need a degree, good numeracy and ICT skills are important. Exact requirements vary from employer to employer, and some may ask for qualifications up to Higher National (HND/C) level. Support staff gain skills and knowledge through on-the-job experience and in-service training courses.

In England, a level 3 **Apprenticeship** for transport planning technicians has been developed with the support of the TPS. The Apprenticeship offers structured training with an employer. While valuable in its own right, the Apprenticeship provides a new progression pathway towards the PDS, and therefore through to the TPP; it also satisfies the requirements

for engineering technician status with the CIHT. Employers set their own entry requirements for the Apprenticeship, but would typically ask for around five GCSEs at grades A*-C or 9-5/4.

Pay and prospects

With experience, promotion to senior transport planner is possible, then to team leader, project manager or higher roles. Some transport planners decide to specialise in a particular aspect of the work, such as computer modelling, particular types of transport (e.g. road, rail etc), sustainable transport or master planning.

Graduate entrants may start on a salary of around £20,000+. Salaries for senior positions may range from £30-40,000; those in project management or team leader roles may earn £50,000+.

For further information

Transport Planning Society (TPS) - tel: 020 7665 2238. The TPS website carries information on careers, courses, possible employers and current vacancies.

www.tps.org.uk/main/careers

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) - tel: 020 7336 1555.

For careers information, see:

www.ciht.org.uk

Besides the TPS website listed above, vacancies in transport planning may be found through the Institution of Civil Engineers at:

www.icerecruit.com/jobs/transport-planner

Local government vacancies are advertised on:

www.LGjobs.com

www.jobsgopublic.com

You can also find vacancies by clicking on 'Jobs' and typing 'transport' in the search box, at:

www.planningresource.co.uk

Related Leaflets that may interest you

- [AC 01 - Local government](#)
- [BB 02 - Construction: technical work and management](#)
- [BC 02 - Cartography](#)
- [BC 05 - Surveying - an introduction to the work and training](#)
- [BC 08 - Planning](#)
- [GJ 05 - Automotive engineering and design](#)

- [TB 01 - Careers using geography](#)
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- [WA 03 - Working at airports](#)
- [WB 01 - Logistics and freight transport management](#)
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Equal opportunities:

Seek advice if you meet discrimination due to age, disability, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

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