



Post-Doctoral Employment Opportunities

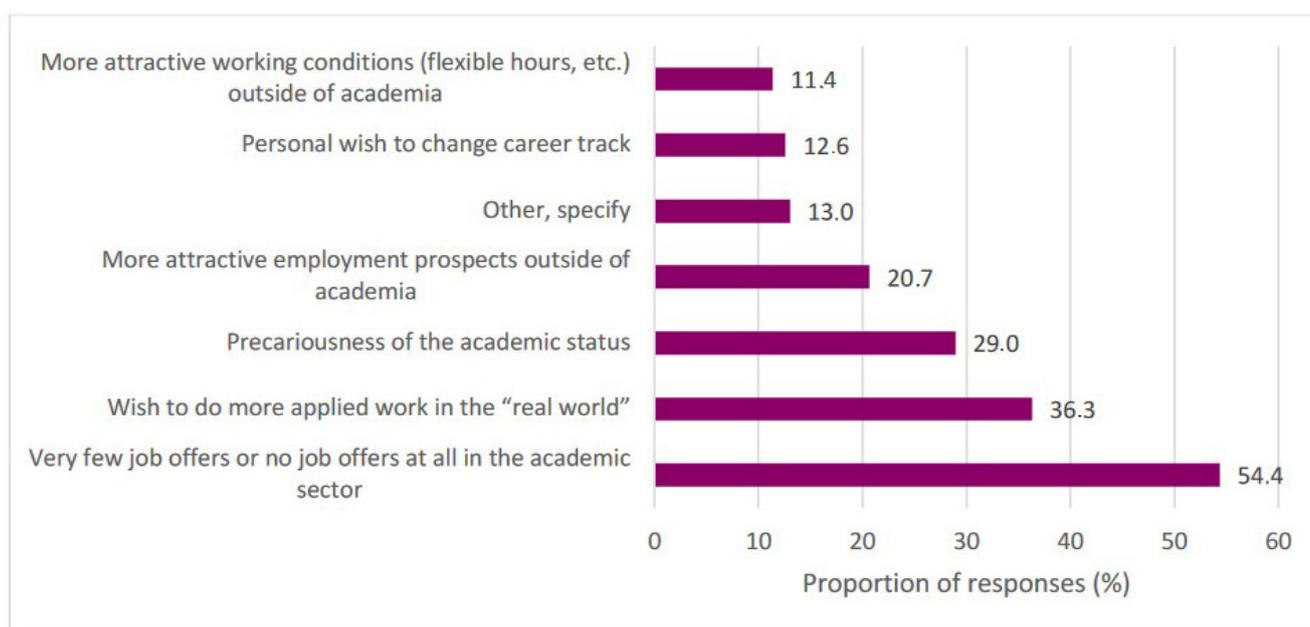


Launching an academic career is no longer the sole objective of PhDs. For various reasons, some researchers have also built or confirmed a professional project outside the academic sector during their thesis. From the very beginning, they had an external partner (company, association, ...) involved in their thesis project or knew that they were doing a thesis as a personal challenge. Others, through meetings during their thesis, gradually opened up to other sectors or decided to go into entrepreneurship. Some may have initially viewed this choice to «leave university» as a plan B. Nevertheless, they are generally very satisfied with their career choice. Indeed, once they get their foot in the door, for example, PhDs move fairly quickly into management positions, positions of great responsibility.

So doctors who leave the academic world are not doctors who fail in their careers! Not only do they flourish in new challenges, while maintaining and applying their way of thinking, their structured organization, etc., but they also enrich the world in which they invest themselves.

Below, various reasons cited by PhD holders for not choosing the academic world according to the survey of the Observatoire de la Recherche et des Carrières Scientifiques (ORCS) (1).

FIGURE 1 : MAIN REASONS FOR NOT PURSUING AN ACADEMIC CAREER



In addition to the academic sector, PhD holders therefore make use of their skills in a wide range of careers (research or non-research) in the private sector (market or non-market) and in public services. The university seems to remain an employer of choice for holders of PhD degrees for positions (outside research and teaching) in its administrations and services



Figure 2 from the ORCS report (2) provides an overview of the types of employers that doctoral graduates go to.



Legend of acronyms

- SHS** Sciences Humaines et Sociales (Social and Human Sciences)
- SEN** Sciences Exactes et Naturelles (Exact and Natural Sciences)
- SVS** Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé (Life and Health Sciences)
- ES** Enseignement supérieur (Higher education)

 See the «PhD assets» fact sheet for more information on the employability of doctoral students.

How to initiate or make this choice of career?

Professionals working in the field of professional integration support make this point loud and clear: the sooner a researcher anticipates the post-doctoral period, the sooner he or she will find a position that meets his or her requirements. In this way, his or her rapid integration will give a positive feeling of professional integration, based on enlightened reflection and not on a lack of time or opportunity. Therefore, from the first years of the thesis, the PhD student is invited to use his/her skills to build his/her professional project: develop a watch on the job and on his/her acquired skills, make hypotheses (career choice), analyze/confront this watch (jobs><skills) to confirm or invalidate the hypotheses, develop communication tools (cv, letter, pitch, popularization...),...





