Great Expectations: Understanding Humanities PhD Career Pathways
No single existing dataset can give institutions or graduate schools the granular information they need to improve doctoral programs.
1) Common standards
2) National leadership
3) A survey that took into account disciplinary diversity
Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: How Well Did a Humanities PhD Prepare Them?

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The vast majority of humanities PhDs still work in fields related to their doctoral education and are satisfied with their jobs. According to the National Survey of College Graduates by the National Science Foundation (NSF), 92% of humanities PhDs working in 2015 held jobs that are closely or somewhat related to their PhDs. Furthermore, 85% of humanities PhDs who are employed are satisfied or very satisfied with their current work. This percentage is consistent for the 92% who work in related fields as well as the 8% who work in fields unrelated to their humanities PhD degrees.

Key Findings:
- A large majority of survey respondents believe that their humanities PhD education prepared them well for their jobs. Although the differences were not statistically significant, humanities PhDs who were employed by colleges and universities generally felt that their doctoral studies had better prepared them for their current job than those who were employed elsewhere. The difference was statistically significant only among those who were three years post-graduation. (Figure 1)
- A large majority of survey respondents said that they would pursue a PhD in general or in the same field, if they had to start over again. Humanities PhDs three years post-graduation and working for employers other than colleges and universities were less likely than their academic counterparts to say that they “definitely would”
Where Historians Work

Careers Beyond the Professoriate, Classified by Dept. of Labor Occupational Codes

Careers beyond postsecondary teaching, classified by the U.S. Dept. of Labor's SOC Codes. Hover over a bubble to see full SOC title and number of historians employed in that category.
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