Preparing Humanities Doctoral Students for Diverse Career Paths

Deans Toolbox Session
CGS Summer Workshop & New Deans Institute
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Presented By:
Mary Farmer-Kaiser, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Professor of History
The University of Louisiana at Lafayette
OUR ROADMAP

Humanities PhDs: What We Know
CGS PhD Career Pathways
Strategies
Humanities PhD Career Paths
Guiding Resources

- American Academy of Arts and Sciences: State of the Humanities 2022 - From Graduate Education to the Workforce
- American Historical Association (AHA): Career Diversity for Historians & Where Historians Work
- Beyond the Professoriate
- CGS: PhD Career Pathways, Humanities Coalition, Promising Practices in Humanities Professional Development
- Graduate Career Consortium: Imagine PhD - Career Exploration / Planning Tool for the Humanities and Social Sciences
- Humanities for the Public Good
- Humanities Without Walls Consortium
- Modern Language Association (MLA): Connected Academics - Preparing Doctoral Students of Language and Literature for a Variety of Careers
- NEH: NextGen Humanities PhD Project
- The Versatile PhD
Where are humanities PhDs working?

According to analysis of data from the National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, and the National Survey of College Graduates, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Humanities Indicators reports that 70% of humanities PhDs work in higher education.
The American Academy of Arts & Sciences Humanities Indicators reports that 61% of those with doctorates in the humanities were employed in academic teaching jobs in 2019.
Among PhD recipients generally, only 27% were employed in *academic teaching jobs* in 2019 (compared to the 61% of those with doctorates in the humanities).
Work Activities on Which Doctoral Degree Holders in the Humanities Spend at Least 10% of Their Time, by Academic Employment Status, 2019
Median Annual Earnings of Doctoral Degree Holders Employed Full-Time, by Field of Degree, 2018
According to the biennial National Survey of College Graduates by the NSF, 92% of humanities PhDs working in 2015 held jobs that are closely or somewhat related to their PhDs. The same survey found that 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 and the 8% who work in fields unrelated to their humanities PhD degrees.
Job Satisfaction among Doctoral Degree Holders, by Field of Degree and Academic Employment Status, 2019
Job Satisfaction among Humanities Doctoral Degree Holders, by Employment Sector, 2019

Academia  Government  Industry/Business  All Sectors
How satisfied are humanities PhDs?
The PhD Career Pathways project is a multi-phase initiative to improve doctoral education through data collection, information-sharing, university networks, and resource development.

With support from the National Science Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, CGS built a coalition of 75 doctoral institutions working to help universities improve student and alumni experiences and outcomes through an evidence-informed approach.

In addition, CGS collected aggregate data on PhD career aspirations and outcomes from our partner universities and provided insights on the experiences and outcomes of doctoral training at the national level.
PhD Career Pathways

Key Findings

Whether in academia or non-academic careers, a large majority believe their humanities PhD education prepared them well for their jobs.
Figure 1: Percent responding "Extremely Well" or "Very Well" to survey item "How well did your PhD prepare you for [your current] job?"

Source: Council of Graduate Schools, Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement Project, Fall 2017 Alumni Survey

Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: How Well Did a Humanities PhD Prepare Them? CGS Research in Brief, October 2018
PhD Career Pathways

Key Findings

01 Preparation
Whether in academia or non-academic careers, a large majority believe their humanities PhD education prepared them well for their jobs.

02 Yes, I'd do it again
Whether in academia or non-academic positions, a large majority also said they'd pursue a PhD in general or in the same field, if they had to start over again.
Figure 2: Percent responding “Definitely Would” or “Probably Would” to survey item “Given the perspective that you have gained since completing your PhD, if you had to start again, how likely would you do the following?”

79% 83% 83% 88% 15 Year
60% 75% 83% 83% 15 Year

Pursue a PhD in general

Pursue a PhD in the same field

Academic Non-Academic

* Statistically significant difference, p<0.05

Source: Council of Graduate Schools, Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement Project, Fall 2017 Alumni Survey

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Key Findings

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Whether in academia or non-academic careers, a large majority believe their humanities PhD education prepared them well for their jobs.

02 Yes, I'd do it again
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03 Skills and attributes
Between humanities PhDs working in academia and elsewhere, there are more similarities than differences in key workforce skills and attributes.
Figure 3: Percent responding “Extremely Important” or “Very Important” to survey item “How important are each of the following attributes/skills in successfully performing your work in this job?”

