

Sources of Further Information for Career Development

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There are excellent sources of both information and support for those making the transition from postgraduate study to employment. Your university careers service is a good starting point and besides tips on job hunting and skills building is likely to offer specific support to the PhD job hunter in the form of workshops, mock interviews and one to one careers support.

Because you are ideally placed time wise to plan for your career, it's useful to think not just about sources of vacancies but also the skills you may want to enhance in time for making applications. Employers, academic and otherwise, appreciate research skills supplemented by a range of other practical abilities which can be developed through study, work experience or shadowing.

Self Assessment

If you don't have time to spare, then starting your job search with some insight into your skills and values will cut out those unsuitable applications. For example if you are motivated by the need for job security and a high income then making applications to universities would conflict with these needs.

Looking for insights into what's important to you can be met by doing some skills analysis and talking priorities through with a careers adviser or members of the department. Insights are also offered by:

- **JobHuntersBible.com**: a web based version of *What colour is your parachute?* Resources to get you to reflect on strengths and preferences in life and work.
- **How to Analyse and Promote your Skills for Work, University of London**: This leaflet features a skills audit of communication, numeracy, IT, working with others, problem solving, commercial awareness and personal attributes.
- **The UK GRAD Programme site**: This site has an *Auditing your skills* section; this allows you to rate your talents and to think about skills you want to develop further. Includes some good skills descriptions to use in your CV.

Careers Advisers comment on wish list of PhD Students

Advisers supporting PhD students from your disciplines reflect that many students wish they had known sooner that it would be a good idea to:

- Take opportunities to practise presentation skills

- Understand more about the value of networking and the conference scene
- Take opportunities to develop their teaching skills
- Value the applicability of their skill and knowledge base to a range of employers
- Get work experience in an area of interest

Why not make your wish list early on so you have time to act on it?

What do PhD students do?

This information is taken from the Vitae website [What do PhDs do?](#) and is based on feedback from doctoral students six months after completing their studies in 2004. Whilst there is an emphasis on the numbers of students staying in education, you will find graduates from arts and humanities across a broad range of employing organisations. So anything is possible.

PhD graduates from arts and humanities (A&H) make up 14% of all UK PhD graduates:

- 30% are employed as higher education and university lecturers - the most popular occupation
- 15% are employed as postdoctoral researchers in universities
- 7% are employed in the cultural sector
- 6% in public administration
- A&H PhD graduates are less likely to be on permanent contracts and more likely to be on short term contracts of less than 12 months than the total PhD graduate population

This site is well worth a visit in particular for the feedback of previous students who talk about how they secured their first jobs - academic and non academic - and how they are applying their research skills to areas that are not necessarily their specialism.

If you are looking for case study examples of how people made a career as academic researchers check out the [University of Reading Career site](#), which also hosts good career management materials giving advice on planning and preparing for applications and interviews.

Skills Building

The [Subject Centre Employability Guides](#) promote a range of specific and generic skills which employers seek. The materials are useful in helping you see the relevance of your skills and knowledge base to a range of employing organisations. The glossary of skills also helps you see quickly and easily how appealing your skills are to employers. Skills like questioning, listening, working with others, planning and organising, written communication, initiative and creativity all feature and are key to the successful completion of your research.

You are probably learning new skills all the time so it's useful to document and add them to your evolving CV. Skills gained outside of study through previous work experience and community involvement should also be included. This helps employers see the breadth of your skills and experience.

Many universities offer skill building courses for postgraduates. Do take the opportunity to attend sessions on:

- networking - giving you confidence to develop new contacts and develop potential collaborations. Useful skill at conferences.
- negotiation - good skill to have when you are setting deadlines with supervisors or discussing areas of research.

- presentation - these skills improve with practice and supportive feedback.
- team building - working with others and problem solving are useful to all employers. These courses help you see what kind of team player you are.

Creating a CV

The sooner you create a CV the quicker you can develop and shape it into a document you like and feel represents your skills and achievements.

- [The University of York Careers Service website](#) is an example of the help available with CV design; it offers illustrations and advice on how to create a different CV for academic and non-academic vacancies. Go to the postgrad section of the careers site for more details.
- [The University of London, Careers service website](#) also includes useful materials specific to postgrads. Their online careers library also includes online publications on CV building and how to prepare for interview.

General Vacancy Information

The following sites are well used and are positively evaluated by careers advisers. They are a great starting point for further info. Your university careers service will also have a postgrad section with good external links to vacancy info.

- [Prospects.ac.uk](#) - national graduate site. Excellent resource for searching occupations and job sectors in addition to comprehensive info about employment in UK and internationally. Check out ***Your PhD... what next?***
- [Graduate Jobsearch online](#) - allows you to search by job sector - includes opportunities from Arts and Creative industries to IT and Computing.
- [PhD Jobs](#) - commercial employers searchable by industry sector.

Academic Vacancy Information

This is a sample of sites to give you a starting point. The department and careers service will have further specialist materials to support your job search.

- [Association of Commonwealth Universities \(ACU\)](#) - University vacancies worldwide.
- [Eduserv](#) - A free service offered by Eduserv for the education community advertising jobs mainly in the UK academic sector.
- [Guardian Jobs](#) - range of vacancies including both research and academic positions.
- [Jobs.ac.uk](#) - Jobs in research and academic related professions. Includes advice on applying for academic vacancies.
- [Times Higher Education magazine \(THE\)](#) - Jobs in Higher Education.

Reading around...

What follows is a selection of titles highly likely to be held by your university library and/or careers service.

- ***Moving on in Your Career: a Guide for Academic Researchers and Postgraduates*** by Lynda Ali and

Barbara Graham. Useful for those considering making the transition from academia to other work areas.

Given the competition for academic posts it's worth researching the changing nature of university teaching and the possible role you will play. The following titles look at changes in institutions and the pros and cons of academic life.

- ***Successful Research Careers: a Guide for Academics*** by S Delamont and P Atkinson. Written by academics for academics. Full of practical examples and case studies highlighting ways of progressing within academia.
 - ***The Academic Career Handbook*** by Lorraine Blaxter, Christina Hughes and Malcolm Tight. Puts higher education in context and offers supportive ***Dos and Don'ts of successful job searches*** and ***Writing your CV creatively***.
 - ***Making Sense of Academic Life, Academics, Universities and Change*** by Peter G Taylor. Insights into the changing roles of teachers in higher education and some things to think about if you want to take on a management and leadership role.
 - ***University Researchers and the Job Market*** by AGCAS and University of London Careers Service. Practical tips and hints and sources of further vacancy information.
 - ***The Academic's Support Kit*** by D Epstein. Chapters on ***Why have an academic career*** and ***Pros and Cons***.
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Created on: June 15th 2010

Updated on: June 15th 2010