



Career Resources for Graduate Students

Graduate study in the humanities and social sciences prepares you for far more than one career path. Whether you are pursuing faculty work, public scholarship, nonprofit leadership, cultural institutions, consulting, policy work, publishing, communications, or industry roles, the resources below can help you translate your training into professional opportunities.

Career Exploration & Skill Building

[The Versatile PhD](#)

A long-running and widely respected resource for humanities and social science graduate students exploring careers beyond the tenure track. Includes career panels, job-search advice, sample résumés, and stories from PhDs working in government, nonprofits, industry, consulting, communications, and higher education administration.

[My Grad Skills Resources](#)

A practical collection of graduate professional development tools focused on career readiness, workplace skills, communication, and long-term professional planning. Includes self-assessment tools and skill-building modules.

[PhD Career Guide](#)

A broad career-planning resource with advice on networking, job searching, interviewing, and identifying transferable skills developed during graduate school. Particularly useful for understanding how to communicate your doctoral training to diverse employers.

[Imagine PhD](#)

A free online career exploration and planning tool specifically designed for humanities and social sciences PhD students. Developed by a consortium of universities, it offers self-assessment tools, career exploration resources, and action planning features. More interactive than a blog, complementing your other text-based resources.

[Jobs on Toast](#) (Chris Humphrey)

Career advice written specifically for graduate students and PhDs, with a focus on practical job-search strategies and understanding the hidden norms of professional hiring. Refreshingly candid and accessible.

[Beyond the Professoriate](#) (Jennifer Polk & L. Maren Wood)

An active career development platform specifically designed for graduate students and PhDs exploring diverse career pathways. Offers live webinars, on-demand courses, career interview libraries, job search strategies, and a supportive community. Particularly strong on translating academic skills for non-academic employers and building confidence for career transitions.

Academic Careers and the Changing Professoriate

[Career Diversity Resources](#) (American Historical Association)

A major resource hub for history graduate students and faculty interested in broadening professional pathways. Includes the AHA Career Contacts mentorship program, which connects graduate students and early-career historians with professionals working in museums, archives, government, nonprofits, publishing, and other sectors.

[Carpe Careers Blog at Inside Higher Ed](#) (Graduate Career Consortium)

Short, accessible posts about graduate career planning, networking, internships, communication skills, and professional development inside and outside academia. Updated regularly with timely advice.

[Humanities Without Walls](#)

A consortium of humanities centers and institutes across major research universities that supports public humanities work, career diversity, and professional development for graduate students and early-career scholars. Offers grants, workshops, and collaborative projects that connect humanities training to public engagement and diverse career paths.

[Public Humanities Network](#)

A professional organization dedicated to advancing public humanities work and connecting humanities scholars with careers in museums, cultural organizations, nonprofits, and community engagement. Offers resources, networking opportunities, and professional development specifically for humanities PhDs pursuing public-facing work.

[National Humanities Alliance](#)

An advocacy organization that also provides resources on humanities careers, policy work, and public engagement. Includes career pathways information and connects humanities scholars with opportunities in advocacy, policy, and cultural organizations.

[The Praxis Network](#)

An influential early initiative exploring digital humanities, scholarly communication, collaboration, and public-facing intellectual work. Useful for students interested in interdisciplinary and digitally engaged careers in libraries, museums, digital publishing, and cultural heritage organizations.

Books

[*The Professor Is In: The Essential Guide To Turning Your Ph.D. Into a Job*](#) (2015; 2026) While focused on academic job searches, Kelsky's later chapters and blog posts increasingly address alt-ac and non-academic transitions. Her frank discussion of the academic job market helps students make informed decisions about career paths.

[*The Book Proposal Book: A Guide for Scholarly Authors*](#) (Laura Portwood-Stacer, 2021)

The definitive guide to writing scholarly book proposals, breaking down an often-mysterious process into clear, manageable steps. Includes real proposal samples, practical worksheets, and expert advice on selecting presses, identifying audiences, and crafting compelling project descriptions. Invaluable for graduate students planning dissertation-to-book projects or anyone navigating academic publishing for the first time.

[Leaving Academia: A Practical Guide](#) (Christopher L. Caterine, 2020)

Offers practical, step-by-step guidance for PhDs transitioning out of academia. Includes advice on résumé writing, networking, interviewing, and the emotional aspects of career change.

Use These Resources Strategically

Graduate students often feel pressure to delay career planning until the final stages of their degree. In practice, students benefit most when they begin exploring professional pathways early. As you move through your program, consider focusing on four areas:

- 1. Build a Professional Narrative.** Learn how to explain your research, teaching, writing, and analytical work to audiences outside your discipline. Practice translating academic language into clear descriptions of skills and impact.
- 2. Develop Transferable Skills.** Project management, collaboration, public communication, data analysis, digital literacy, and leadership all matter across career sectors. Look for opportunities to build these skills through teaching, research projects, internships, and campus involvement.
- 3. Expand Your Network.** Informational interviews, alumni conversations, internships, conference participation, and mentorship programs can help you understand how different career paths actually work. Start building relationships early and maintain them throughout your career.
- 4. Experiment Early.** Graduate school is a good time to try different forms of professional work: public writing, internships, community partnerships, digital projects, nonprofit collaborations, editing, policy work, or administrative leadership. These experiences help you discover what energizes you professionally.

Career exploration is not a backup plan. Humanities and social science graduate education develops advanced abilities in research, analysis, writing, interpretation, communication, teaching, and problem-solving. These capacities matter in many professional settings.

The goal is not simply to "leave academia" or "stay in academia." The goal is to build an intellectually meaningful, sustainable, and adaptable professional life.