

# Adam Nichols, National Strategy Teaching and Learning Consultant

**Royal Geographical Society**  
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Advancing geography  
and geographical learning



Adam Nichols is a National Strategy Teaching and Learning Consultant for Sunderland LA. He was awarded Chartered Geographer status in 2005. Here's what he says about being a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)....

## **Why did you decide to apply to become a Chartered Geographer?**

It was in the process of applying for my present post that I realised that during my teaching and university career I have been involved in significant developments in subject pedagogy. Now, as a Strategy Consultant, my work allows me to help kindle and re-kindle passion for and commitment to improving the quality and effectiveness of classroom teaching, particularly through Action Research. I regard CGeog as recognition of my contributions to geography education both now and over the years that extend beyond the terms of job descriptions.

## **How did you find the application process?**

It was a good opportunity to stock-take. I began by jotting down various experiences and activities relevant to the CGeog criteria and soon found myself needing a pad of Post-it notes to sort my geographical life into some sort of order, then to collate evidence. The professional report did take several evenings at the computer, but I wanted to do a thorough job. Unfortunately, the end product reads a bit like a self-styled obituary. I admit to feeling a bit proud of myself and realised that I must have the subject running through my veins!

## **What sort of experience and activities did you include in your professional self evaluation report?**

I focused on three significant areas of professional involvement and development: Founder membership of the Thinking Through Geography group in Newcastle, PGCE Geography tutoring and thirdly, membership of the GA International Working Group. So many interesting things have grown out of those: authoring, research, INSET, conference presentations and leading some GA study tours, to name a few.

## **How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?**

CGeog has the effect of reminding me that what's important is not past achievement but on-going, active involvement in promoting the subject and encouraging others to follow suit that matters. On a completely different tack, there are some countries where titles and qualifications matter more than others in terms of hierarchy and status. CGeog on my business card has been both a talking point and (in the absence of "Prof". or " Dr.") a help in making contact with officials and academics in positions to assist by 'opening doors'!

## **How has your Local Authority benefited from you gaining the accreditation?**

As a Teaching & Learning Consultant, I work in all subject areas nowadays, so being awarded CGeog was a useful reminder to my senior colleagues that I am a subject specialist, still heavily involved in geography, and now that subject advisers are a rare breed, I am on the spot to 'plug the gap' in expertise and advice.

**How have your management team responded to you gaining the accreditation?**

The School Improvement service encourages CPD for its team members and respects their achievements, but we don't tend to bandy them about. However, I did include the award of CGeog in my application for a 'SPAR' salary point.

**As the CGeog (Teacher) network grows, what would you like to see happen / be available to you?**

The increasing pool of expertise and experience must be a valuable resource for other Geographers. Sharing and disseminating good practice is always valuable.

**Any words of advice for aspiring Chartered Geographer (Teachers)?**

If you have conviction that learning through geography is of critical importance for civil societies and a sustainable future, then inevitably, you will find yourself engaging with and working with others in the wider geographical community to help make geography "touch people's lives". Follow your nose. And contrary to what others may say, DO volunteer. It will help your career!