

CAREER PLANNING FOR PHDS

GETTING THE WORK YOU WANT IF YOU HAVE A DOCTORATE.

Before applying for a PhD

- Reflect on your motivations and ambitions – which career doors does a PhD need to open for you?
- Speak to people who are already on a PhD programme.
- Speak to potential supervisors.
- Research possible next steps beyond the PhD via job adverts, LinkedIn and Prospects (prospects.ac.uk).

YEAR

1

- Start to build networks with team members, colleagues and people in fields of work that interest you. Set up your LinkedIn page and profile.
- Familiarise yourself with the training opportunities provided by your institution.
- Start to investigate career options. What type of work attracts you? What are your strengths? What matters to you in a career?
- Build your skills through work experience, public engagement and personal interests. Reflect on your development.
- Discuss career options with your supervisor and a careers consultant. Many institutions have specialist advisers and coaches who are dedicated to supporting PhD students. You don't need specific ideas in mind when you do this.

YEAR

2

- Identify jobs and sectors you are interested in. Your careers service website will have resources for this. Read the Vitae 'What do researchers do?' publications ([on vitae.ac.uk](https://www.vitae.ac.uk)).
- Seek guidance from a careers consultant to help clarify your career selection and your key selling points.
- Expand your networks and use these to build contacts and help you develop your career ideas. Talk to people already doing the jobs you are interested in.
- Identify work shadowing opportunities.
- Start getting your CV in order – this will help you think clearly about your skills and attributes.
- Consider how to communicate your research skills effectively for your target sectors and employers.
- Continue to build your transferable skills through research, teaching and other activities.
- Make use of the PhD-specific training and development provided at your institution.
- Attend careers fairs and employer presentations. Often events aimed at undergraduates are attended by employers who are also interested in PhD graduates.
- Attend conferences to expand your network, become comfortable talking about and promoting your research.
- Form an academic career plan for publications and get some teaching experience. Consider how you will promote your research and publications.

YEAR

3

- Identify specific job roles you are interested in.
- Build regular time for job searching and applications into your diary.
- Identify potential employers in your chosen sectors and research them thoroughly. Try to speak to someone who already works there.
- Work out your job-seeking strategies and find out where, when and how vacancies are advertised. A careers consultant can help with this.
- Seek advice on interview preparation from your careers service.
- Apply for some jobs to gain experience and build confidence.
- Get feedback on CVs and applications from careers advisers.
- Continue to check out careers fairs and employer presentations.
- Reflect on possible next steps beyond the roles you have been applying for.

