Beyond Academia: Exploring Career Paths and Networking

Dietrich College Graduate Student Professionalization Series
Nov 11, 2021

Kristin Staunton, Career Consultant
1. What tools are available to explore career paths
2. Possible non-academic career paths for H&SS majors
3. The importance of informational interviewing for career exploration and building a network
4. Where to apply for positions
You Have Options - Transferable Skills

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<th>Project Management &amp; Organization</th>
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<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Problem Solving</td>
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Job Posting Exercise

Pick one of the job descriptions.

Look at the qualifications for the position and think about/write down how you are developing those skills in your graduate program.

- PhD - Client Analytics, Pacific Investment Management Company
- Academic Collaborator – Social Impact Research, Meta
- Associate Director of Communications, New York University
- Educational Content Developer for Spanish, Duolingo

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aB14nkOfUjRFx3YSHjmf9z7FcYxhJCdSpAQ0h3TRw/edit#
Resources to Explore Career Paths

**General**
Professional Listings on LinkedIn
LinkedIn Learning
https://phdsatwork.com/
Cheeky Scientist
CMUniverse
O*Net
My Next Move

**By Industry**
See Speciality Area PDFs on CPDC Website:
https://www.cmu.edu/career/resource-library/career-exploration/index.html
See Resources by College on CPDC Website
Non-Academic Career Paths for Grad Students

Research and Development
- Quality Assurance
- Clinical & Medical Affairs

Business
- Entrepreneurship
- Consulting
- Financial Services
- Operations
- Business Development and Strategy
- Sales & Marketing

Education
- K-12, Public/Private Schools
- Higher Education Staff Positions

Information Aggregation
- Intellectual Property
- Patents
- Information Management
- Data Science

Communications
- Writing & Editing
- Journalism
- Science Outreach
- Advocacy

Government / Nonprofit / Think Tanks
- Research
- Policy
- Funding
Values Exercise

Before we do the exercise, take a few minutes to reflect on your professional life. Answer the following:

1. What was your proudest moment in your work?
2. What led you to pursue your scholarly interest(s)?
3. What was a pivotal moment for you as a graduate student?

EXERCISE: Values Self-Assessment

People have unique sets of qualities they value above others in their work. What characteristics do you value in your career?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ItnOV37Kn8yMezTRVRIyYdsocjRKEi82sVgQW7unK64/edit?usp=sharing
Evaluate Your Fit and Make Plan to Fill Any Gaps

Once you have identified job interest areas, explore them to see what skills are needed.

Make plan to fill gaps:
- Courses at CMU or online (e.g. business, entrepreneurship)
- Clubs (e.g. Graduate consulting club)
- Network with people on campus
- Professional organizations (Women in Tech)
- Internship
- Find a mentor
Informational Interviewing - Purpose/Importance

- Discover opportunities: 75-80% of all open jobs are filled through networking and job referrals
- Get to know more about a particular company and/or the industry as a whole
- Build a network that can be mutually beneficial

Resource: Article on Networking for PhDs
Informational Interviewing - Finding Professionals

Besides your personal network (friends, family, advisor, faculty, peers) you can find CMU alumni and other professionals in the following ways:

- Alumni information from your program
- CMUniverse (launching Fall 2021, but will take time to build up contacts)
- LinkedIn
- CareerShift (CPDC Resource in Handshake)
Finding Professionals - LinkedIn Alumni Tool

96,589 alumni

Search alumni by title, keyword or company

Start year 1900  End year 2021

Where they live

84,414 | United States
18,492 | Greater Pittsburgh Area
13,574 | San Francisco Bay Area

Where they work

3,442 | Carnegie Mellon University
2,537 | Google
1,240 | Facebook
Finding Professionals - CareerShift
Reaching Out on LinkedIn

- Default to formality (Ms. Mr. Dr., Professor, etc.) until your contact invites an opportunity for informality
- Introduce yourself
- Mention how you’re connected

Good afternoon Ms. Smith,

I’m pursuing my PhD in Philosophy at Carnegie Mellon University, and I’d like to connect with you.

Thank you,
Alexandra Lopez
Once a contact accepts your LinkedIn invitation, send a thank you message and request for an informational conversation:

- Restate how you’re connected and request a conversation
- Customize your message based on contact’s role and your interest in being connected
- Be specific when requesting time to speak
- Don’t ask for assistance with your job or internship search in your first message
How to Follow Up

- Allow two weeks for a networking contact to respond to you, and then follow up with an abbreviated version of your informational conversation request.

