

# Alternative Career Pathways After Your PhD: ESSENTIAL CHECKLIST



Ever wondered what options there are in your career after your PhD has ended? While academia may have been the traditional path, today this is neither assured nor always desired! However, the alternative pathways are not as clearly defined or well known. So how can you be sure of what career lies ahead of you? We recently consulted a panel of experts in a live Q&A video who gave their top tips and advice on the career options available after your PhD, and how to pursue them. We summarised these in a short checklist to help you take charge of your future and to increase your employability.

## GAIN A WIDER PERSPECTIVE

- Consider job shadowing or work placements to get a feel for specific industries.
- Identify your personal strengths and motivations and look for a career that fits these.
- Consider paths that bridge the gap between academia and industry, for example, portfolio, policymaking, or consultancy careers.

## UTILISE YOUR DIGITAL IDENTITY

- Maintain your network proactively – a blog is a good way to promote yourself and your work to potential employers.
- Continue the work completed for your departmental profile and keep a visible presence once your PhD has ended.
- LinkedIn is the main resource employers use to check your online persona – ask for recommendations from connections. They can boost your employability!

## MAP OUT POTENTIAL JOBS OUTSIDE ACADEMIA

- Get in touch with alumni to learn about their journey after completing a PhD.
- Follow relevant hash tags on Twitter.
- Attend careers fairs and ask company representatives questions to learn about specific industries.
- Consider starting your own business – look within your university for the resources to start-up.
- Find entrepreneurs at conferences and ask questions about their business ventures.

## BE OPEN TO UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES

- Keep other interests alive as you don't know what your path will be until you've gone down it.
- A combination of being proactive and being at the right place at the right time at conferences will throw up new routes.

## ADAPT YOUR ACADEMIC CV

- Separate skills into technical and personal sections.
- Tailor it to every job.
- Include specific examples of the required skills. Emphasise the responsibilities you have had during your PhD in applications.
- Frame your PhD as professional experience in its own right by listing it under work experience as well as education.
- Think about what your 'profession' is and present yourself accordingly – never call yourself a 'PhD student'.
- Be positive about why you're transitioning from academia to industry. State what you can offer the company and why you have passion for that company.

To hear more on Alternative Career Pathways After Your PhD, **watch our live Q&A video** or **read the summary** available on the jobs.ac.uk Careers Advice section.