

# Palaeontologist

Palaeontologists study the fossils of plants and animals.



You could work in a university, a museum, in the oil and gas industry or for a scientific magazine or TV production company.

You'll usually specialise in a particular area of palaeontology, like:

- invertebrate palaeontology – animals without backbones like insects
- vertebrate palaeontology – animals with backbones such as dinosaurs, birds and fish
- palaeobotany – plant, flower and seed fossils or pollen
- micropalaeontology – microfossils like plankton

## **Skills You'll need:**

- observation skills
- the ability to work with statistical and graphical information
- scientific and technical skills
- a methodical and logical approach to work
- attention to detail

**These university subjects are related to this career:**

[Archaeology](#)

[Environmental and earth sciences](#)

[Geography](#)



## **Working hours, patterns and environment**

- You'll usually work 9am to 5pm in an office or laboratory. You may need to work longer hours if you're on a project with a deadline.
- If you work on an oil rig, you could spend several weeks on an offshore platform.
- In fieldwork and on research trips you could work in remote parts of the world, on land or at sea.
- The work is physically demanding.

**East Midlands growth:** +13.2% from 2014 to 2024, creating 15,460 jobs

**Natural and social science professionals**

**East Midlands median earnings:** £35,310

## **Career path and progression**

You could work as a geological surveyor, a consultant in mining and mineral exploration, or the oil and gas industry.

You could move into university teaching and research.

The skills you gain are also valued in the scientific media, TV and the financial sector.

## **You'll usually need:**

- a degree in botany, Earth sciences, geology, palaeontology or zoology
- 3 A levels, including maths and physics
- 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A\* to C) including maths, English and science