

Thinking about Careers in

Christopher R. Madan *Editor*

Academia and the World Beyond

Navigating Life after a PhD



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

NINE DTP

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@cMadan
<http://engra.me>



Things People ask PhD students

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What's your research on?

What's the point of that?

What will you do after?

Are you going to be a teacher?

Did you hear that <person your age> got a job?

Did you hear they're buying a house?

What do you mean you're no money?

Can't you get a Summer job?

When are you finished your PhD?

Are you done Now?

How long can it take?

Now?

WHY ARE YOU SAD ALL THE TIME?

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 - ...then a graduate student
 - ...then a research fellow

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- Now I have my job sorted, what are the options for the students I supervise?

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Madan, C. R. (2021). A brief primer on the PhD supervision relationship. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 54(4), 5229-5234.

Madan, C. R. (2022). Approaching the PhD thesis and viva: Clarifying expectations and enhancing preparations. *Cognitive Psychology Bulletin*, 7, 46-48.

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- Not enough faculty positions for everyone...
what else can you do with a PhD?

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- Not enough faculty positions for everyone...
what else can you do with a PhD?
- Informational interviews
 - People who were in earlier PhD cohorts or met at research conferences

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...those are some research-related skills, but not everything!

What do academics do?

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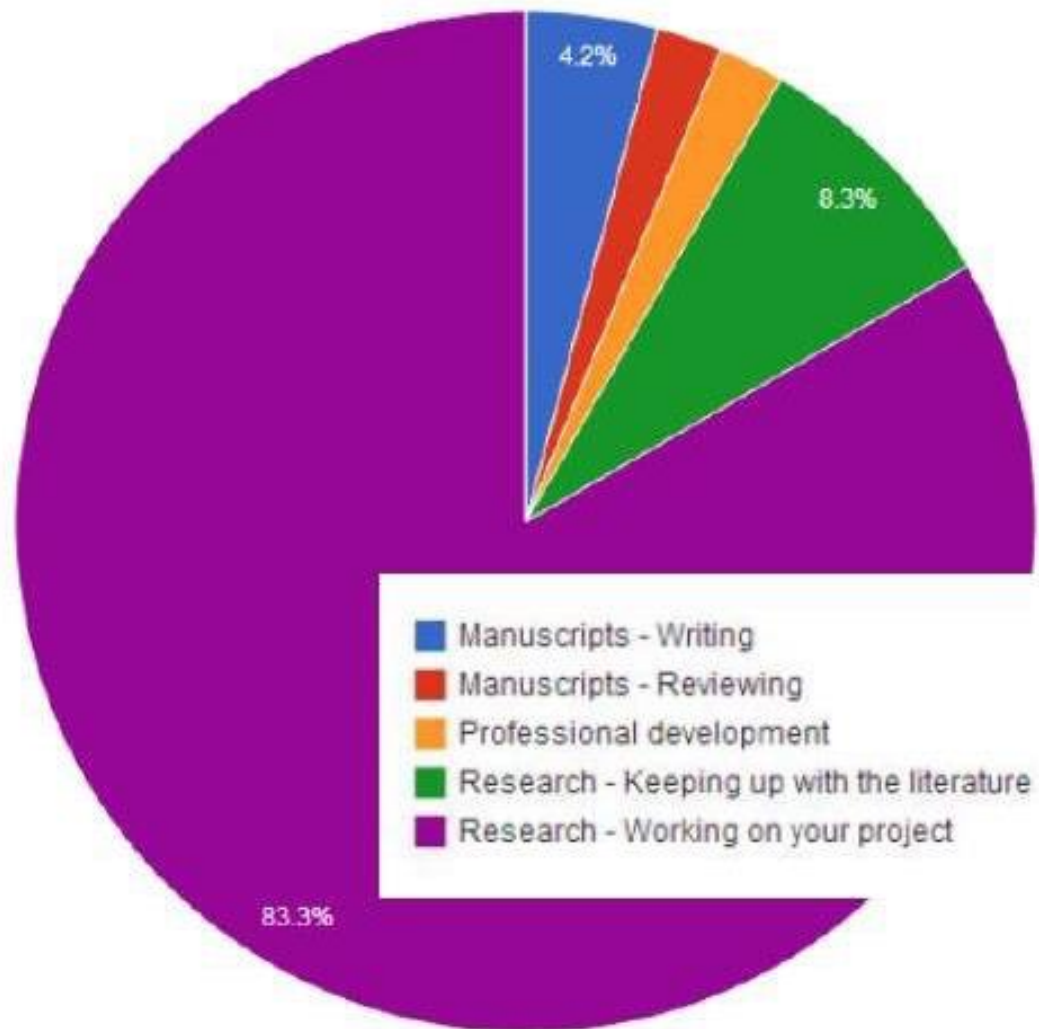
- Preparing and delivering lectures
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- Committees
- Peer review
- Applying for grants

