



Nonacademic Careers

A majority of students who complete a PhD [enter the nonacademic workforce](#). Nonacademic opportunities are varied and include positions in sectors such as research and contracting services, foundations, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and the government (local, state, and federal). Across sectors, many positions are research-oriented and indicated by job titles such as research associate, research scientist, data manager, lab director, research analyst, or program coordinator. In some sectors, applied positions may be available in technical writing, business development, management, and career services.

In this section, we link to resources that provide information on the variety of nonacademic career opportunities, discuss some of the more common nonacademic job sectors open to those with graduate training, and link to resources to help applicants find and apply for open positions.

Jobs, Funding, and Opportunities Alert

Sign up for the [Jobs, Funding, and Opportunities alert](#) from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families to get information on new jobs, funding, postdoctoral fellowships, calls for papers, conferences, and other opportunities!

Learn about types of nonacademic opportunities

Relevant Webinar from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

[Exploring Career Trajectories](#). This webinar (October 2019) highlighted various strategies and identified decision-making points to consider when exploring both academic and nonacademic career trajectories. Panelists discussed the wide range of career opportunities open to emerging scholars and presented recommendations and resources to facilitate an informed decision-making process for emerging scholars, particularly diverse scholars of color.

Finding information on nonacademic opportunities while in graduate school can be challenging. This section contains links to resources to help applicants learn more about the varied nonacademic career opportunities open to those with graduate training in the social sciences.

Resource	Description
For PhDs Who Need a Non-academic Job <i>Hortensii Blog</i>	Resource guide with 10 career websites every PhD should visit
PhD Career Finder <i>Versatile PhD</i>	Interactive website for exploring nonacademic careers in humanities/ social sciences and STEM. This website includes job categories and real-life examples of the types of jobs that fit within the nonacademic category, as well as general information such as disciplines, starting points, preparation, and lifestyle.
Non-Academic Research Careers: A PhD's Guide to Standing Out From the Crowd <i>Mendeley</i>	Blog post providing key questions to help applicants take the next steps in nonacademic research careers

Resource	Description
Career Exploration for Humanities and Social Science PhDs Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences	Website to help applicants start their career search; includes resources on the types of careers attainable outside of academia with a PhD

Common nonacademic job sectors

Government

Local, state, and federal government agencies have job opportunities for individuals with graduate social science training. At the federal level, many agencies support social science research aimed at promoting the well-being of the U.S. population. Some federal agencies also support the implementation and evaluation of social service policies and programs. Staff in these agencies do not typically carry out the research themselves but support external researchers (contractors or grantees) in conducting these activities. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Education (ED), Department of Labor (DOL), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) are among the many federal agencies that hire individuals with graduate training in social sciences.

At the local and state levels, PhD-level social scientists can often inform policies and programs implemented by specific states and localities. Examples of workplaces at the state and local levels include school districts, state government offices, and town/city governments. To identify career openings in state and local governments, check the careers section of local or state government websites.

Resource	Description
Presidential Management Fellows	The PMF program is a leadership development program for advanced degree candidates to work in several government programs.

Research organizations

Many small, midsize, and large research organizations carry out social science research and evaluation. Examples of organizations that employ PhD-level social scientists are listed in the table below. Many of the research organizations listed here are nonpartisan and are prohibited from conducting advocacy. To learn more about advocacy organizations, visit [these resources](#). Opportunities specifically tailored to students from populations that are underrepresented in graduate schools are marked with an asterisk (*).

Resource	Description
15 Top Hispanic Research Companies* Quirk's Media	List of companies that focus on research development with a focus on diversity and inclusion
Latino Research Centers & Institutes* Dartmouth College	List and description of research centers and institutes that focus their research on Latino(a) issues
Abt. Associates	Abt. Associates provides research, consulting, and technical assistance services in various fields to promote social advancement.

Resource	Description
<u>American Institutes for Research</u>	AIR is a behavioral and social science research organization that offers research, evaluation, and technical assistance to inform changes to various policy areas.
<u>Child Trends</u>	Child Trends conducts research on children at all stages of life to improve child and youth outcomes.
<u>Mathematica</u>	Mathematica is a research institution that supports a variety of research and policy advancements to improve public well-being.
<u>MDRC</u>	MDRC is a research institution that builds knowledge on relevant issues through interventions, program evaluation, and technical assistance.
<u>NORC at the University of Chicago</u>	NORC administers several research efforts to inform prevalent issues in research and data science.
<u>Pew Research Center</u>	Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan organization that leads public opinion polling, research, and analysis on various topics.
<u>RAND Corporation</u>	The RAND Corporation conducts analyses of public policy challenges to develop realistic and nonpartisan solutions.
<u>SRI International</u>	SRI is a nonprofit research center that supports government and industry development through scientific research and innovation.
<u>Urban Institute</u>	The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that shares its research findings and implications with stakeholders to improve public policy and practice.
<u>Westat</u>	Westat conducts research on various focus areas to advance health equity.