What can you put in place to prepare your after-thesis?

› Carry out a personal and professional assessment on a regular basis:

- by listing throughout the thesis the tasks carried out and extracting the developed skills that could be valorized for a future job, without forgetting your extra-professional activities.
- evaluating your activities to identify the ones you would like in your future job
- by taking stock of your values/interests/brakes on which you can base your thought
- by assessing the value of the work, what it should bring you, what it represents

This work helps build self-confidence by becoming aware of the extent of the skills acquired. This assessment will also help to sell your profile to the employer, to value your skills, etc.

› Exploring career opportunities outside of academia

- By consulting a maximum of job offers in different fields, identifying those that make you vibrate (develop a watch). The career center at your university can contribute to this.
- By identifying companies, organizations, services, etc. that might interest you: consult websites and browse through career fairs.
- By meeting other researchers, integration professionals, HR professionals, people with the job you want or don't want,...
- By reading job descriptions in «job» references (FOREM, Pôle Emploi, etc.), and by deciphering career paths on social networks.
- By seeking information you about the functioning of the company whatever its sector (commercial, non-profit, public): economic aspects, human resources management, labour law, etc...

Gradually acquire relevant information on the sectors, companies and functions you are interested in in order to compare them with your balance sheet and develop a professional project in line with your expectations.

› Build your network

- By creating your profiles on social networks (LinkedIn, researchgate,...)
- By getting in touch (and keeping in touch) with people in your professional and personal environment: your colleagues, your acquaintances, your meetings during conferences, lectures, congresses, thesis defenses, training, leisure, ... This will be useful throughout your career.
- By conducting «network interviews»: talking to a person with the position you are looking for will allow you to ask all the questions, even the most indiscreet ones (salary, working atmosphere, working conditions, recruitment, etc.)!
- By taking care of your visibility: regularly disseminate relevant information about your network.
- By using your network when actively looking for a job, cooptation is in fashion!

It is an added value of the PhD to have a developed network of scientists. It will be a goldmine to find the information you need to develop your career projects.

› Multiplying experiences

Besides extra-professional experiences, invest in activities within your university/laboratory to develop or refine certain skills: organization of events (symposia, conferences, meetings, ...), participation in grant applications, ...

What can university employment support units bring you?

› You can benefit from their expertise to prepare your post-thesis.

- Carry out a skills assessment, discuss the job market and its prospects, take stock of your network, etc...
- Structuring your job search or taking stock of your research
- Verify the match between the job you want to do and your profile and the skills to be developed (if necessary)
- Be attentive to your possible fears
- Provide advice (resume, letter, interviews, job fair,...) and develop an action plan



In your universities, the units dedicated to professional support are:

ULB	Infor-Emploi
UCLouvain	Centre d'Information et d'Orientation
ULiège	Alumni ULiège Emploi
UNamur	Cellule Emploi
UMons	Service Alumni - Projet Emploi
USaint-Louis Bruxelles	Espace Emploi

Outside the university, you can find support from [Adoc Talent Management](#), the [Laboratoire d'Ergologie Appliquée](#), and the [l'Association Bernard-Gregory](#), among others.

What can the university, the thesis supervisor, do for you?

For several years now, universities have been setting up numerous training courses in cross-disciplinary skills. They also follow the recommendations of the European Charter for Researchers and develop initiatives to support them in their careers.

Don't forget to get information from your university's services:

ULB, Doctorate Unit	doctorat@ulb.be, www.ulb.be/doctorat
UMons, Doctorate Unit	phd@umons.ac.be
UCLouvain, PhD unit	doctorat-adre@uclouvain.be
ULiège	doctorat@uliege.be, www.recherche.uliege.be/doctorat
UNamur, Euraxess Unit	euraxess@unamur.be, https://www.unamur.be/en/research/euraxess
USaint-Louis Brussels, Doctorate Unit	doctorat@usaintlouis.be

Your supervisor can provide precise information about your academic career. This will also help you make your career choice. Take advantage of his/her network to expand yours.

Your supervisor can also write you a letter of recommendation or be mentioned as a reference person on your curriculum vitae. Remember to ask his/her permission.

How to set up the development of your career project?

› **During the first year of your thesis, keep your skills map up to date during the following years and your «job market watch» file:**

- Take stock of the skills already acquired (bac, master, etc.). Consult the «transversal skills» sheet to find out how to take stock. Depending on the assessment, plan training courses in the transversal skills to be acquired.
- Set up tools for monitoring the job market.

› **2nd year and beyond, gradually develop your own academic and non-academic network and make the most of your profiles using the content of the personal and professional assessment.**

- Choose the social networks on which you want to position yourself (e.g. LinkedIn) and develop your profile.
- Update your skills assessment and job market intelligence.
- Get involved in the «physical» network of your supervisor and the researchers you meet at the conference.