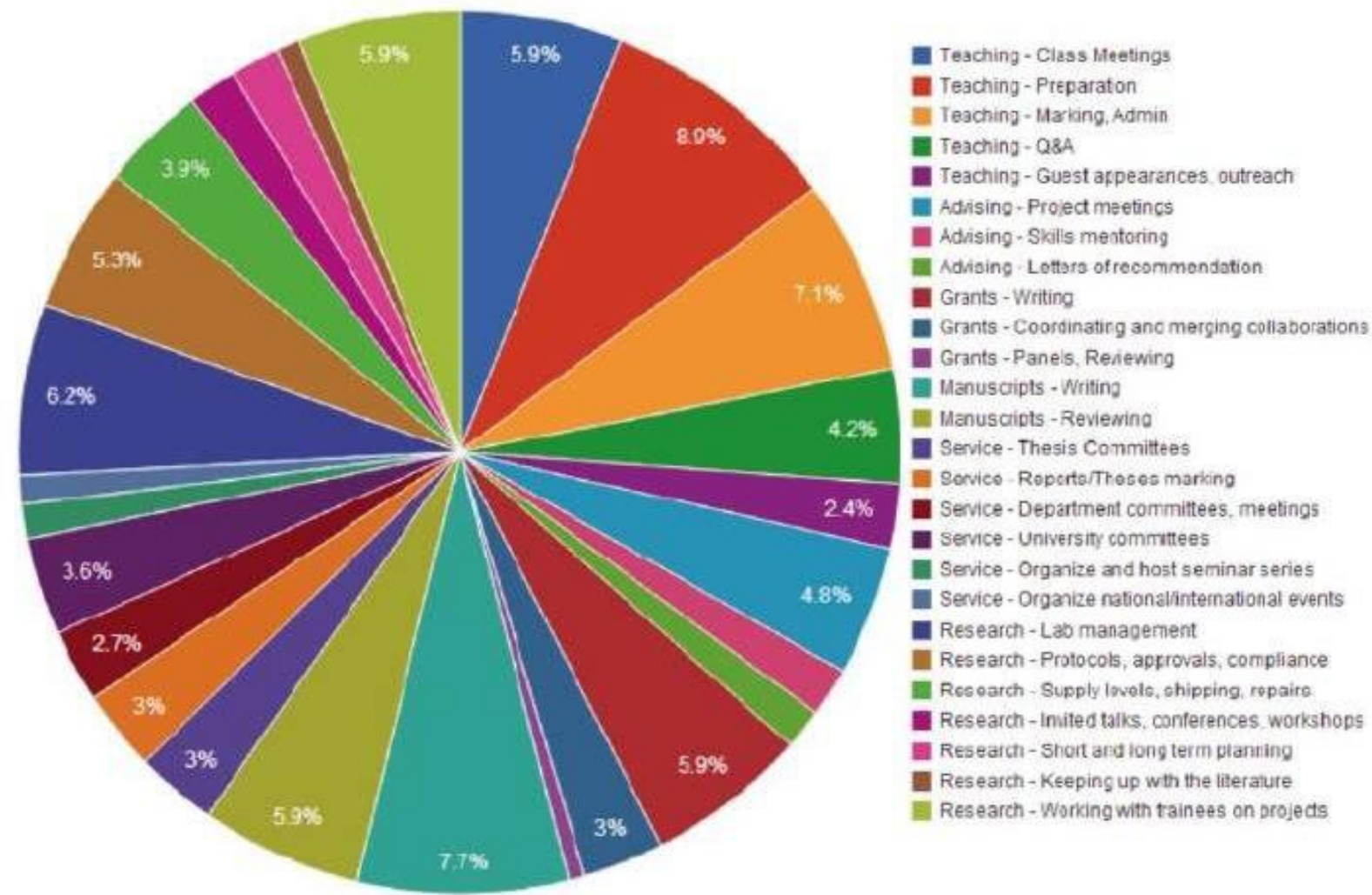
Research Fellow

Assistant Prof.

Research Fellow



Assistant Prof.



What do academics do?

Table 1 Faculty credentials fall into four categories

	Assistant	Associate	Full
Core competencies			
Current grant funding	1.00	1.00	1.00
Publication history	1.00	1.00	1.00
Research area	1.00	1.00	1.00
Scientific/programmatic fit	1.00	1.00	1.00
Potential research contributions	1.00	1.00	0.86
Ability to establish new techniques	0.86	0.86	0.86
General fit	0.86	0.93	1.00
Recruitability	0.86	1.00	1.00
Initial necessities			
Advisor/mentor reputation	0.93	0.64	0.50
Training institution reputation	0.86	0.64	0.57
Necessities for advancement			
National/international recognition	0.36	0.93	1.00
Regional/national recognition	0.50	0.93	0.93
Previous grant funding	0.64	1.00	1.00
Leadership abilities/potential	0.64	0.86	1.00
Unnecessary credentials			
Contribution to service mission	0.50	0.64	0.64
Contribution to teaching mission	0.57	0.64	0.64
Local/regional recognition	0.57	0.79	0.83

Credential scores followed one of four distinct trends: core competencies, initial necessities, necessities for advancement, and unnecessary credentials.