Advocacy organizations

Advocacy organizations also hire PhD-level scientists. These organizations can be a great option for scholars interested in advocating for specific populations of interest. Examples of advocacy organizations that hire PhD-level scientists are listed below.

Resource	Description
Children's Defense Fund	The Children's Defense Fund advocates on behalf of children in poverty, children of color, and those with disabilities through policy work and programs.
Education Post	The Education Post shares the education priorities of teachers, parents, and students through blogs, videos, and op-eds.
The Education Trust	The Education Trust aims to increase equity in education by elevating student voices in policy implementation and research.
Stand for Children	Stand for Children is a nonprofit education advocacy organization that relies on parents and policy to achieve equity in education.

For-profit organizations

Many PhD-level scientists are able to use their skills and expertise at for-profit companies. Examples of large for-profit organizations that employ social scientists include tech companies (e.g., Facebook, Google, Apple, Netflix, IBM), consulting firms (e.g., IRI Consultants, McKinsey), and educational content creators (e.g., Cengage). For those who are creative and able to develop unconventional solutions, for-profit companies offer many possibilities for PhD-level scientists to put their skills to great use!

Looking and applying for nonacademic jobs

The nonacademic job market is quite different from the academic job market. Jobs will be posted at different times and on different websites. The typical application package for a nonacademic job also looks quite different from an academic application. The resources below describe where to find nonacademic job postings and offer advice on preparing application materials for these jobs. In addition to the resources below, many discipline-specific professional associations (e.g., the [American Sociological Association](#) [ASA], [American Psychological Association](#) [APA]) track job opportunities in and out of academia.

Where to find jobs

Resource	Description
The Chronicle of Higher Education	Career search engine by types of positions, locations, posting dates, institution type, and employment type
The Chronicle of Philanthropy	Career search engine for nonprofit jobs
GoinGlobal	Career and job portal for international jobs and internships

Resource	Description
Idealist	Career search engine for nonprofit jobs
Indeed	Job-finding website, including a search engine by type of job and location
LinkedIn	Professional social network platform, where employers share job listings
The Muse	Job board and portal including tips on everything from writing a cover letter to dressing for success
Publishers Marketplace	Job board for a range of positions in publishing
USA Jobs	Job board portal to apply for jobs in the federal government
Versatile PhD	Career development website with specific information on job opportunities and information for specific career trajectories

Applying for nonacademic jobs

Resource	Description
Transition to nonacademic positions	
An Academic's Guide to Getting a Non-Academic Job <i>Wolgin, 2018</i>	Guide to help academics in humanities and social sciences who are looking to transition to nonacademic positions
CV and/or resume	
The Post-Ac's Guide to the Resume <i>The Professor Is In</i>	Guide provides formatting basics, necessary and optional elements for a resume, and information on what to exclude from a nonacademic job resume
Converting a Curriculum Vitae to Resume <i>UC Davis</i>	Describes key features of a CV and a resume, how to organize these outlines, and how to convert a longer CV to a shorter resume
CV to Resume Conversion Guide <i>Yale Office of Career Services</i>	Presentation on converting your CV to a resume, with an example conversion, common mistakes, and lessons learned

Resource	Description
Cover letter	
<u>The Post-Ac's Guide to the Cover Letter</u> <u>The Professor Is In</u>	Outline and instructions for writing a cover letter for nonacademic positions
<u>Before you Write a Cover Letter For a Non-Faculty Job, Try This Exercise</u> <u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u>	Questions and strategies to think about before writing a nonacademic job cover letter
<u>Non-Academic Job Applications: Letters and Personal Statements</u> <u>The London School of Economics and Political Science</u>	Advice on writing cover letters and personal statements, including content to include for nonacademic jobs and questions to consider when writing the application
Interview	
<u>Interview Questions for Non-Academic Jobs</u> <u>Connected Academics</u>	List of common interview questions for jobs outside of academic settings, designed for students in PhD programs

