

## Chapter 5: Outside Academia – Finding a Job in Industry, Business, or Nonprofits

---

This chapter provides guidance to all of those considering the possibility of pursuing a career outside of academia, including:

- Making the transition
- Self-assessment: Identifying skills and interests
- Career exploration: informational interviews and networking
- Interning, Volunteering, and Shadowing
- Locating Job Opportunities
- The Application Process
  - Researching the Organization
  - Resumes
  - Cover Letters
  - Interviews
  - Negotiating the offer and beyond

Considering a non-academic career? You're not alone. Today an increasing number of graduate students are opting for careers outside of academia. For some, the academic job market has necessitated considering other career possibilities. Others have made a decision to seek work outside academia for a variety of personal and professional reasons. The key is to find work to which you are drawn and for which you are suited. We encourage you to use the resources and ideas in this section to get started. The University of Michigan provides information about the non-academic career path, including information on transferrable skills from graduate school, and translating your skills to a non-academic setting:

<http://gradschool.about.com/od/alternativecareer/a/nonacadskill.htm>

### MAKING THE TRANSITION

It is not unusual to feel pressure in your department to pursue (tenure-track) careers in academia...however, your department, along with your discipline's national professional organization(s), may be the best place to get information on non-academic careers in your field. If you feel comfortable, try talking to your advisor about non-academic paths. See a related article, "To Tell or Not to Tell (Your Advisor)" here:

<http://chronicle.com/article/To-Tell-Or-Not-To-Tell-Your/45701/>

If you feel uneasy about broaching the subject with your advisor, try to find a faculty mentor in your department who is open to the idea of non-academic careers or come to CareerLAB for career counseling by a staff professional (all counseling is completely confidential).

Read about the experiences of other graduate students who decided to pursue non-academic careers.

- The links and blogs in The Alternative Scientist continue to be very relevant and useful, although the blog is not very active at the moment: <http://alternative-scientist.blogspot.com/>
- Check out The Chronicle's "Leaving Academe" forum: <http://chronicle.com/forums/index.php/board,28.o.html>

- The blog, On the Fence, is geared toward “indecisive academics who are on the market, or currently employed in academe, but considering non-academic job options:” <http://phd-onthefence.blogspot.com/>
- Life After the PhD is a useful blog dedicated to providing career advice for graduate students who are considering leaving the academy. It features interviews with PhDs who have gone onto successful careers outside of academia, as well as other career resources: <http://lifeafterthephd.com/>

Start your transition to a career outside of academia by becoming informed and making a plan of action. These resources will provide a good guide:

- Sellout is a site for those considering careers beyond academia, and is managed by Mark Johnson, an English PhD who left the academy: <http://ironstring.com/sellout/>
- The Prodigal Academic aggregates numerous sites of interest to those looking for non-academic science careers: <http://theprodigalacademic.blogspot.com/p/non-academic-science-career-information.html>
- The Association of Departments of English provides key advice for those thinking of pursuing a non-academic job relevant to both English PhD and those outside of that field: [http://www.ade.org/cgi-shl/docstudio/docs.pl?job\\_nonacademic](http://www.ade.org/cgi-shl/docstudio/docs.pl?job_nonacademic)
- For links to information on alternative career options for those with PhDs, see: [http://gradschool.about.com/od/alternativecareer/Alternative\\_Careers\\_for\\_PhDs.htm](http://gradschool.about.com/od/alternativecareer/Alternative_Careers_for_PhDs.htm)
- The American Physical Society provides a number of resources for non-traditional careers: <http://www.aps.org/units/fgsa/careers/non-traditional/index.cfm>
- “What can you do with a Humanities PhD anyway?” <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/03/what-can-you-do-with-a-humanities-phd-anyway/359927/>
- “What Doors Does a Ph.D. in History Open?” <http://chronicle.com/article/What-Doors-Does-a-PhD-in/135448/>
- “Non-Academic Career Options for PhDs in the Humanities and Social Sciences” <http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/tipsheets/non-academic-career-options-phds-and-mas>
- “Developing a Non-Academic Career” [http://www.mla.org/job\\_nonacademic](http://www.mla.org/job_nonacademic)

## Resources

- Through the CareerLAB website, connect to Versatile PhD – a site dedicated to helping humanities and social science PhDs and graduate students identify and prepare for possible non-academic careers.
- PhDs.org provides numerous links to articles and websites, plus allows you to search for non-academic careers: <http://www.phds.org/jobs/nonacademic-careers/>
- The job bank through the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students provide job postings from across the disciplines: <http://jobs.nagps.org/a/jobs/find-jobs>
- The Chronicle provides further advice about where to find non-academic jobs: <http://chronicle.com/article/Where-to-Find-Information-on/45379>

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the essential first step for anyone considering a new career path. Honest self-assessment now may save you from pursuing an ultimately unfulfilling career of convenience (“This is what all Ph.D.s in \_\_\_\_\_ go into outside of academia”). Find out if your career interest(s) fit with your personality,

temperament, interests, values, learning style, and work style. Read about the importance of self-assessment for graduate students considering non-academic careers.