(Wright & Vanderford, 2017)

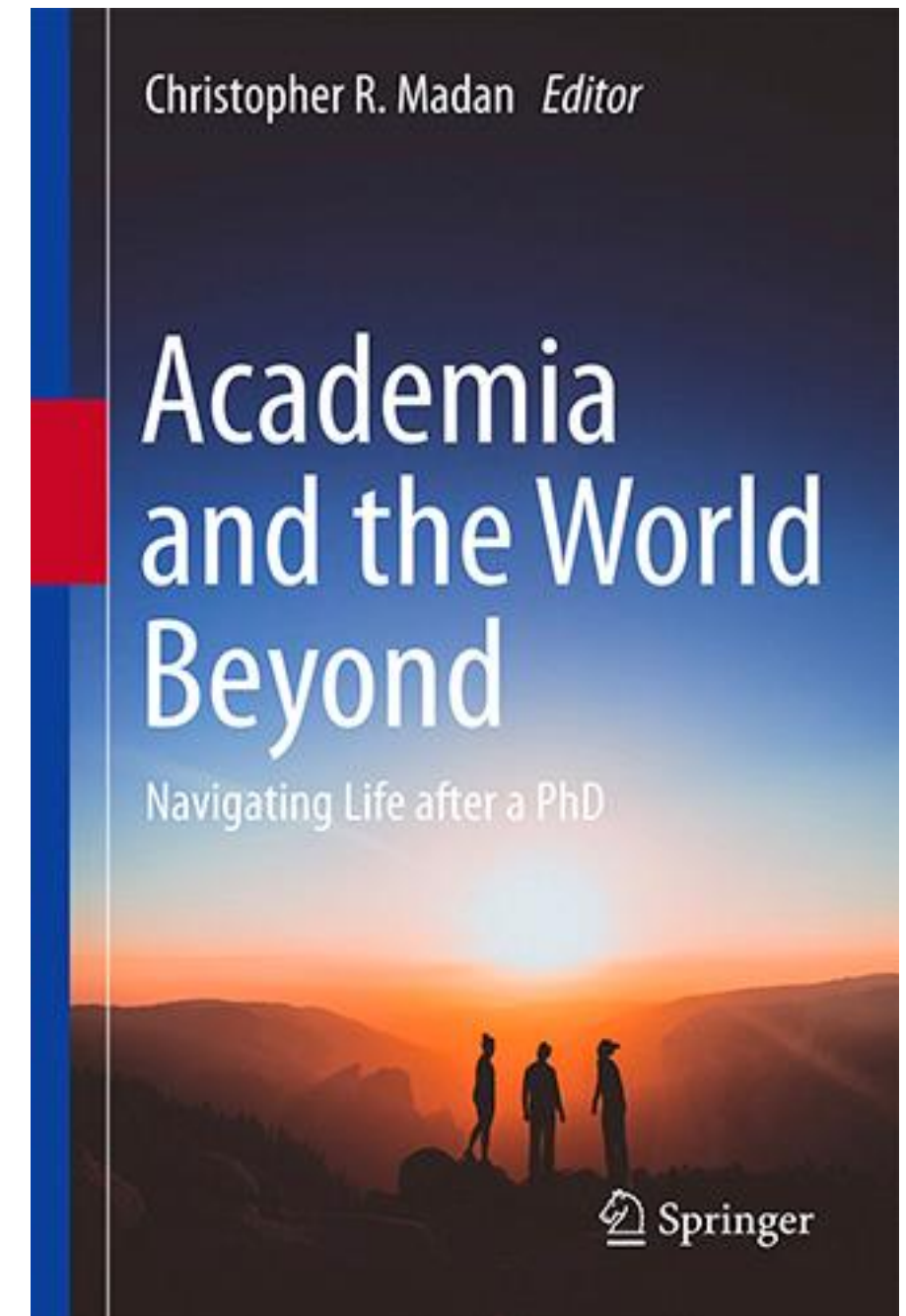
“Academia and the World Beyond”

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What to do after a PhD?

“Academia and the World Beyond”

What to do after a PhD?



