



Hiring outside the box: why you should consider anthropologists for your job role



Anthropology Careers & Employment (ACE) is the career site of the **American Anthropological Association (AAA)**. Whether you're a professional in the anthropological community looking to elevate your career, or an employer seeking to tap into the best and brightest anthropological minds, ACE is the place for you.

Our comprehensive job board features diverse roles spanning higher education institutions, museums, government, for-profit businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. We also feature internships and fellowship positions for emerging talent, alongside editorial positions.

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‘Studying anthropology opened a lot of doors ... it gave me a wide range of transferrable skills that I have used over and over again in my career. As well as an understanding of research practices and methodologies that I personally use in my day job, anthropology is all based around understanding people, who we are, how we got there, and why we do what we do, which lends itself to many career paths, not just my own.’

Kirsty Merrit, Head of Research Liaison at University College London

Unlock your competitive edge – discover hidden talents in anthropology

Ask any person involved in recruitment, ‘what worries you right now?’ and we can bet one thing will top their list: the skills gap. In a market that’s increasingly favoring the jobseeker, attracting cream of the crop of talent is becoming more complex, with 81% of recruitment professionals reporting difficulties in filling roles.

Some industries are struggling more than others, with 77% of healthcare and life sciences organizations reporting hiring difficulties, 76% in consumer goods and services, 76% in information technology, 73% in communication services and more.

Did you know...

Adidas hired anthropologists to observe people needing transitional and fashionable clothing to wear anywhere, from the gym to the club. That’s how athleisure wear was created.

Employers find it increasingly challenging to ensure their teams have the right mix of skills, with employers estimating that 44% of skills in their workers will be disrupted over the next five years.

As time progresses, employers are encouraged to reevaluate their recruiting strategies and who they’re hiring.

Where can you look for top talent that meets your skills requirements and unlocks a competitive edge?

It’s time to rethink your talent acquisition. Revolutionize your team – **make your next hire an anthropologist.**

Read on to discover:

- What is anthropology, and how can an anthropology professional help you?
- The dynamic skillsets and experience of anthropologists
- How to attract and retain anthropologists
- How ACE can help you to find next-level anthropology jobseekers



‘Anthropologists have actually been working in business for decades, starting with Xerox in the late 1970s. Microsoft is now among the largest employers of anthropologists worldwide.’

Anthropologists help drill down on company culture, 2018

What is an anthropologist?

Pop quiz: what makes you human? Is it all just skin and bones? It’s a tough question – one that anthropologists seek to answer. To be specific, we define anthropology as:

‘Anthropology is the study of what makes us human. To understand the full sweep and complexity of cultures across all of human history, anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences.’

Anthropologists study human nature, from biological aspects like studying bones to how we behave. Some may focus on particular fields, geographic areas, or historical periods. They are highly educated, with typical entry level education requirements at a Master’s degree level at a minimum. However, some also study anthropology at the college level and move on to other roles not traditionally linked with anthropology ([more on page 5](#)).

Traditional anthropologists work in a range of settings. Some are office based or work in laboratories, and some work in the field, requiring travel. They are often involved in planning and overseeing cultural research, collecting and analyzing data, writing reports of findings and advising organizations on how their policies, programs and products may culturally impact.

Anthropologists – particularly forensic anthropologists – may sometimes be involved in cases where [human remains have been discovered](#), helping with the identification process. Think ‘Bones’, the television series with a whole team of anthropologists. They can also play a vital role in the ecology, with some active in [preparing defense facilities against extreme weather conditions](#).

Anthropology is typically broken down into four subdisciplines, with anthropologists usually focusing on one of them:

- Archaeology
- Biological anthropology
- Cultural anthropology
- Linguistic anthropology

Where do anthropologists work?

Anthropologists are in demand, with a predicted job growth of [4% from 2022-2032](#). They are remarkably versatile, thriving in many roles and industries, so it's no surprise they're popular with recruiters. However, many anthropologists are never hired under the title of anthropologist like one who might study engineering, for example, and is hired as an engineer. They apply their insights to a [variety of sectors](#), including schools, businesses and other organizations.

For those who specialize in biomedical anthropology, [public health](#) can be an attractive option, for instance.

A keen grasp of human experiences and cultural nuances is essential to an anthropologist's nature, making them exceptional [market research](#) professionals. In fact, [a study covering 81 market research job postings](#) from September 2023 found that 5% of employers looked for candidates with anthropological backgrounds.

'Almost every job, from selling cars to going to the moon, involves dealing with people. Anthropologists study people. Dealing successfully with people, whether they are customers, constituents, clients or partners, requires social knowledge. Anthropologists study people and are experts at capturing that social knowledge, providing the information that is essential for getting the job done successfully.'