- In "What you Should be Doing Now to Prepare for your Next Job Search," Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong give suggestions for how to use your summers to explore career options and take stock of your skills and interests: <http://chronicle.com/article/Using-the-Summer-to-Explore/46948/>
- Sandra Yin offers useful advice in this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article: <http://chronicle.com/article/Know-Thyself/45287>

You will spend at least one-third of your life working. Make sure you enjoy it! Take the time to identify your goals, skills, likes and dislikes. Be aware that you may need to repeat these tests periodically throughout your working career as your interests, experience and priorities change. Below are some well-known self-assessment tools as well as resources to help you identify your unique skills. After consulting the following web and print resources, meet with a career advisor to discuss your findings and what they mean for you.

### Self-Assessment Tests

Richard N. Bolles, author of *What Color is Your Parachute* offers the following points of advice to keep in mind when using career and personality tests. These can be found in more detail on his website, Job Hunters' Bible: <http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/>

- There is no one test that everyone loves.
- There is no one test that always gives better results than others.
- No test should necessarily be assumed to be accurate.
- You should take several tests, rather than just one.
- Always let your intuition be your guide.
- Don't let tests make you forget that you are absolutely unique on the face of the earth - as your fingerprints attest.
- You are never finished with a test until you have done some good hard thinking about yourself. Be absolutely honest in your responses. As Bolles says, "Lie, and you'll get what you deserve."

### Identifying your Skills

"But I don't have any skills!" is what nearly all graduate students say when asked what skills they have. You do have skills, which can be applied to numerous career arenas. Take some time to explore them! Here are some great sources of information.

- Here, Tara Kuther outlines skills that graduate students have that translate outside of academic: <http://gradschool.about.com/od/alternativecareer/a/nonacadskill.htm>
- Here, Robin Wagner explores how recasting oneself for non-academic jobs can uncover skills that you did not realize you had!: <http://chronicle.com/article/Recasting-Yourself-for/46403/>
- Here, Richard N. Bolles highlights different types of skills that people may have: [http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/articles/article.php?art\\_item=009](http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/articles/article.php?art_item=009)
- 

### CareerLAB Resources

- You can make an appointment for **Self-Assessment Counseling** by visiting [www.brown.edu/careerlab/advising](http://www.brown.edu/careerlab/advising). Be sure to identify yourself as a graduate student.

- **Strong Interest Inventory** This self-administered instrument is used to help understand your interests and identify the kinds of work for which you might be suited. After completion, the test is sent out for scoring and an appointment is booked for an interpretation with an advisor. See a career advisor to get started.
- **Use FOCUS** free of cost via the CareerLAB website. Focus is an online self assessment tool to help students through self discovery, reflection and career exploration. This interactive tool helps to determine your interests, values, preferences, and skills, and provides you with suggested career paths based on your individual results: <http://careerdevelopment.brown.edu/resources/focus.php>

## Online Resources

- Are you an Introvert or an Extrovert? Do you rely more on intuition or sensory data? Take the Keirsey test (based on the work of Myers and Briggs) and find out what it all means. <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/instruments2.aspx?partid=0>
- Use Type Focus to discover your personality type, strengths, and how they relate to careers at: <http://www.typefocus.com/>
- A useful personality test from the authors of the book *Do What You Are*: <http://www.personalitytype.com/>
- For a shortened version of "The Birkman Method" consisting of 24 forced-choice questions. This is a fast test that in each question asks you to choose between two categories even if you do not particularly like either one. <http://www.princetonreview.com/careerquiz.aspx>
- This quiz based on your interests, values, and personal style will lead you to a variety of careers, which you can then research immediately through the online Occupational Outlook Handbook. It's designed for general audiences. Automatic connection to online material about career fields relevant to your style is very helpful: <http://www.careerkey.org/>

## Print Resources

- *So What Are You Going to do with That? A Guide for M.A.'s and Ph.D's Seeking Careers Outside of the Academy* by Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius (Ferrari, Straus and Giroux, 2001)
- *PhD [Alternate] Career Clinic* by Jane Y. Chin (9Pillars Publishing, 2011)
- *What Color is Your Parachute? : A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career Changers* by Richard N. Bolles. (Ten Speed Press, 2002 edition.)

## CAREER EXPLORATION

Once you have completed some self-assessment exercises, it's time to explore careers and identify those which fit you. There are a number of methods to explore careers and they should be used in tandem to give you the best and widest range of information. Use on-line and print resources to follow career trends and find information on salary, duties and qualifications, working environment, and stress level. Use informational interviewing to get an inside perspective on potential careers and possibly discover related careers you may not have otherwise known existed. Shadowing, volunteering, and internships are unparalleled ways of getting firsthand knowledge of a potential career.

## Career and Industry Profiles

- Career Magazine provides current and archived articles about various careers and the job search, as well as links to other career sites: <http://www.careermag.com/>
- Fast Company offers information about specific industries and companies: <http://www.fastcompany.com/>
- Occupational Outlook Quarterly, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides employment projections and career information. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/home.htm>
- For a directory for hundreds of job resources, services, and career information guides covering business, industry, government, non-profit, overseas work, etc., see: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>
- For information about specific industries, companies, narratives about a typical day in various careers, career advice, message boards, and more, see: [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)
- The Wall Street Journal's career site offers salary and hiring information, career columnists, job-hunting advice, etc., for the business and industry sectors: <http://online.wsj.com/public/page/news-career-jobs.html>
- WetFeet provides a range of career resources, including industry and company profiles, advice for career changers, resources for women and minorities, and much more: [www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com)

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational Interviewing is a key strategy for career exploration as well as for building your network. Making the contact and arranging the interview is the first step; knowing what you want to ask when you arrive is critical. Review the questions below, pick those that are most appropriate, and tailor them to fit the situation and your personal style. Let the conversation flow – don't feel like you have to ask every question on the list.