- If you do not receive a reply from a second message, then stop contact and move forward with a different networking contact.

Good afternoon Ms. Smith,

I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to follow-up on my previous request for an informational interview. As I mentioned, I’m pursuing my PhD in Philosophy from Carnegie Mellon University, and I’m interested in learning more about your work at Civic Science.

Thanks,
Alexandra
Conducting an Informational Interview

Be Prepared - research your interviewee, company, and industry in advance of the interview

Determine what you want to learn from the conversation and ask questions that can’t easily be answered by visiting the company’s website

Ask open ended questions that will allow the contact to provide a strong response

- How did you get into this field?
- What skills and abilities are important for a (Job Title) to possess at your firm?
- What do you think makes Employer X unique? OR
- What do you most enjoy about working at your organization?

Manage the interview so your conversation ends within the specified timeframe

Conclude by asking if you may keep in touch as you continue your job search

- Based on our conversation can you think of 1 or 2 other people I could chat with?

Say thank you and follow up appropriately to continue to develop your relationship
How to ask for a referral

A contact may directly offer to assist you with your job search during an informational call - Accept their assistance if you’re still interested in the employer/opportunity

Depending on their offer, you could:
• Ask them to suggest someone at the company to whom you could directly send your resume (in order to further your application)
• Ask them if they have any recommendations for how you can express your interest that would be in addition to applying online

A contact may not offer to assist you during your call and that’s normal - If you feel you had a good conversation, you may follow-up after your call and ask your contact to refer or recommend you for an opportunity at the company

• Depending on your conversation, you could ask them to suggest someone at the company to whom you could directly send your resume
Dietrich Graduate Employment Outcomes 2017-20


Example Companies/Positions:

**PSYCHOLOGY**
Language Data Researcher, Amazon
UX Researcher, Google
Human Ecologist, Phipps Conservatory
Data Scientist, VISIMO

**PHILOSOPHY**
Data Scientist, Conversant
Technical Product Manager, Facebook
Houston Astros, R&D Analyst
Program Manager, Tufts

**ENGLISH**
Medical Writer, Allegheny Health Network
Content Writer, Fitbit
Curriculum Developer, Institute of Reading Development
Media Editor, Mondato

**IPS**
Security Analyst, Accenture
Immigration Paralegal, Dentons Cohen Law
Journeyman Analyst, Radiant Solutions
Staff Assistant, United States Senate
# Where to Apply for Positions

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<tr>
<th>JOB BOARDS</th>
<th>WEBSITES (Careers, Jobs, or Employment tab)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handshake</td>
<td>Companies/Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Professional Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
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<td>Career Shift</td>
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<td>Goin Global</td>
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- Use PhD as a keyword search (add skill for more specificity)
- Filter by Location, Company, Salary, Job Type
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Citi</td>
<td>Equities Quantitative Analyst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duolingo</td>
<td>Machine Learning Engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Crosby Group</td>
<td>Senior Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>Data Scientist Intern, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intel</td>
<td>Statistician/Data Scientist</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Institute for the Brain</td>
<td>Director of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense Intelligence Agency</td>
<td>Intelligence Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duolingo</td>
<td>Psychometrician</td>
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Internship Search Timing

- Timelines can be industry or program specific—Generally, active search occurs within the academic year preceding the summer in which you will complete the internship---begins as early as August prior to the May/June internship start.

- Plan to attend Career Fairs, apply to internships as they become available, network, etc. UNTIL you accept an internship opportunity

- Before beginning an internship search, check in with your Career Consultant
Job Search Timing

- Timelines can be industry or program specific. Active search typically occurs within the academic year in which you are completing your degree and/or begins ~6-9 months from defense.

- Pay attention to availability information on job postings:
  - Graduation date requirements
  - The phrase “immediate need” or similar
  - Focus on applying to positions that have been recently posted.
Good News

- The value of earning a Masters Degree is substantial, and is reflected in starting salary differentials

- PhD candidates often receive an even higher starting salary, and more responsibility
Career & Professional Development Center

Location: West Wing, 2nd Floor
Email: kstaunton@cmu.edu

Appointments can be made through Handshake, both virtually and in-person. If you do nothing else, create your Handshake account!