<https://engra.me/books/academiabeyond>

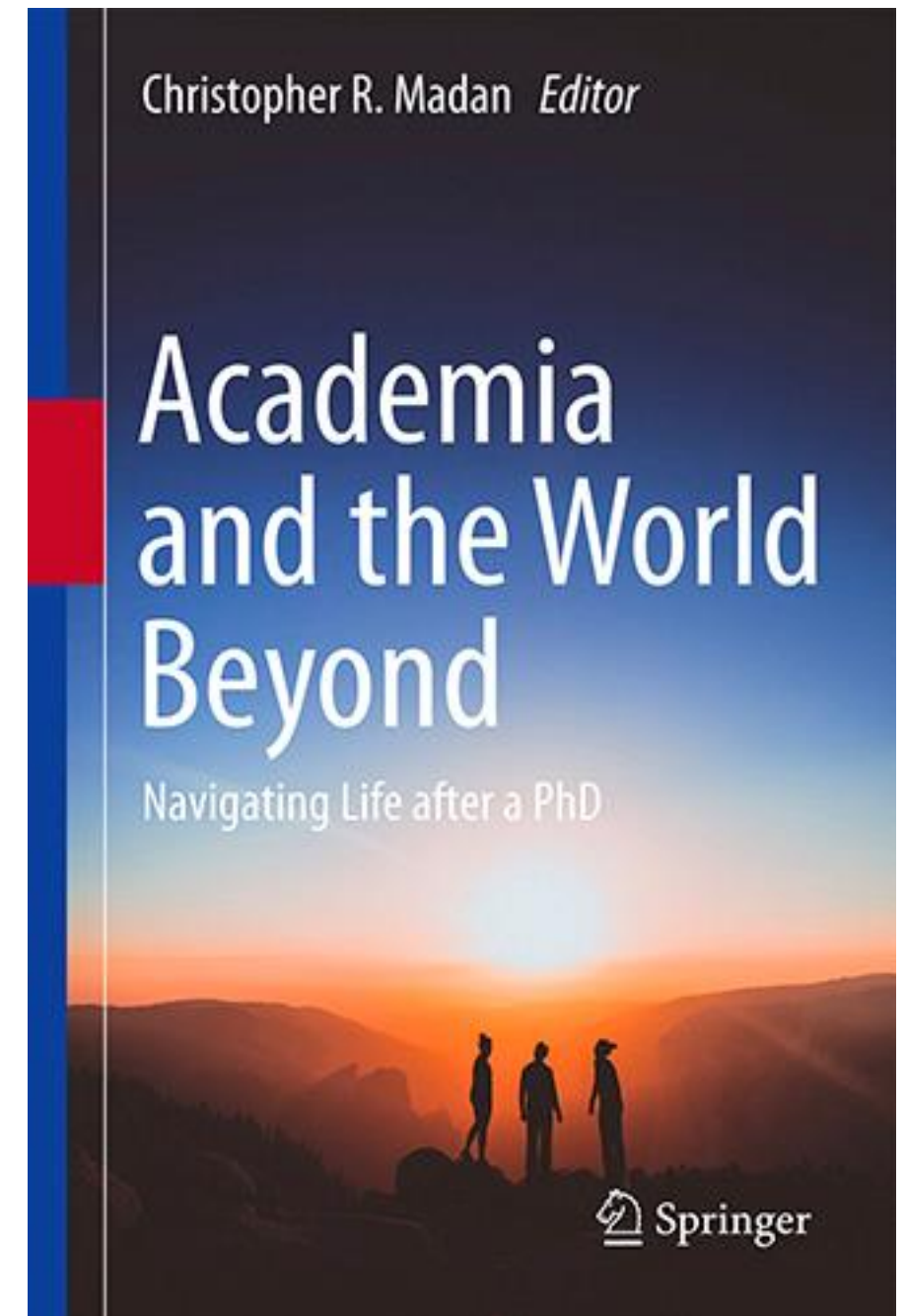
(published earlier this year)

“Academia and the World Beyond”

What to do after a PhD?

- Interviewed people about careers post-PhD (most in psychology/neuroscience)
- 22 interviews in book,
40% academic and
60% in non-academic positions
- Contextualised project and shared some insights from others not able to be interviewed in introductory chapter

...more interviews in progress



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Different Paths to Similar Roles?

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“I Had No Idea That the Option to Pursue a Career as a Professional Scientific Editor Even Existed”

Stavroula Kousta

Academic Careers

Academic Careers

“Be Bold and Go for Opportunities Outside Your Comfort Zone”



Elliot A. Ludvig



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Abstract In this chapter, Elliot Ludvig tells us about his journey through several departments—psychology, neuroscience, computing science, and mechanical/aerospace engineering—as well as to industry and back again. Elliot shares how his goals led to this path and suggests that readers should be bold and going for opportunities outside their comfort zone. Research responsibilities change with career progression, but other roles become important in academia as well, including teaching and mentorship, with the potential for others, such as being a course director. Elliot has also moved internationally and discusses some comparisons between countries. Other challenges can also be critical, such as the ‘two-body problem’ of securing jobs for both partners and balancing academia with having a family life.

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“Running a Research Lab Is Like Running a Small Business with a Highly Uncertain, Constantly Fluctuating Budget”

Lucina Q. Uddin



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Abstract In the interview with Lucina Uddin, we discuss how being open to opportunities can determine where you go next. Applying for faculty positions and deciding where to move to can be difficult, so it is important to think about your lifestyle preferences and deal breakers. Lucina highlights how working as teams and collaboratively is important and can be one of the best parts of working in academia. Unfortunately, there are issues in academia, such as those related to diversity. Academic roles change greatly as you shift toward leading a team—where skills such as emotional intelligence, open mindedness, decisiveness, and humility become increasingly important.