### What is the purpose of informational interviewing?

Informational interviewing allows you to talk to "experts" about their careers and career paths. The goal of these conversations is to expand your understanding of a career area as you consider career directions, as well as to make valuable professional contacts. The purpose is not to obtain a job. Informational interviewing allows you to:

- learn about a career field: its culture, opportunities, and necessary training
- receive advice on job search strategies
- gather information about a specific organization
- explore what a particular job might entail
- receive advice on graduate school or other preparatory experiences
- develop a network of contacts
- build your confidence and knowledge for job interviews

### Who can I interview?

You can interview anyone who is doing work in a field that might be of interest. This includes family members, friends, faculty members, the person sitting next to you at a party, and Brown graduates. See "Opportunities for Informational Interviewing" (below) for more ideas.

## How should I arrange the interview?

Interviews can be arranged by letter, e-mail, or telephone. Many people find it helpful to write a brief letter of introduction, and then follow up with a phone call to arrange a time to talk. The talk can be in person or on the phone. E-mail often allows for continuing discussion.

## How can I prepare for an information interview?

Do research before you go to save time and have a more valuable conversation! Use print, electronic, and personal resources to gather information about the career field and the organization. If you've done your research or talked to others in the field, you can pose more interesting questions that will yield richer answers. Think about what you want to learn from each contact. Use the questions above as a guide. Be sure to include questions about additional contacts or resources. Each interview can lead to new sources of information.

## How should I follow up?

Write a thank you note indicating your appreciation for their time and advice. Consider additional follow up to keep them up-to-date with your career plans and to let them know how their advice contributed to your career decisions or job search.

## Sample Questions for Information Interviewing

### **Career path:**

- Describe your career path leading to your current position.
- How did you select this career?
- What was your first job?
- Are there alternative routes to the same career/job?
- What are the levels or steps in this career?
- Is there mobility between organizations? Nationally? Internationally?

### **Education/Training/Experience necessary:**

- What background, skills, or experiences are necessary?
- Are there specific opportunities for applicants with Ph.D.s or M.A./M.S.?
- Is an internship advisable?
- Are there some gaps in my resume that need to be filled?

### **Daily activities/organizational culture/lifestyle/fit:**

- What is your typical day like?
- Is there a typical work schedule? Is overtime, flextime, part-time, job-sharing, travel required or possible?
- What is the work environment like? Casual or formal? Fast-paced or relaxed?  
Team-oriented or independent?
- What types of people generally thrive in this environment/career?
- How well can career and family responsibilities be managed in this field?

- What effect does this career have on your lifestyle and family life?
- What are the rewards of your work? Drawbacks?
- What type of training is provided?
- What is the typical salary range?
- How much autonomy is there?
- Are there opportunities to receive mentoring?
- What is the typical timeframe for moving up?

### **Future of the career field:**

- How do you see the career field changing in the next decade?
- Where will the jobs be in the next decade? What types of jobs will emerge? What types will be eliminated?

### **I want to learn more:**

- Who else would you recommend that I talk to for information?
- What professional organizations are active and helpful to students?
- What journals/magazines would be helpful to read?
- What are helpful websites to explore?
- What question haven't I asked you that I should be thinking about?
- What is the best career advice you can give me?

### **Online Resources**

- Here, Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong detail how to gain valuable insight about career options by conducting informational interviews with people in fields that you are interested in: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-to-Do-an-Informational/44793>
- In “Informational Interviewing 101,” Robin Wagner discusses getting the most out of informational interviews: <http://chronicle.com/article/Informational-Interviewing-101/45380/>
- For a New York Times post on informational interviewing by Marci Alboher, see: <http://shiftingcareers.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/29/mastering-the-informational-interview/>
- For an article on the benefits of having a mentor outside of academia, see: <http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Youll-Want-a-Mentor-Ou/45513/>
- For an article on the long-term benefits of building your network, see: <http://chronicle.com/article/Coffee-in-2002-a-Job-Offer-in/45086>
- For a tutorial on informational interviewing, from what to ask, to what to wear, see: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-Do-You-Teach-Networking-/127008/>

### **CareerLAB Resources**

- Use BRUnet, Brown’s more than 5,200 member career network, to connect with alumni in a variety of fields through informational interviews: <http://alumni.brown.edu/volunteer/career/>

- The CareerLAB also organizes programs in which graduate alumni share thoughts on career choices, the job search, and life after Brown. Career Conversations cover a wide range of opportunities. Check out the events calendar for upcoming programs.
- At Brown Career Fairs you have the opportunity to speak in person or online with representatives from a wide variety of employers. On-campus Career Fairs are open to all Brown students. Brown has also participated in Virtual Career Fairs with other research institutions.

## INTERN, VOLUNTEER, SHADOW

After researching career opportunities and conducting informational interviewing, consider interning, volunteering, or shadowing to help determine if a profession or organization is a good fit for you.

Formal internship programs for graduate students are not as common among organizations as those for undergraduate students, so chances are you will be using your well-crafted skills of persuasion to convince a company or organization why they will benefit from creating a temporary (and paid!) position for you. Volunteering, of course, allows you more control over the nature and duration of the arrangement. Job shadowing usually occurs over a period of one or more days and consists of unobtrusively following and observing one or more persons during the course of a workday at a particular organization.

