

What Can I Do With a PhD?

Alternatives to Careers in Academia

Increased Employment Opportunities

While a PhD is now the established entry qualification for *academic* employment in higher education, PhD students are increasingly looking outside these sectors at a wider range of opportunities. Unemployment among PhD holders is significantly lower than among first degree holders. Holding a postgraduate degree may increase your chances of employment in a variety of fields.

Highly Desirable Skills

PhD holders are increasingly sought for their *high level skills*, which transfer into a wide range of sectors. The most obvious skills gained during doctoral studies include writing, research, critical analyses, and time management. Additional skills also include investigative and organizational skills, public speaking, and performing under pressure. Opportunities vary according to the subject matter of your doctorate and will need to be investigated. Many opportunities exist--the diversity of careers range much further than what one might expect!

A Variety of Opportunities and Options

PhD holders may enter the *corporate, non-profit, and government* worlds as policy analysts, consultants, human resource managers, and program managers. Many people have also used their PhD experience to conduct research beyond academia, serving as directors of research, research analysts, survey researchers, and statisticians. While there is a stigma that PhD programs do not prepare people to become practitioners, many PhD holders have pursued careers as community developers, program directors in social service agencies, entrepreneurs, writers, and artists. Many people have found doctoral programs to serve as an effective way to write, perform, and/or publish their work.

Getting Started...

Today, PhD holders embark upon literally hundreds of career paths. Although teaching and conducting research remains a dominant activity among the thousands of PhD holders today, other forms of employment are growing both in number and significance. The best way to determine what career paths to pursue upon PhD completion is to consult employers or colleagues for employment details in your area of interest. For more general information, visit your career center or look at career guides, books, and websites that describe academic career alternatives, including:

Basalla, Susan & Debelius, Maggie. (2001). *"So what are you going to do with that?": A guide to career-changing for M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.