Academic Careers

“Be Bold and Go for Opportunities Outside Your Comfort Zone”

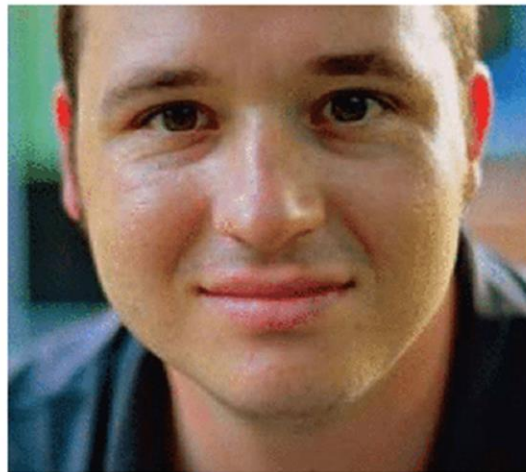
Elliot A. Ludvig



Elliot

“I Really Enjoy the Hectic Multitude of Jobs I Get to Complete in Any One Day”

Gavin Buckingham



Gavin Buckingham

Abstract Gavin Buckingham tells us about his research and current academic position in his interview and shares some lessons he learned along the way. He suggests that getting experience with the academic roles beyond research, such as teaching and supervising, can be helpful in determining if academia will be a good fit. Gavin also moved after his first faculty position, and we discuss factors that contributed to this decision. PhD students do not need to define their career based on their doctoral research but rather consider that their environment and colleagues will change as they move along, and this can be used as an opportunity to change the research as well. Becoming involved in university-level committees early on can also be a useful way to gain a better understanding of university decision-making.



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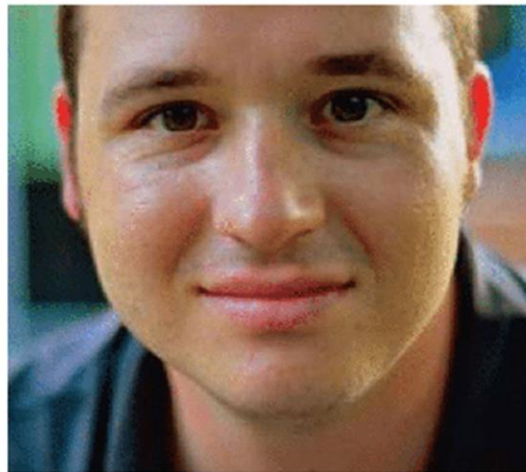
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Abstract Gavin Buckingham discusses his research and current role in his interview and shares what he learned along the way. His teaching experience with students beyond research, such as advising, can be helpful. Academia will be a good fit after his first faculty position. Factors that contributed to students do not need to be based on their doctorate. Consider that their colleagues will change as this can be used as an asset in the research as well. At the university-level, communication can also be a useful way to gain a standing of university

“Running a Research Lab Is Like Running a Small Business with a Highly Uncertain Future”

“Find a Mentor, Someone Who Loves to Teach and Who Is Good at It”

Kelly J. Arbeau



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Abstract In the interview with Kelly Arbeau, we discuss how she has adapted to adversities—including PhD supervisor leaving and university closing. Despite these challenges, Kelly found fulfilling job roles and was able to secure a tenured academic position. In this process, Kelly also describes how she revised her strategy for how she fits within her department and university. Consider how much you enjoy teaching and what other considerations may relate to where you would want a position, such as location, but also faith and other potential values of the university. Deciding your own priorities and expectations related to collaboration, teaching, and research can help you make sure you stay on track with all of the roles that need to be balanced. There are many great resources out there, from workshops to books; use what you can to prepare yourself for the job market.

Academic Careers

research-focused **OR** teaching-focused

research **teaching** mentorship **admin**

moving internationally **two-body** problem

when to have kids grant writing

collaborating **soft skills** and **technical skills**

public speaking switching to industry and back again

Non-Academic Careers

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“Align Your Mission and Vision with Your Next Steps After Your PhD”



Maira Quintanilha



Maira Quintanilha

Abstract Here, we interviewed Maira Quintanilha about her path from PhD to founding her own business—helping academics and researchers with their qualitative research projects. Having initially planned to be an academic, Maira found a new path after realizing she could build a business to teach qualitative methods online, a career path that would offer more flexibility and allow her to prioritize her family. Maira was drawn to academia to learn and inspire learning in others and now does that through her business. Maira shares many insights she learned along the way, such as finding your “zone of genius” and mentors, considering what you are passionate about, and investing in your own skill development.

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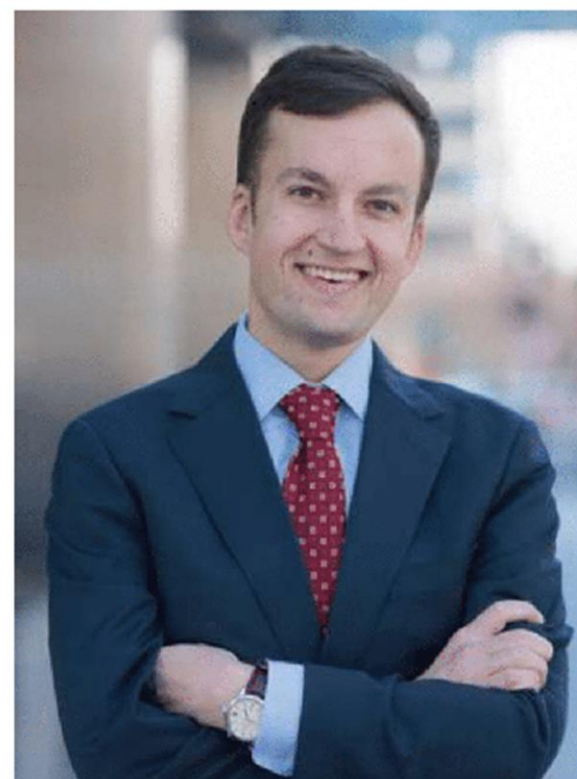
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“I Advocate on Behalf of Psychological Science Before the US Congress”