- For an article on the benefits of doing an internship during the course of your graduate career, see: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-Internships-Can-Open-Doors/46291/>
- Here, Robin Wagner provides a valuable list of web resources for graduate students looking for internship opportunities: <http://chronicle.com/article/Web-Resources-For-Internships/46292/>
- The University of California, Berkeley's Career Center provides an useful wealth of information about graduate students and internships: <https://career.berkeley.edu/phds/PhDIntern.stm>
- The US Department of State provides internship opportunities for graduate and post-graduate students, some of which are paid: <http://careers.state.gov/students/programs>
- For internship and fellowship opportunities in the sciences see: <http://www.science.gov/internships/graduate.html>
- The CareerLAB uses an on-line posting service. These internships are geared toward undergraduates, but this is an excellent database of employers. See the CareerLAB website for the latest information.

## LOCATING OPPORTUNITIES

Locating employment opportunities is your next challenge, especially given the existence of a large and hidden job market (jobs that are under-advertised and tend to be filled by word of mouth). Personal contacts will be very important at this stage. If you don't have any personal contacts then make them! Remember that informational interviewing can serve as part of the networking process. Tell everyone you know about your job interests, not just those already in your future profession. A family member or friend may not be able to help you directly but may know someone who can.

### Resources

- For an article on "Quasi-academic" careers, see: <http://chronicle.com/article/Quasi-Academic-Careers/47054/>
- For an article on alternate career paths for PhDs in the humanities and the social sciences, see:

[http://education-portal.com/articles/Alternative\\_Jobs\\_for\\_Humanities\\_PhDs.html](http://education-portal.com/articles/Alternative_Jobs_for_Humanities_PhDs.html)

- Here, Gabriela Montell provides a list of web resources for where to find non-academic jobs across a wide variety of disciplines: <http://chronicle.com/article/Where-to-Find-Information-on/45379/>
- University of California, Berkeley's Career Center provides numerous resources for non-academic career options across the disciplines: <https://career.berkeley.edu/Phds/PhDCareer.stm>

Brown also offers its students access to **WetFeet** – a site that provides insightful profiles of companies, careers, and industries to help job seekers find the right career, the right industry, the right company, and the right job. Here, you can conduct in-depth research on companies, careers and industries and access expert career advice. You can download WetFeet's popular Insider Guides providing detailed information on a variety of topics.

Additionally, if you are a graduate student in the Humanities and Social Sciences interested in exploring careers outside of academia, be sure to take full advantage of the access to **The Versatile PhD** offered through Brown. This incredibly useful resource demystifies nonacademic careers for humanists and social scientists, highlights career paths, and provides peer and professional support for non-academic career options. Access to The Versatile PhD is password protected for members of the Brown University community. To access the website, you will have to establish an account that is free to members of the Brown community. Go to: <http://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/careerlab/resources/versatile-phd/versatile-phd> and follow the instructions.

According to the site, “[t]he key concept here is *versatility*: the ability to apply your skills and interests in a wide variety of fields” – perhaps fields you never considered before. Other benefits Versatile PhDs provides include the ability to:

- Join a thriving, supportive web-based community where you can dialogue with "Versatile PhDs" in and outside the academy
- Read first-person narratives written by real humanities and social science PhDs and ABDs who have established non-academic careers, describing how they did it and sharing their advice from experience
- Participate in Career Panel discussions with Versatile PhDs working in a given field

The following companies have hired Brown Graduate School Students. This is by no means an exhaustive list of employers, but is meant to give you an idea of the possibilities open to individuals with advanced degrees.

## Masters Degree or ABD in Humanities or Social Sciences

- ABT Associates
- Adelphia Communications
- Agency.com
- Andanza, Inc.
- Askjeeves.com
- ATT Broadband
- Back Row Productions
- Bank of Japan
- Bantam Dell Books
- Bedford/St. Martins Press
- BigBad.com
- Blackwell Publishers
- Britannica U.com
- Cambridge, Mass. Public School System
- Christie's, Inc.
- Cleveland Museum of Art
- Dell Computers
- Doubleclick.com
- Earthwatch
- Environmental Advocates
- Fast Company
- Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
- Foreign Ministry of Japan
- GTE Internetworking
- IBM Global Services, Australia
- Infoworld.com
- Intel
- International Business Solutions
- Jardine Fleming Securities/Research
- Mainspring
- McKinsey & Company
- Meansbusiness.com
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- National Consortium for Community Ed
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation

- P.B.S. Public Television
- Paine Webber, Inc.
- Pfizer, Inc.
- Public Policy Institute of California
- Qubit Technologies
- RI Department of Education
- RI Education Alliance
- Sigma Research Biochemicals
- Southend Press
- TheStreet.com
- United Nations Assn. of Greater Boston
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- USS Constitution Museum
- Women of the West Museum