Anthropology Career Readiness Network

'Culture is not a variable that can be asserted and examined at certain times and not at others. It is, therefore, incumbent upon market research to seek out anthropological expertise in building sound and meaningful perspective.'

Bolstering market research with anthropology, Forbes, 2023

There are also [corporate anthropologists](#), who study customers, products and systems to help businesses better understand how they can connect with their audience. By deeply understanding consumers and cultures, corporate anthropologists can help elevate your product design, help your organization to be more efficient and smarter, and provide guidance to give you a competitive edge in your industry.

Some roles where you may find anthropologists include:

- Survey Researcher
 - Marketing Specialist
 - Social Worker
 - Writer
 - Religious Studies Teacher
 - Health and Wellness Manager
 - Archivist or Museum Technician
 - Midwifery
 - Lawyer
 - Forensic Science Technician
 - Cultural Ambassador
 - Political Consultant
 - Post-secondary Instructor
 - Tour Guide
 - Equality and Diversity Officer
 - Historian
 - Journalist
 - Advertising Executive
 - Advocacy Manager
 - Librarian
 - Archaeologist
 - Market Research Analyst
 - Librarian
- ...and more.



‘Studying anthropology has taught me how to be a better listener, be more curious about differing perspectives and further understand why people do what they do. My success as a psychotherapist is based in my decision to practice an applied form of anthropology.’

Career Spotlight: Nicole Torres, ACE, 2023

Skills to elevate your workforce

Anthropologists are a goldmine of talent. With diverse skill sets and unique perspectives, they can revolutionize your organization. Savvy employers can unlock a treasure trove of benefits by adding an anthropology professional to their teams, bringing fresh and innovative ideas to take business to new heights.

Diverse perspectives

Diversity and inclusion are essential pillars of the modern working world. **29% of people** have quit roles because they have felt uncomfortable. **36% are less motivated** or productive in workplaces where they feel they cannot be themselves, and more than **57% of people believe** that their companies need more inclusive policies. It’s essential to have people with diverse perspectives on your team to build a more inclusive corporate culture.

An anthropologist’s studies and careers are built upon understanding, respecting and appreciating human differences. These qualities make them invaluable coworkers and client liaisons, fostering trust and understanding across diverse groups of people.

Human-first mindset

With an innate understanding of human behavior and nuances, anthropologists can build authentic connections and provide next-level products and services. Anthropologists are trained to see the human perspective in everything, from **UX, design, creating technology** and so much more. This can be valuable, particularly when boosting the marketability of your products and company, as anthropologists can easily see things from your customers’ perspective.

‘By studying applied anthropology at the University of North Texas (UNT), I was able to bridge the gap between technology and human needs, enabling me to create more effective and user-centered products and services. This journey ultimately led me to specialize in new product development and user experience, with a focus on emerging technologies.’

Career Spotlight: Matt Artz, ACE, 2023

‘While my position is not in an anthropology department, my research skills as an anthropologist have often come in handy.’

Beyond the Anthropology Department, ACE, 2024

Skilled researchers

Anthropologists are seasoned research experts. They are trained to master the art of data collection, analysis, and place data into the wider context of a scenario efficiently. They can analyze complex data and think outside of the box.

They also often know how to use different quantitative and qualitative research techniques and are trained to find other ways of interpreting results. This makes them valuable assets for various projects and job roles and efficient problem solvers. They’re also valuable project managers and have experience conducting research projects from start to finish.

‘I never had any idea that anthropologists were working in business and high tech sectors, really, until the very week I finished my PhD and my cohort and I threw a big bash to celebrate.’

Career Spotlight: Melissa Cefkin, ACE, 2022

Analytical mindset

Analytical thinking and creative thinking continue to be the [most important skills for workers](#). This skill was ranked as the [second most important core skill for employers in 2023](#).

Anthropologists are analytically minded. They can break down massive amounts of data into themes and insights and effectively recognize patterns. This makes them valuable for data analytics, data management and qualitative analysis roles.

Physical stamina

If you’re hiring for a physical role, you’re in luck. Anthropologists who have done a lot of fieldwork must have physical stamina, sometimes spending hours in the field. While not all routes into anthropology are physically demanding, at least some degree of physical stamina is generally essential.

‘I think a lot of students see their professors and think that academia is the only path. It is certainly one path that is very rewarding and exciting, but there are other ways to do this work that aren’t as visible.’

Career Spotlight: Erica Walters, ACE, 2023

Of course, these aren’t all of the skills anthropologists possess. Some skills are unique to certain disciplines; for instance, a medical anthropologist may have a more acute understanding of illnesses and health, making them a great candidate for jobs in the health sciences.

Anthropologists also have [other key skills](#) beneficial in the workplace, including:

- Time management
- Discussion and group work skills
- Statistical and computing techniques
- Logical thinking
- Organization
- Problem solving

Secure and retain anthropology talent

Now that you know why you should hire anthropologists, how can you attract them? Consider what is important to jobseekers – what’s important to them? Here are some things that you need to keep in mind.