K. Andrew DeSoto



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Abstract In our interview with Andy DeSoto, we find out about his path from PhD to policy. Andy works for one of the key psychology scientific organizations and frequently visits Capitol Hill to help the association advocate for federal funding or topics related to psychological science. Speaking and writing skills are essential to this job, and the credentials of a PhD are important for demonstrating expertise. This job allows Andy to not only stay in touch with his academic colleagues but also focus on making a difference on behalf of the field. He reminds us that career paths are often not direct, to seize the opportunities that arise, and to enjoy your time as a PhD student.

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K. Andrew DeSoto

“A Career Path in Open Science Has Been a Great Fit”



Ana E. Van Gulick



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Abstract In our interview with Ana Van Gulick, she tells us about her PhD work and struggles with working alone and the slow pace of research. She subsequently worked as an academic librarian and learned more about data management and open science. Ana now works in a project manager role for Figshare, a company that serves as a scientific data repository. This role allows Ana to help researchers share their data, keep up with changing scientific research practices, and work across many disciplines. A PhD prepares people for many career paths beyond the specific academic field of study, as many skills are transferable.

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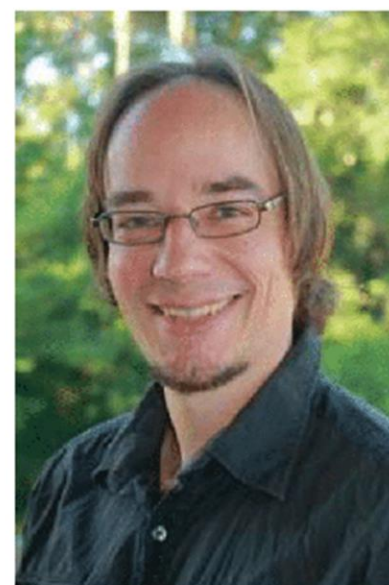
Ana E. Van Gulick

Abstract In our interview with Ana E. Van Gulick, she tells us about her PhD work and the challenges of working alone and the slow pace of science. She frequently worked as an academic and now works in a project management company that serves as a science communication project. This role allows Ana to help researchers manage data, keep up with changing scientific practices, and work across many disciplines. She compares people for many career paths in the academic field of study, as many scientists

“I Might Have More of a Knack for Science Communication Than for Doing Actual Science”



Jens Foell



Jens Foell

Abstract In our interview with Jens Foell, we discuss his prior research work in neuropsychology and neuroimaging and recent transition to a full-time science communication position. For several years, Jens has been involved in a large-scale “rotating curator” science communication project called Real Scientists. More recently, Jens led the launch of the German language spin-off. Jens shares his insights in how to be a science communicator and how this has become a full-time job for him. Jens also discusses how labs can differ in their culture—such as their working environment and expectations for working hours.

Non-Academic Careers

“There Is an Enormous Market for PhDs in Technical Sales Positions”



Cleyde V. Helena



Cleyde V. Helena

Abstract In our interview with Cleyde V. Helena, she tells us about her experience in technical sales and how lack of communication in the lab she was working in led her to now work as an independent technical sales, helping researchers chase customized solutions for their research. Leaving academia is a difficult and painful process, but she helps others realize that it can also be fulfilling. If you have doubts or are feeling stuck, think about why you are in academia. There are many career options out there; it's just a matter of finding the one that might be a good fit for you happy.

“On Behalf of Psychological Researchers Before the US Congress”



“A PhD Has Helped Me Learn How to Think Through Problems”



Aaron Moss



Aaron Moss

Abstract In our interview with Aaron Moss, we discuss how his post-PhD career focus changed from research to teaching to industry. Aaron's experience using online research platforms for his graduate research made him a great fit when he applied for a position at CloudResearch, a company that connects behavioral researchers to online research participants. The job involves keeping up with current research and publishing research while also helping other researchers conduct their studies. Aaron reminds that while graduate school is associated with many uncertainties, it is important to figure out what your goals are and work toward those during graduate school.