### Masters Degree or ABD in Sciences, Engineering, or Mathematics

- Abacus Direct Corp
- Accenture (Andersen Consulting)
- B.F. Goodrich Aerospace
- Boston Technology Inc.
- Cambridge Technology Partners, Inc.
- Citibank, Inc.
- Cubiculum Systems, L.L.C.
- Design Lab
- Digital Equipment Corporation
- Empact Solutions
- Engineering Animation
- Fidelity Investments
- GE Power Systems
- Goldman Sachs
- Hager Richter GeoScience
- Hibbitt, Karlsson and Sorenson, Inc.
- HighGround Systems, Inc.
- I.B.M. Corporation
- Intel
- Interactive Factory
- Lightlogic, Inc.
- Lucent Technologies
- Microcosm Technologies, Inc.
- Microsoft Corporation
- NASA Naval Undersea Warfare Center
- NetZero, Inc.
- Next Point Networks
- Oracles Corporation
- Pacific Data Images
- Raytheon Systems company
- Sun Microsystems Inc.
- Sybase Inc.
- TCY Technologies, Inc.
- Texas Instruments Inc.
- The Mathworks
- The Motley Fool, England
- Wellesley Centers for Research on Women

### PhD in Sciences, Engineering, or Mathematics

- Agency.com
- AT&T Bell Labs
- ClickSafe.com L.L.C.
- McKinsey & Company
- Ingenuity Systems
- Bristol-Meyer Squibb
- IBM
- Microcosm Technologies
- Harvard University Flybase
- 3M corporation
- Seagate Technology
- Spectra Science Corporation

### Online Resources

To find other PhD-friendly companies and organizations and to browse job openings in a variety of fields, use the online job banks and resources below:

- The Job Bank provided by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students: <http://www.nagps.org/>
- Use the search function of USA Jobs at: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
- The job listings provided at Academic 360 is not just restricted to teaching positions: <http://www.academic360.com/>
- See the Jobs section of The Versatile Phd to browse recently posted jobs: <http://versatilephd.com/jobs/>
- The Columbia University Center for Career Education provides links to a number of resources, including where to look for jobs: <http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/tipsheets/non-academic-career-options-phds-and-mas>
- Search jobs for PhDs and locate PhD-friendly organizations here: <http://jobs.phds.org/>

- The website for the journal *Science* provides a searchable database of jobs for science students: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>
- Research Gate provides users with specialized job listings: <http://www.researchgate.net/>

### Job Bank Resources

- The Vault: [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)
- Monster: [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
- Riley Guide: [www.rileyguide.com](http://www.rileyguide.com)
- The Job Hunters' Bible: <http://rileyguide.com/>
- Career Builder: [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)
- Simply Hired: [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com)

### International Job Resources

Many of the above job banks include options to search for international jobs. You may also consider using the below links if you are especially interested in a job outside of the US:

- Quintessential Careers Worldwide Job Resources: [www.quintcareers.com/Global\\_job\\_resources.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/Global_job_resources.html)
- For jobs in Australia: <http://www.seek.com.au/>
- GoAbroad's job search: <http://jobs.goabroad.com/>
- 4International Career and Jobs: <http://www.4icj.com/>
- DevEx's international development jobs: <http://www.devex.com/en/jobs>
- Indeed.com's International Jobs: <http://www.indeed.com/worldwide>

### Additional Online Resources

Additionally, the following blogs and websites are both entertaining, and a source of up-to-date articles and information from the point of view of PhDs who have pursued non-academic paths:

- [www.selloutyoursoul.com](http://www.selloutyoursoul.com)
- For advice tailored to historians: [www.Beyondacademe.com](http://www.Beyondacademe.com)
- [www.worstprofessorever.com](http://www.worstprofessorever.com)
- <http://www.phd-onthefence.blogspot.com/>
- <http://alternativephd.wordpress.com/about/>

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Now that you have identified some job openings or simply places you'd like to work, it's time to convince your prospective employers that you are the best candidate for the job. Start with researching the particular organization and also, if possible, the particular position in order to tailor your resume, cover letter, and interview to their needs.

Do remember to never fall to the temptation to stretch or inflate your experience and abilities in order to 'get your foot in the door'. If your previous employer is contacted and has never heard of the old job title you put on your resume, needless to say it will hurt your chances of getting the new job. Don't inflate your skills or add skills that you don't have on your resume. At an interview you may be asked to demonstrate them! If you don't have a needed skill say so honestly and add that you would be willing to learn it before beginning your job or you could try to negotiate more on the job training.

The non-academic job search process can be a difficult one at times because now you – the veteran graduate student – must redefine your selling points from academic accomplishments to practical skill sets. It can also be an empowering experience and a time for establishing a new professional identity and embarking on a new career path.

### Researching the Organization

Below is a basic list of items you'll want to find out as you gather information about the organization. Add to this your own topics of interest.

- Products and services
- Organizational and geographical structure
- Philosophy
- History
- Company trends (profits/losses)
- Industry trends
- Future directions
- Work atmosphere, diversity, etc.
- Employee benefits
- Company “current events” (ie awards, lawsuits, recent developments)

### Resources

- WetFeet: <http://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/careerlab/resources/jobinternship-search-tools/wetfeet/wetfeet>
- The Vault: [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)
- Monster: [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
- For company reviews, salaries, and the inside scoop from anonymous employees: [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)
- Business Wire provides press releases and news by industry at: [www.businesswire.com](http://www.businesswire.com)
- Research non-profits at: [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)
- Use LinkedIn to find people within the organization, figure out what they do and perhaps if they would be willing to talk with you about the organization.
- Go to competitor websites to get information on developments in the company's industry or sector.
- Call the human resources department of the company for which you'll be interviewed and ask for company brochures, new employee packets, etc.
- Consult publications such as Forbes, Fortune, Business Week, Wall Street Journal and others for their 'best of' and 'worst of' lists that provide unbiased information about a variety of companies.