Source: Council of Graduate Schools, Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement Project, Fall 2017 Alumni Survey
PhD Career Pathways

Takeaway Points

01 Relevant training
Together, the results suggest that humanities PhD training offers relevant training that prepares grads for jobs inside and outside of the academy.

02 It may take a moment
For those employed in business, non-profit, government and other sectors, it may take longer to recognize the value and relevance of PhD training to their non-academic careers.

03 And another moment
The value of a humanities PhD might not be immediately tangible to employers outside of the academy.
Takeaway Points

Most useful PD

4 areas of PD are most frequently cited as useful by both humanities and non-humanities PhDs: communication, public speaking, networking, & digital literacy.
Figure 1: Usefulness of Professional Development

- Communication: 96%
- Public speaking: 94%
- Networking: 91%
- Digital literacy: 91%
- Project management: 88%
- Quantitative literacy/Data analytics: 86%
- Academic writing: 86%
- Career preparation (i.e. CV preparation, interviewing): 86%
- Leadership Development: 86%
- Research ethics/Scholarly integrity: 86%
- Diversity/Multicultural competency: 83%
- Teaching preparation: 74%
- Grant writing: 73%
- Research or fieldwork abroad: 59%
- Entrepreneurship: 47%
- International travel seminar or study tour: 45%
- Study abroad (semester/quarter or longer): 41%
PhD Career Pathways

Key Findings

Most useful PD
4 areas of PD are most frequently cited as useful by both humanities and non-humanities PhDs: communication, public speaking, networking, & digital literacy.

Grant writing matters
Humanities PhDs also indicate a significant usefulness of grant writing skills.

PhD Professional Development: Value, Timing, and Participation, CGS Research in Brief, January 2021
Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: The Importance of Preparation in Grant Writing for PhDs, CGS Research in Brief, August 2022
Figure 1. Usefulness of Grant Writing Skills in Current Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Useless</th>
<th>Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities (n=808)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Math, and Computer Science (n=581)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Earth Sciences (n=513)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and Health Sciences (n=891)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Behavioral Sciences (n=792)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fields (n=542)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (n=1669)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University non-faculty (n=603)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government (n=332)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit (n=264)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (n=881)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement, Fall 2020 Follow-up Alumni Survey.

**Barriers for Participation.** Survey participants selected barriers that precluded them from participating in grant writing professional development opportunities during their degree program. Barriers included “Not Offered or Unaware,” “Competing Priorities,” “Timing,” “Monetary Cost” and “Lack of Interest.” Results were similar across all degree fields. “Not Offered or Unaware” had the highest percentage, at 71%, as one of the barriers to pursuing grant writing. The remaining percentages include 15% for “Competing Priorities,” 6% for “Timing,” 1% for “Monetary Cost,” and 6% for “Lack of Interest.”
PhD Career Pathways

Takeaway Points

**Most useful PD**
4 areas of PD are most frequently cited as useful by both humanities and non-humanities PhDs: communication, public speaking, networking, & digital literacy.

**Grant writing matters**
Humanities PhDs also indicate a significant usefulness of grant writing skills.

**Selective engagement**
In these PD areas cited as most useful (and others), humanities PhDs participated less than their non-humanities counterparts.

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PhD Professional Development: Value, Timing, and Participation, CGS Research in Brief, January 2021
Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: The Importance of Preparation in Grant Writing for PhDs, CGS Research in Brief, August 2022
Figure 4: Professional Development Participation: Humanities vs. Non-Humanities

Academic writing: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Research ethics/ Scholarly integrity: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Networking: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Career preparation: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Grant writing: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Research or fieldwork abroad: Humanities > Non-Humanities
International travel seminar: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Leadership development: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Study abroad: Humanities > Non-Humanities
Entrepreneurship: Humanities > Non-Humanities
PhD Career Pathways

Promising Practices

Be intentional

Be intentional in offering curricular and co-curricular experiences that integrate training and professional development opportunities toward a variety of career paths.

Market/advertise so that humanities PhD students become more aware of resources they identify as valuable.

Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: How Well Did a Humanities PhD Prepare Them? CGS Research in Brief, October 2018

PhD Professional Development: Value, Timing, and Participation, CGS Research in Brief, January 2021
PhD Career Pathways

Promising Practices

Language matters

Avoid terms that suggest careers outside of the academy are second-best.