› **Between 18 to 12 months before the defense, identify one or more professional projects and set up actions to reach your professional goal at the end of your thesis:**

- Update your skills assessment and analyze the content of your job market intelligence.
- Position yourself in relation to the market, your aspirations, etc. List the interesting companies for your projects.
- Take an interest in the «physical» network of your supervisor and the researchers you met at the conference and invite them to join your network.
- List the additional training courses to be followed if necessary in relation to the professional project (languages, quality approach, business creation, etc.) on the basis of your skills assessments (see the « transversal skills» sheet).

› **6 months before the presentation: start applying and activate your networks:**

- Draw up «CV and letters» according to the jobs and sectors targeted.
- Announce your availability and your professional project (profile, CV, physical network,...).
- Activate your networks to get offers from the «hidden» market.
- Practice your job interviews.
- Manage your applications and develop a draft career plan.
- Prepare your integration into the company/organization.

› **Examples of vacancies:**

- Any activity related to research (e.g. R&D functions in companies, private or public research centers, political parties, etc.).
- Any activity outside research but related to research in both the private and public sectors. This includes research support functions (administrative, management, legal, valorization jobs, etc.) in universities and the public service (e.g. as evaluator of research projects for a grant).
- Any activity where your expertise is an added value: consultant/advice (e.g. BCG, Mac Kinsey, recruitment/headhunting office, European Parliament, European Commission, ...), teaching, business creation (e.g. startup).

› **Videos of professional integration**

The PhD in 3 words by the researchers:

https://sites.uclouvain.be/cio/videos/prodoc/Mots_cles2.mp

The PhD in 3 words by employers:

<https://sites.uclouvain.be/cio/videos/prodoc/Qualites.mp4>





INTERVIEWS WITH RESEARCHERS

INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

PRIVATE NON-MARKET SECTOR

M. ABDELFATTAH TOURZI

Field: Training and Socio-Professional Integration (B), Chargé de mission, Doctor in social sciences, R&D function: socio-economic studies

Présentation ; Activité et fonction ; Compétences ;
Contexte professionnel ; Recrutement ; Formation doctorale ;
Evolution professionnelle

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Présentation ; Activité et fonction ; Compétences ;
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Présentation ; Activité et fonction ; Compétences ;
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INTERVIEWS WITH RESEARCHERS

INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

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[Présentation](#) ; [Activité et fonction](#) ; [Compétences](#) ;
[Contexte professionnel](#) ; [Recrutement](#) ; [Formation doctorale](#) ;
[Evolution professionnelle](#)

M. PHILIPPE VERWAERDE

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[Présentation](#) ; [Activité et fonction](#) ; [Compétences](#) ;
[Contexte professionnel](#) ; [Recrutement](#) ; [Formation doctorale](#) ;
[Evolution professionnelle](#)

M. GUILLAUME PAILLONCY

Field: Electronics (B), Application & Marketing Engineer, Doctor in Microwave and Microtechnology, R&D Function and Marketing
[Présentation](#) ; [Activité et fonction](#) ; [Compétences](#) ;
[Contexte professionnel](#) ; [Recrutement](#) ; [Formation doctorale](#) ;
[Evolution professionnelle](#)

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Field: Consultancy (F), Solution Architect, Innovation Manager, Master in Mathematics, IT Management Function
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[Evolution professionnelle](#)

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[Evolution professionnelle](#)

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[Evolution professionnelle](#)

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INTERVIEWS WITH RESEARCHERS

INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

PRIVATE PUBLIC SECTOR

M. ARNAUD LIÉGEOIS

Field: Health Care (B), HR Officer, Doctor of Psychology, HR
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M. BAUDOUIIN JAMBE

Field: Operational Directorate General Economics, Em-
ployment, Research (B), Director a.i., Doctor of Applied
Sciences, Management function

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[Evolution professionnelle](#)

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BUSINESS CREATION

M. CHRISTOPHE LAMBERT

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Field: Computer Science (F), Director, Doctorate in Electronics, General Management Function

[Présentation](#) ; [Activité et fonction](#) ; [Compétences](#) ; [Contexte professionnel](#) ; [Recrutement](#) ; [Formation doctorale](#) ; [Evolution professionnelle](#)

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- (2) Ibidem
- (3) Ibidem



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The PhD@Work project aims to strengthen and enhance the transversal skills of researchers. It is an integrated and inter-university project which has several sub-objectives: to continue the effort already made to strengthen the transversal skills of PhD students and PhDs, in better adequacy with the needs of the socio-economic world; to promote these skills to recruiters in order to improve the employability of PhDs and to support innovation; to develop supports, tools and support for professional integration; and to organize communication and events aimed at PhD students and PhDs as well as academics and companies. The project leader is the ASBL Objectif Recherche and the partner universities are UMONS, UCLouvain, USaint-Louis Brussels, ULB, UNamur and ULiège.

The PhD Welcome Pack was written by UNamur in collaboration with the partners of the PhDs@Work project.