## WRITING A RESUME

For those seeking non-academic positions, the resume is your most important job tool.

- The resume serves as your introduction to potential employers, requiring careful attention to both content and style. It is your marketing tool.
- For an employer, the resume can be used as a screener, and you don't want to be screened out.
- It is said that the average reader will take about 25 seconds to read a resume: your challenge is to include the most important information in a readable form.
- An effective resume highlights your skills and experiences to show you are a good fit for the targeted position.

A key question for many graduate students is how a resume is different from a CV. **A resume is not just a short CV.**

- A CV is an academic document used for faculty and other research positions. It is a listing of academic training and experiences. Therefore, the details of academic preparation usually matter, such as dissertation title and summary, or advisor's name.
- Since a resume is used for jobs outside academia, the details above are often excluded. Instead, you'll want to include skills and experiences that will be valued in the non-academic arena where you are seeking employment.

A caveat for scientists: Often scientists seek research positions in industry. In this case, a resume may have many of the same components as a CV; in fact, it is possible that a CV will be appropriate. Sometimes scientists will use a "hybrid" document, which includes both academic and resume categories.

### What Does Your Resume say About you?

If you have made a decision to look for work outside academia, your resume needs to reflect this. For example, whereas a CV could include professional organizations related to your field, or titles of your articles or professional presentations, in most cases, a resume will not. Will your potential employer be interested in the actual content of your work, or in your research and writing skills? It is necessary to show an employer that you understand who they are and what they are looking for. Your resume needs to shout the message that you want to work with them.

### Some Key Points to Remember

- The purpose of the resume is to get you an interview – then you can get the job.
- As the resume is tailored to a specific employer, many job seekers will need more than one version.
- A resume can include paid and unpaid work, internships and jobs, research, teaching, and other types of experiences.
- Pay attention to spacing, white space, use of bullets, headings, and highlighting features. Be consistent in your style and format.

- The font size should be no smaller than 10 pt. Margins should be at least half an inch.
- A one-page resume is often preferred by employers, however, some graduate students will need an additional page.
- Do not include personal information such as age, date-of-birth, marital status, children, height/weight, or social security number.
- Always spellcheck and proofread. And then do it again. No mistakes!
- Every entry on your resume must be 100% accurate and true.

### Step 1: Review Resume Samples

Don't reinvent the wheel. There are many places to go for help.

- Ask to see the resumes of friends and family, especially those who have recently been hired.
- Look online for examples of resumes for people in your field.
- Attend a graduate student resume writing workshop.
- See a career advisor for a resume critique.

### Step 2: Inventory Your Accomplishments, Training, Skills, and Other Experiences

Make lists if you are just beginning this process. If you already have a CV, consider adding/deleting categories and editing/revising your existing document. Consider including:

- Academic degrees, institution
- Paid/unpaid work or internships
- Awards/honors
- Volunteer/community service
- Computer/language/lab skills
- Experience (research, teaching, writing, leadership, technical, related, etc.)
- Other interests/activities
- (Selected) publications/presentations

### Step 3: Prepare a Draft

- Heading/contact information  
Name, address, phone number where you want calls and you can get messages (with a respectable message on your machine), email address.
- Education  
Include name and location of your schools, degrees received, date of degrees. Do not include anything that has not yet occurred.

- Experience  
List your experiences using function headings to focus the reader's attention on skill areas (i.e., Research Experience). Don't categorize according to paid/unpaid. Combine to emphasize types of skills. Identify where you worked, location, your title, and dates of affiliation. Use short, descriptive phrases starting with "action words" (verbs) that reflect your skills.
- Skills  
List languages, lab, or computer skills
- Honors
- Interests/Activities (if appropriate)
- Publications/presentations (if appropriate)

#### Step 4: Proof your resume

- Have your resume critiqued, and make revisions.
- Proofread, check for punctuation and spelling as well as format and style.
- Show your resume draft to a friend or colleague.
- See a CareerLAB advisor for a critique.

#### Step 5: Print your resume

- Use resume weight paper (available at the bookstore or copy stores).
- Pick a light, neutral color, like white or ivory.
- Use a good printer, or have the resume printed.
- If you like, purchase matching envelopes and paper for your cover letters.

#### Resources

- Columbia University's Center for Career Education also contains valuable tips and examples: <http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/tipsheets/resumes-and-cvs-converting-your-cv-resume>
- Among other useful advice, Robin Wagner details how to convert a CV to a resume: <http://chronicle.com/article/Recasting-Yourself-for/46403/>
- Here, Kim Thompson and Terren Ilana Wein provide an example of how to convert a C.V. into an effective resume: <http://chronicle.com/article/A-CV-Revised-Into-a-R-sum-/44714/>

## COVER LETTER WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Writing a cover letter should never be done as an afterthought – it is just as important as your resume. If the reader's attention is not grabbed quickly through a well-written cover letter, your resume might not be considered.

The challenge for advanced degree candidates is to sell your skills, experience, expertise, and maturity. Distinguish yourself by highlighting your background and specifically referring to the training, preparation and experiences that make you a good fit. You won't want to reiterate your resume, but provide an introduction to the skills and experiences that make you a good candidate.

Remember to tailor the cover letter to the reader, just as you tailor the resume. For an opportunity outside academia, be sure to showcase the skills and personal characteristics that the employer is looking for. This might mean playing down your specific academic credentials and playing up your communication, teamwork, research, analysis, and other skills that are highly desirable in the non-academic setting.