Ana E. Van Gulick

practices, and work across disciplines. It prepares people for many careers in the academic field of study, as many students

Jens Foell

Non-Academic Careers

government policy science communication

journal editor founder and director

hospital research coordinator marketing
data scientist industry research scientist

(social media, tech, retail sales, pharmaceuticals, government, software development, sports)

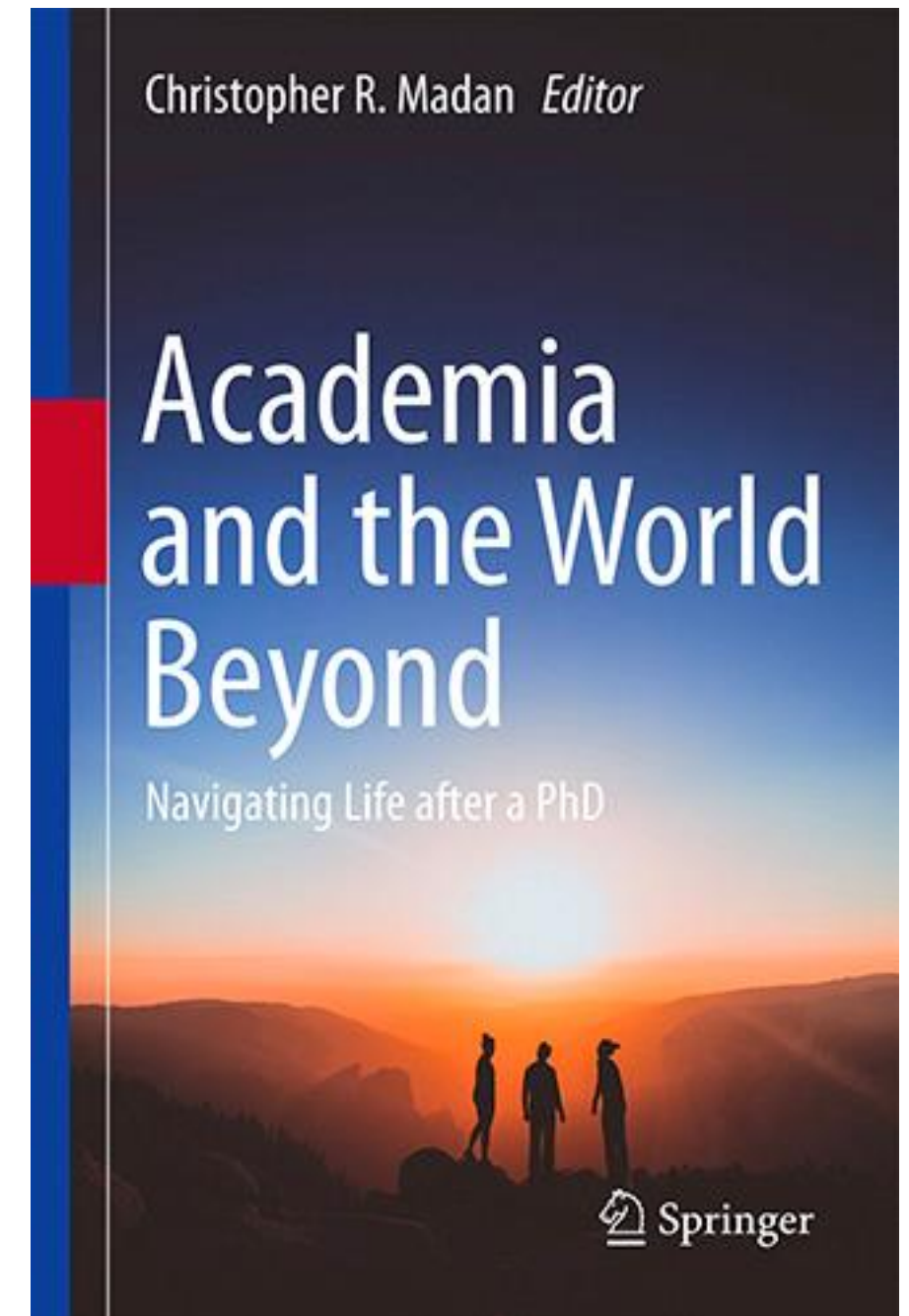
product manager **business administration**