Avoid reinforcing the assumption that PhDs can only work in one sector or that their careers are linear.

Avoid descriptions of skill sets that are imprecise, inaccurate, gendered, and/or outdated. Some terms used to describe social skills such as collaboration or communications (e.g., "soft skills") imply these skills are less important than other academic skill sets. Try using "essential skills."

Use inclusive language when talking about humanities PhD careers.
PhD Career Pathways

Promising Practices

03 Resist common (and often unquestioned or critical) assumptions about careers outside of academia

"The 'best' students get academic jobs."

"There aren't enough jobs for all PhDs."

"PhD students don't have time for additional professional development."

04 Highlight student agency when talking about humanities PhD careers

05 Collect and share PhD career data, taking care to showcase career diversity
Shaping New Narratives about PhD Careers: A Communications Resource to Advocate for Career Diversity

Messages that Highlight Diverse Options and Student Agency in Navigating Careers

Reframing assumptions about PhD careers—and opening up new possibilities for thinking about them—also, of course, requires consideration. CGS has compiled the following list of messages about career diversity and related topics to help you advocate for career diversity on your campus. These messages are designed to be adapted; please feel free to select the messages that are best aligned with your Institution's or program's mission and goals.

Career Diversity for PhDs

- PhD alumni make valuable contributions to a broad range of professions in academia, industry, the non-profit sector and government.
- Many national organizations and agencies have recognized the value of career diversity for PhDs, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the National Academies, the Council of Graduate Schools, the Association of American Universities (AAU), and disciplinary societies in both the humanities and STEM fields.
- Universities and programs often benefit from supporting the success of students in their chosen career pathways.
- Benefits may include:
  - Better student morale as they face a broader variety of options for their futures.
  - The ability to recruit talented students who aspire to have a research or research-related career outside of academia.
  - The ability to demonstrate the impact of PhDs in all sectors of the workforce.
  - Alumni-driven internships and other experiential learning opportunities for current graduate students.
  - Opportunities for future collaborations with industry and other sectors.

Student Career Preparation and Professional Development

- PhD education offers relevant training that prepares
- PhD candidates benefit from time and opportunities to identify and pursue professional development opportunities that are aligned with their career plans.
- Conversations about career preparation should happen early and often as a student's goals and circumstances evolve.
- Based on recent data from CGS, the transition to the first career can be most challenging, especially in the humanities. Well-informed career preparation and intentional professional development can help make the transition smoother.

Preparation for Different Types of Careers

- Many students go on to teach and work in universities different from the ones they trained. Many students go on to have an important impact as teachers at liberal arts colleges, master's focused institutions, community colleges, and K-12 schools.
- Students aspiring to academic careers can benefit from learning about the variety of higher education contexts where they may teach over the course of their careers.
- According to recent data from CGS, the types of skills and knowledge that are important in different institutional contexts may vary. For example, teaching skills are considered more important by PhDs working in four-year colleges and community colleges, whereas research skills are considered more important at institutions of high research intensity.
- Supporting students who want to have an impact at small four-year institutions or in community colleges aligns

Figure 1: Inclusive language options for talking about humanities PhD careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>You could talk about...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Profession</td>
<td>Professional careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities careers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia (one possibility among many)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The job market</td>
<td>Job markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The academic job market (one possibility among many)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic careers</td>
<td>Careers beyond academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative careers</td>
<td>Pathways beyond the professoriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professorial careers</td>
<td>BGN careers (Business, Government, and Nonprofit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan B</td>
<td>Career of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backup options</td>
<td>Broad options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career diversity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible career paths</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Versatile humanists</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Career horizons/pathways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repertoire of possibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Building (intellectual/professional) communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building connections</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job placement</td>
<td>First position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First destination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career entry point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhDs as produced</td>
<td>PhDs as earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PhD Career Pathways

Promising Practices

Engage employers as partners, and help them understand more/better the skills and knowledge humanities PhDs offer to their sectors of employment.

Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of PhD Career Pathways: How Well Did a Humanities PhD Prepare Them?
CGS Research in Brief, October 2018
Share of Humanities Departments Providing Career Preparation Opportunities to Doctoral Students, by Activity Type, 2017
PhD Career Pathways

Strategies
Simple strategies

that create space for broader, student-centered career discernment

Communicate the value of PhD career transparency by sharing messages about career diversity within your campus community.