### Purpose

A cover letter usually goes along with a resume. It deserves just as much attention. A terrific resume might never be read if the cover letter doesn't provide the "hook!" Consider a cover letter your first "writing sample".

- A good cover letter provides additional information, and complements, but does not repeat, your resume.
- Use the opportunity to indicate why you are a good fit for the job.
- Show that you have done research on the type of work, position and the organization.

### Cover Letter Tips

- Use standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper, the same paper as your resume, with matching envelopes.
- Stay to one page.
- Word process and then check and recheck for spelling, grammar, and typographical errors.
- Address your letter to a specific person with the correct title (avoid "To Whom it May Concern").
- Tailor your letter to a specific position (if possible).
- Write it in your own words so it sounds like you-- not like something out of a book.
- Visit Career Services for a cover letter critique.

### Paragraph 1

- State the reason for the letter.
- Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying.
- Indicate how you learned of the opening (referral, newspaper, Career Fairs, job posting, etc.).

## Paragraph 2 and possibly 3

- State why you are interested in the position/organization.
- Indicate how your academic background and other experiences make you a good candidate.
- Mention relevant skills you have developed through your experiences (summer jobs, volunteer positions, internships, community service, campus leadership and activities, etc.).
- Explain what you can do for the employer (use your knowledge of the organization).

## Final Paragraph

- Explain your interest in discussing the position or other possibilities within the company/organization.
- Repeat your phone number and/or e-mail address.
- Offer to produce additional information if desired.
- Close with a statement or question that will encourage a response (e.g., you will be in the city on a certain date and would like to set up an interview).

## Resources

- Take a look at “What Makes a Good Cover Letter” on the Jobstar website for ways to craft an interesting and engaging cover letter: <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/cletters.php>
- You can download examples of cover letters for non-academic jobs here: [http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/cmsfiles/File/Career\\_Non-Academic\\_Handout\\_10-04.pdf](http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/cmsfiles/File/Career_Non-Academic_Handout_10-04.pdf)

## INTERVIEWING

"A great resume will get you an interview. A great interview is what gets you a job."

### Preparing for the Interview - The 3 R's

Three steps to prepare yourself for an upcoming interview.

- **Research:** Gather information about the position, organization and the field through print and online resources and informational interviews. Read information from websites, job descriptions, annual reports, trade journals, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- **Review & Relate :** Review your experiences and skills and draw connections between your background and the position's responsibilities and qualifications. Identify specific examples that highlight your relevant skills.
- **Rehearse :** Anticipate the kinds of questions you may be asked, try your responses out with a friend, or schedule a practice interview at Career Services. Craft your own list of questions about the position and organization to ask the interviewer. The goal is not to memorize answers (which would sound rehearsed), but to gain confidence in discussing your strengths and experience in an interview situation.

## Knowing What to Expect

An employer will be using the interview to ascertain three things:

- Do you have the academic background, technical qualifications, and skills to do the job?
- Do you have the personal characteristics and competencies necessary for effective performance?
- Are you a good fit with the organization?

In most cases, an interviewer has already decided from your resume that you meet the first criteria, though s/he may have additional questions about your background, on which you'll be asked to expand. The answers to questions two and three can usually be gained only through an interview. Be prepared with examples of personal characteristics such as leadership, dedication, teamwork, and communication and interpersonal skills.

Be prepared to present your credentials

- Key responses are crisp and concise.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question. Do not guess.
- Build on areas of interest as indicated by the interviewer's reactions.
- Be prepared to illustrate your answers with examples.
- Avoid being negative. Show the positive side of all situations.

Know your accomplishments and what you have to offer!

- Tailor your presentation to your audience. Know what specific points will sell for the position, and have specific points to reinforce that you are right for the position.
- Link your accomplishments to the job at hand.
- When answering a question or giving information, always back up a statement with a concrete example.

## Interview Protocol

Some of the following seem to be common sense but often, in times of nervousness or stress, are easily forgotten:

- Appear alert, show enthusiasm and energy.
- Smile, maintain eye contact, and give a firm handshake.
- Take time answering. Momentary pauses to collect your thoughts are O.K.
- If at all possible, do not write anything down until after the interview is over.
- Be prepared to ask pertinent questions to the interviewer.
- Do not ask about salary.
- At the conclusion of the interview, ask for a business card and what the next steps and time frame are.
- Write and send a **thank you note** within 24 hours.

## What Will I Be Asked?

In one way or another, you will be asked three basic questions in any interview:

- Why are you interested in this field?
- Why are you interested in this position and organization?
- What relevant skills and experience do you have that will make you successful?

Review these questions to assess how prepared you are to discuss your interests and skills. Do you feel your answers will be convincing to an interviewer?

## Interview FAQ's:

### **Personal**

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- Why should we hire you?

### **Education**

- Why did you choose to study at Brown?
- Why did you choose to get a Ph.D. in \_\_\_\_\_?
- What aspects of your program did you enjoy most/least?
- Tell me about your dissertation (or Master's thesis).

### **Knowledge of the Organization**

- What do you know about our organization? Why do you want to work for us?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
- In what type of work environment are you most comfortable?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?

### **Experience**

- How does your Brown education or work experience relate to this job?
- Give me an example of your \_\_\_\_\_ skills (e.g., writing).
- What did you learn from your participation in extracurricular activities?
- What has been your experience working in a team?
- What is the best job you ever had? Why?

