



Career Histories of PhD Graduates

Faculty: Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Note: Blue = academic role

PhD Subject or Department & Grad date	Current Job Title	Organisation & / or Job Sector	Previous Job (s)	PhD Essential for role?
Chemistry, 2004	Head of Search Relevance	eBay Europe	eBay UK and Skype Global	Yes
Chemistry, 2005	Medical Doctor	Guys and St Thomas's NHS Trust	Medical Student	No
Chemistry, 2006	Business Consultant	Ventex (Energy Sector)	Not stated	No
Chemistry, 2007	Regulatory Labelling Coordinator	Eli Lilly - American pharmaceutical manufacturer	Regulatory Affairs Officer for herbal manufacturing company	Not stated
Earth Sciences, 2006	Postdoctoral Research fellow,	UCL	Postdoctoral research scientist, UCL	Yes
Physics and Astronomy, 2006	IT Consultant	Decica	Post-doc research at King's College London	Yes
Physics and Astronomy, 2007	Postdoctoral Researcher	Space and Climate Physics, UCL	Not stated	Not stated

Physics and Astronomy, 2008	Postdoctoral Researcher in Nanotechnology	Science & Technology Facilities Council	Post Doc role at UCL	Yes
Science and Technology Studies	Postdoctoral Researcher	University of Cambridge	Not stated	Not stated

Career Case Studies: Further Details

S. – PhD Chemistry, 2004

S. is the Head of Search Relevance for eBay Europe. Previously, he worked for eBay UK and Skype Global. S. believes his PhD has helped him to stand out when looking for a role, and regularly uses the technical skills acquired through his degree in his current role, particularly quantitative research skills. He feels that key transferable skills important for this position include personal motivation to set goals and communication skills for presenting. Shervin faced a few challenges when entering the job market after graduation. He felt that many employers do not fully appreciate or understand what a PhD graduate can bring to an organisation. He was often considered overqualified for certain roles or not qualified enough, especially as he was moving away from chemistry / physics to wanting to work in an internet based industry/organisation. However S. believes that eBay understand the value that PhD's can bring to an organisation, and have noticeably expanded the number of PhD graduates they recruit. S. found his job through Freshminds – a UK-based recruitment consultancy. While at UCL, S. used the Career Service for his career planning. He used the library to find out more about organisations, took part in CV workshops and mock interviews and went to company presentations. Overall S. was happy with the level of service and support he got from the Careers Service. S. would advise current PhD graduates to think really hard about the skills they have learnt in their programme. Talk to other people (alumni) who have worked in the same department or in organisations they are thinking of going to after graduation. Also tailor your CV to a company, focus on selling yourself and on the skills that are applicable.

E. – PhD Chemistry, 2005

E. is a Medical Doctor at Guys and St Thomas's NHS Trust. She did her medical training after she did her PhD at UCL. Her PhD and Chemistry background was useful although not necessary in securing her MD training. Key transferable skills learnt from her PhD which she applies to her current role include: communication (written), teamwork, IT skills and people management. To secure her training (after the PhD) she applied directly through appropriate channels and was accepted. E. advises current PhD's to have something lined up after you graduate and to do all the preparation work while you are doing your PhD and not when you finished. This will save time and anxiety later on.

D. – PhD Chemistry, 2006

D. works for Ventex as a Business Consultant focusing on the energy sector. Her skills in logical processing, data management, time planning and organisation skills are important for her role. Specific knowledge of science is not essential. When entering employment for the first time after graduating, one of the immediate challenges she faced was the fact she was over qualified for the roles she applied for. Even with a PhD, the roles and salary were similar to those who have a non-PhD degree, so having a PhD does not necessarily give someone the 'edge'. D. attended several Careers Service workshops, used the library and received careers advice.

- *Specific courses attended: Careers Skills Workshops for PhD students - Private Sector: KPMG, Careers Networking Event - Alternative Careers in Science, Copyright and Intellectual Property.*
- *Dina had a 60 minute careers discussion with a careers adviser and used the CV checking service.*

J. – PhD Chemistry, 2007

J. currently works for Eli Lilly - the UK affiliate of a major American pharmaceutical manufacturer, where she is the Regulatory Labelling Coordinator. Prior to this she was the Regulatory Affairs Officer for a herbal manufacturing company. J. uses problem solving skills, analytics and knowledge of chemistry gained from her degree, in her current role. The position itself is not technical or scientific / laboratory based. After graduating, the immediate challenge that J. faced was not having relevant work experience under her belt - it took some time to get this experience. She used the Careers Service on numerous occasions to get advice/help on psychometric tests and interviews, and attended science-related employer events. She also found the career planning resources in the Information Library useful.