Showcase diversity

Anthropologists are trained to study many different cultures, so showcasing diversity is wise to demonstrate that your values align with theirs.

Anthropology is also very diverse, so ensure your job ads, hiring practices, benefits, and how you treat existing staff are inclusive. **83% of anthropologists** are female, so benefits like enhanced maternity leave or flexible working options should be considered to cater to those who may choose to become parents.

‘I wish our institutional structures and social systems could shift so that women professionals (and all people) who value their families and work-life balance can excel professionally and get paid a right livelihood. Instead, many of us face a lot of structural discrimination, which further limits our abilities to perform and make a living, nonetheless excel. If careers could include work flexibility with living wages, women and therein their families and our society would benefit.’

Career Spotlight: Amanda Concha-Holmes, ACE, 2023

Consider passive candidates

Given the versatility of anthropologists, you’ll want to be strategic when recruiting them. Posting your job role on standard jobseeking sites like Indeed or LinkedIn may not be the most effective route. Instead, consider where they spend time – advertise in relevant publications and on anthropology-centric career centers like the [ACE Career Center](#).

Keep job applications short and sweet

Sure, lengthy job applications give you more information, but that’s redundant if it’s deterring candidates from applying to your openings in the first place. **39% of jobseekers** say they would abandon a job application if the process took too long. Keep your application process as short as possible – **78% of jobseekers** would expect the application process to take 30 minutes or less. Ensure that all following steps are clear and inclusive once they’ve applied.

Offer competitive benefits

What does a jobseeker gain from applying to your job opening? Do you offer an enhanced vacation package? What about salary? For example, **anthropologists’ average salary in 2023 was \$63,800** annually. You need to ensure that your offering is attractive to appeal to the best and brightest jobseekers.

Reach anthropology specialists dedicated to solving human problems

Want to find exceptional anthropology professionals for your next role? Consider advertising on the ACE Career Center.

Benefits include:

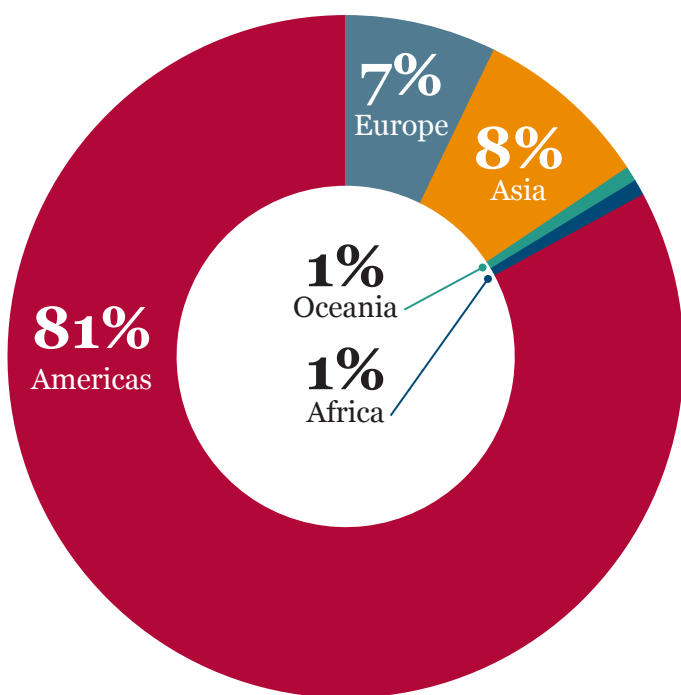
275,000 website sessions

843,000 unique page views

298,000 users

1,900 searchable profiles

- **Audience** – Reach a global anthropology audience covering a spectrum of specialties, including applied anthropology, environmental anthropology, political and legal anthropology, medical anthropology, and more.



- **Employer branding** – Associate your brand with one of the world’s most established and prestigious anthropological organizations. Get a fully branded Employer Hub to broaden your organization’s core values and messaging for a comprehensive, value-based offering.
- **Strategic and targeted advertising** – Connect with a wide variety of niche active and passive candidates in anthropology with our recruitment marketing packages.
- **Reach passive candidates** – Expand your reach by targeting top candidates in the world’s largest online journal collection, the Wiley Online Library.
- **Enhance your workflow** – Get expert recruitment support from our Talent Solutions Managers to help you find the right marketing strategy, whether you have one vacancy or multiple. Take advantage of our autopost packages for fully automated, hassle-free job postings to optimize and enhance your workflow.

Find the most qualified anthropology professionals today on [ACE](#).

Did you know...

Google hired anthropologists to observe people using their phones and why they use them. That’s why smartphones are so user-friendly.

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