### **Career Goals**

- What are your future career goals? What do you see yourself doing in 5 years, 10 years?

- What questions do you have?

### "Tell me about yourself:" The 90-second response

"Tell me about yourself" is very commonly used in an interview. What are employers looking for in your answer? This and other open-ended questions are asked to see how well you can focus your answers to the position for which you are interviewing. Responses to this question should demonstrate your skills, interests, and past experiences, and show how these skills and experiences would contribute to the organization.

Use a 90-second guideline when answering this question.

- Focus the first 15 seconds on any personal information you wish to share (e.g., where you are from).
- Focus the next 30 seconds on your academic experience (e.g. what you are studying, major research project(s), relevant studies/work abroad).
- Focus the next 30 seconds on your experience (e.g., leadership activities, internships, volunteer work).
- Focus the last 15 seconds to discuss why you are interested in the position (given the background you just discussed).

Remember, this is a brief answer. Just give the highlights of your experiences and focus your answer. Spend some time writing down the experiences you wish to discuss and then practice how you want to answer the question.

### Behavior-Based Interviewing:

Currently, behavior-based interviewing is popular with many employers. This approach is built on the premise that past behavior will likely predict future performance. Instead of being asked how you would behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you did behave. You will not be able to generalize or theorize. Expect the interviewer to probe your responses and ask you to provide details. Choose examples carefully: those with positive outcomes, quantifiable results, or qualitative improvements.

- Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- Describe a time when you successfully balanced several competing priorities.
- Give an example of a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Tell me about a time when you persuaded team members to do things your way.
- Tell me about a time when you had to handle a difficult situation with a co-worker.
- Describe the most significant written document or report or presentation you have had to complete.
- Describe a specific occasion in which you were creative in solving a problem.
- Give an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or peers.
- Talk about a time when you were faced with a difficult decision and describe how it turned out.

### Questions You Can Ask an Interviewer:

- What will the day-to-day responsibilities of the position entail?
- What are the most important responsibilities of the position?
- What are the priorities over the next year?
- What is the greatest challenge currently facing this department or organization?
- What kind of supervision and training is provided?
- What type of person succeeds in this position? Organization?
- What type of feedback (reviews) can I expect? Frequency?
- What is the organization's management philosophy?
- How would you describe the organizational culture?
- Tell me about your own experience with this organization. What do you enjoy most/least about working here?
- Why is this position open? What happened to the previous incumbent?
- What is the next step in the interview process? What is your time frame? Other questions can be developed based on current research and news about the organization or its competitors.

## Resources

- For advice on how to address the “gaps” in your work experience while you were at graduate school, see this interesting post from selloutyoursoul.com: <http://www.selloutyoursoul.com/2011/03/22/jobs-for-phds-outside-of-academia/>
- Robin Wagner provides advice on how to give your best performance in an interview here: <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Secret-to-a-Successful-Job/46366>
- For a list of the 10 most common job interview questions, see: <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2011/01/24/the-10-most-common-job-interview-questions>
- For examples of questions you might ask an interviewer, see: <http://career.vt.edu/Interviewing/AskQuestions.html> and
- Also check Job Banks such as Monster ([www.Monster.com](http://www.Monster.com)) and CareerPerfect ([www.careerperfect.com](http://www.careerperfect.com)) for more advice and articles about interviewing

## Print Resources

- *Acing the Interview: How to Ask and Answer the Questions that will get you the Job* by Tony Beshara (Amacon 2008).
- *Winning Job Interviews* by Paul Powers (2009)
- *301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions* by Vicky Oliver (Sourcebooks, 2005)

## NEGOTIATING THE JOB OFFER AND BEYOND

Try not to be the first to raise the salary issue. Wait for the employer to introduce the topic. In discussing salary during interviews or negotiation do not state "I want X dollars" or "I made X before but I need Y salary." Show that you've done your research without divulging too much personal information. Simply state something similar to: "The salary range for this job in this area ranges from X to Z. I'm looking for Y."

### What You May Negotiate

- base salary
- performance bonus
- raises
- structure of compensation package
- vacation time
- flex-time or telecommuting
- continuing education (tuition reimbursement)
- other important points of interest to you

### Points to Keep in Mind

Keep in mind that you'll have to be willing to trade some benefits for others. Be careful not to display greed in your negotiations. Carefully identify and research your needs vs. wants and set priorities among them prior to negotiating. Never say "yes" to an offer immediately no matter how much you want the job. Ask for a reasonable amount of time to 'evaluate the company's offer'. Take that time to weigh the pros and cons of the offer along with others you have received or may receive. Besides, you do not want to give the negative impression that you are desperate or make important decisions hastily.

### On-line Negotiating Resources

- Here, Gwendolyn Bradley provides tips for negotiating your salary for a non-academic job: <http://chronicle.com/article/Negotiating-Salary-in-the/45407/>
- Visit websites such as [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) <http://jobstar.org>, and [www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com) to locate average industry salary ranges.
- State salaries are public record, as are most nonprofit salaries – look up comparable positions to see what is fair.
- Riley Guide provides resources that are useful for evaluating and negotiating job offers at: <http://www.rileyguide.com/offers.html>
- Download Illinois guide to negotiating a nonacademic job offer here: [www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices/nonacademic/offers/offernegotiation.pdf](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices/nonacademic/offers/offernegotiation.pdf)