- *Specific courses attended: Careers Skills Workshops for PhD students - Private Sector: KPMG, Commercial Awareness - with The Financial Training Company, Careers Networking Event - Alternative Careers in Science, PhD Employers Forum - Economics, Engineering and Science, Career Planning and Job Searching, CVs and Applications, Careers Skills Workshops for PhD students - Public Sector: Civil Service.*
- *Jalpa had a mock interview with a careers adviser.*

P.– PhD Earth Science, 2006

After graduation, P. started working as a Research Scientist (Post-Doc) at UCL sponsored by the STFC and then moved onto a Research Scientist (Fellow) post. He found this role through the UCL website job page. His PhD was essential for both roles and he uses his subject knowledge and technical skills all the time. Key transferable skills he uses include planning and organisation, communications, decision making, information gathering and presenting. After graduating the key challenge that P. faced was getting funding for his research.

R. – PhD Physics and Astronomy, 2006

Before his current role as an IT Consultant for Decica, R. did a post-doc at King's College London. R. applied for his current role through an open application process. His PhD is essential for the job as well as his technical knowledge, but not subject knowledge. Key transferable skills R. highlights include: team work within the software team and communication – particularly writing skills for key documents. During his time at UCL, R. had several one-to-one consultations with a careers adviser and believes the advisers offered him good advice and had a broad understanding of

various career paths PhD's could take. He would recommend current PhD students to get as much experience as they can as the current employment market is competitive.

N. – PhD Physics and Astronomy, 2007

N. is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Space and Climate Physics at UCL. One of the main challenges upon taking this position included getting up to speed with the new subject area. Her role requires mainly programming skills and she gained experience for this during her PhD. N. used the Careers Service for general careers advice and found the service useful.

A. – PhD Physics and Astronomy, 2008

After completing his PhD A. started working for the Science & Technology Facilities Council (Rutherford Lab, Oxfordshire) as a Postdoctoral Researcher in Nanotechnology/Hydrogen Storage. Before this he held a short post-doc role at UCL. His PhD is essential for his current role as it is pure research; therefore subject knowledge is important. Key transferable skills include: teamwork, communication, management and mentoring, planning and assessment, some independent working, and knowledge of research techniques. Finding a job was not difficult as he used his personal networks and connections at UCL. The main challenge that A. faced during the final year of his PhD was the gap between submitting the thesis and starting a job, and at the same time preparing for the viva. Whilst at UCL, A. used the Careers Service to help write up his CV and plan for interviews. His key advice for PhD students staying in research is not to expect a settled lifestyle as a Postdoctoral Researcher - keep with it if you enjoy research.

- *Specific courses attended: Employer-Led Careers Skills Workshops; Team Working - with KPMG, Networking - with the BBC, Negotiation Skills - with Deloitte. Also attended How to Write CVs and Fill in Application Forms workshop.*

H. – PhD in Science and Technology Studies, 2008

H. has taken up a Postdoctoral position at the University of Cambridge and is still applying the research skills she developed as a PhD to her current role. Her current position was advertised online on jobs.ac.uk. H. had an individual consultation with an adviser at the Careers Service on how to apply for jobs and found it really helpful because 'you can ask questions directly to someone and get good answers'. H. also attended a number of training courses at the Graduate School including; 'Interviewing for Scientists', 'Academic Careers' and 'How to Write a PhD' and was generally pleased with what she received.

- *Specific courses attended: Fundamentals of Teaching I - Strategies for Teaching in HE, Publishing your seminar paper in a journal, UK GRADschool Residential Courses, Research Communication Workshop - Research for Policy Makers, Research Communication Workshop - Interviewing for the Radio, Research Communication Workshop - Writing The News, Careers Forum - Getting into Academia in the UK, Data Protection.*

