

Thinking About Your Career

Some students embark on a doctorate aiming to pursue an academic career, however, the number of students graduating each year far surpasses the number of jobs available in universities and the rate at which jobs appear. If you wish to follow a career in higher education, begin working towards that from the start of your doctorate. Ask your supervisor about teaching and publishing opportunities, potentially editing a post-graduate journal, and showing your work.

I think if a student is coming in to do a PhD to pursue an academic career, they have to really be thinking about that as soon as they start, they have to be prepared to get publications out, think of that pathway to get teaching experience and so on. (staff member, 2020)

You may also be considering careers outside academia. Throughout your degree you develop skills such as networking, promotion, collaboration, production, and technical abilities. You will learn about presentation, writing, constructing a strong theoretical argument, research skills, how to examine your practice, and synthesis, for example. Most of these skills and many others can be transferable to other environments. Further, doctoral education requires resilience, motivation and an exploratory mindset, valuable attributes for potential employers.

Thinking about potential career paths and searching for opportunities to upgrade your skills during your degree will put you in a stronger position when you finish. The following are some notes to consider:

- **Involve your supervisor.** Discuss your career ambitions with your supervisor and ask for what you need. They might be able to support you with access to academic teaching, point you towards small grants for conferences and other opportunities. If you feel that a close involvement with industry partners would be beneficial, ask your supervisor to introduce you to key players and be pro-active in developing an informal arrangement. Funding may not be available, but an informal short internship or project will help you develop skills and networks.

- **Take advantage of career training opportunities offered by your course, department, school, or university.** Training is normally available in topics such as publishing, Viva preparation, funding applications, conference presentation, project management, research impact, work dissemination, and teaching. These training sessions can be helpful to navigate academic processes.

To know what's appropriate to ask for at a conference. Those are some quite basic academic cultural skills that I was fortunate in that my supervisor was really good at teaching us those. (PhD student, 2020)

- **Review the skills you need to develop: focused expertise vs general skills.** Consider whether you may need specific skills; generic skills such as communication and project management; or a combination of both for the doctorate and/or your future career.
- **Think about how your expertise can impact society.** In thinking broadly about your career opportunities, consider how your Artistic Research practice has potential to impact the communities around you, and how you might potentially contribute to them. Reflect on the skills you are developing and how they might impact your communities positively.