Share stories of PhD alumni having an important impact in a broad range of careers. (Contribute them to the CGS GradImpact Project too.)

Create and cultivate professional networking groups online (and on multiple platforms) for PhD students and alumni.

Celebrate faculty and staff who support career diversity in their programs and offices.

Highlight tools and opportunities beyond your campus (e.g., ImaginePhD, Versatile PhD) to support awareness of career diversity and professional development among PhD students.
Transferable Skills

Help students (and faculty) see (and articulate) essential, often overlooked skill sets.

- Communication, written & oral
- Critical analysis & problem solving
- Digital literacy & data analytics
- Leadership & teamwork
- Professional acumen, self management, & persistence
- Project management & organization
- Research & information management
- Tools & techniques (domain knowledge)
- Quantitative literacy & data analytics
Integrate resources like these from Connected Academics, a MLA project, into your programming to help students "translate" their skill sets.
Imagine PhD

Powered by the Graduate Career Consortium, Imagine PhD is a free, comprehensive career exploration and planning tool for PhDs in the humanities and social sciences. It offers users the ability to assess career-related skills, interests, and values, explore diverse paths, create goals, and map out next steps.

The Versatile PhD

A Versatile PhD institutional subscription provides non-academic career resources and professional development. Students can use the free version. With an institutional subscription, they get additional content and features and you get support. Subscription term is July 1 – June 30. Pricing for new subscribers is $4,500 per full year for both humanities/social science and STEM, or $2,250 for either side by itself. A one-time $400 setup fee is charged in the first year only.

Values Exercises

Career discernment is aided by values exercises like Stanford Career Education's Meaningful Work Kit. These tools help student align career goals with core values, work culture preferences, and skills that they enjoy. Like this one, there are several available that are free and that include downloadable results that can serve as great pre- or post-programming exercises.
Career Diversity Workshop

Explore Diverse Future Careers

HWW’s Career Diversity Summer workshop is a 2-week, immersive career diversity experience for 20 PhD students in the humanities. The workshop provides tools, values exercises, and space for individuals to imagine their professional futures.

Network with Fellows  Meet 2023 Fellows

Indiana University Bloomington
Marquette University
Michigan State University
Northwestern University
University of Notre Dame
Ohio State University
Penn State University
Purdue University
University of Chicago
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska at Lincoln
University of Wisconsin at Madison
With the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, internship hosts, and university collaboration, PhD students at the University of Iowa are asking what APPLIED HUMANITIES might look like through Humanities for the Public Good Program internship.

Students spend two summer months working with and for a campus or community partner on a thoughtfully designed project. Following orientation, they attend weekly cohort gatherings over the summer to share experiences. Together, they discuss what the humanities mean in their workplace, how concepts and methods from their disciplines translate into their workplace, and they reimagine their own research, writing, scholarly work in light of their internship experience.

https://uihumanitiesforthepublicgood.com/2023-interns/

Stellar work

Our colleagues are answering the call to do more and to do better. There are many stellar examples.

Are there others we should give a shout-out to today?
Rackham’s Public Scholarship programs support students in developing the professional experience necessary to impact the public good through their scholarship and careers.

**The Institute for Social Change:** Workshops, discussions, and learning with presenters and peers that introduce students to the practice of publicly engaged scholarship. The program provides space and mentorship for students to develop their own approaches and project ideas.

**Community Engaged Course Design Workshop:** An intensive, semester-long professional development workshop for graduate students in any field interested in teaching a community engaged learning course.

**Winter Mellon-Rackham Public Engagement and the Humanities Program:** The Mellon Public Engagement and the Humanities Program bring together a cohort of humanities graduate students to connect, learn, and advance a project in the realm of publicly engaged humanities scholarship.

Our colleagues are answering the call to do more and to do better. There are many stellar examples. Are there others we should give a shout-out to today?
What are your strategies?

What kind of professional development opportunities do you provide HUMANITIES PhD STUDENTS for career preparation and transition from grad school?

What resources and guidance do you offer FACULTY MEMBERS AND ADVISORS, so that they talk to their humanities students about a range of job opportunities and career pathways?

How do you foster partnerships with current and prospective humanities PhD EMPLOYERS? How effective are you efforts? And how do you assess effectiveness?
Thank you.
Feel free to reach out.

mary.farmer-kaiser@louisiana.edu