scientific equipment salesperson

intellectual property lawyer journalist

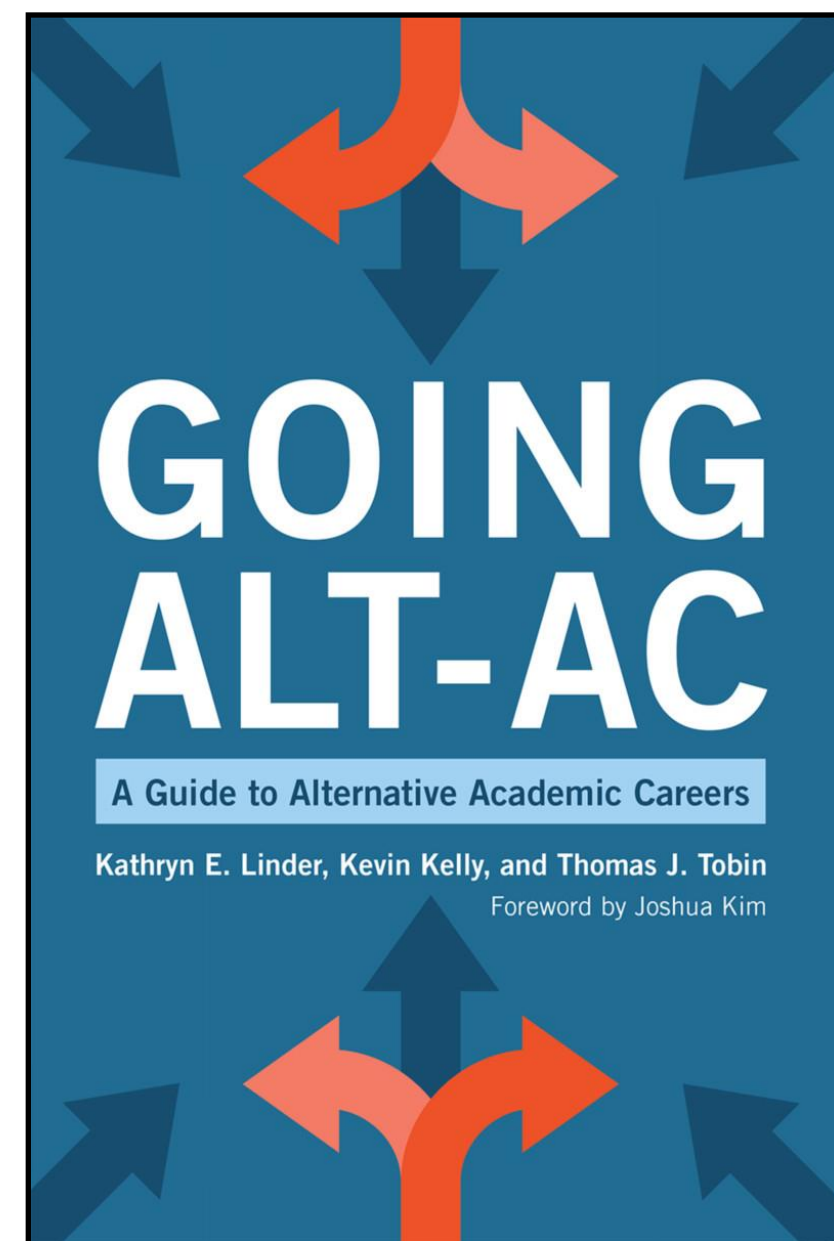
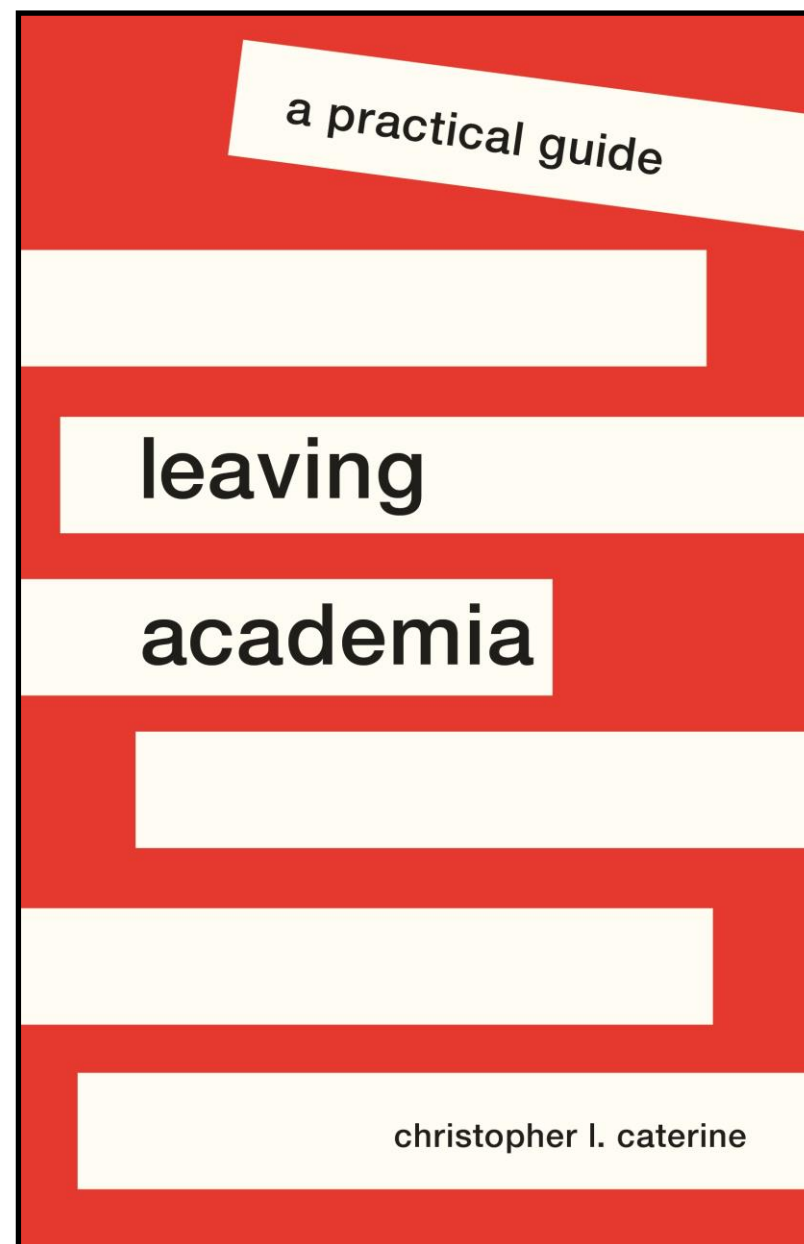
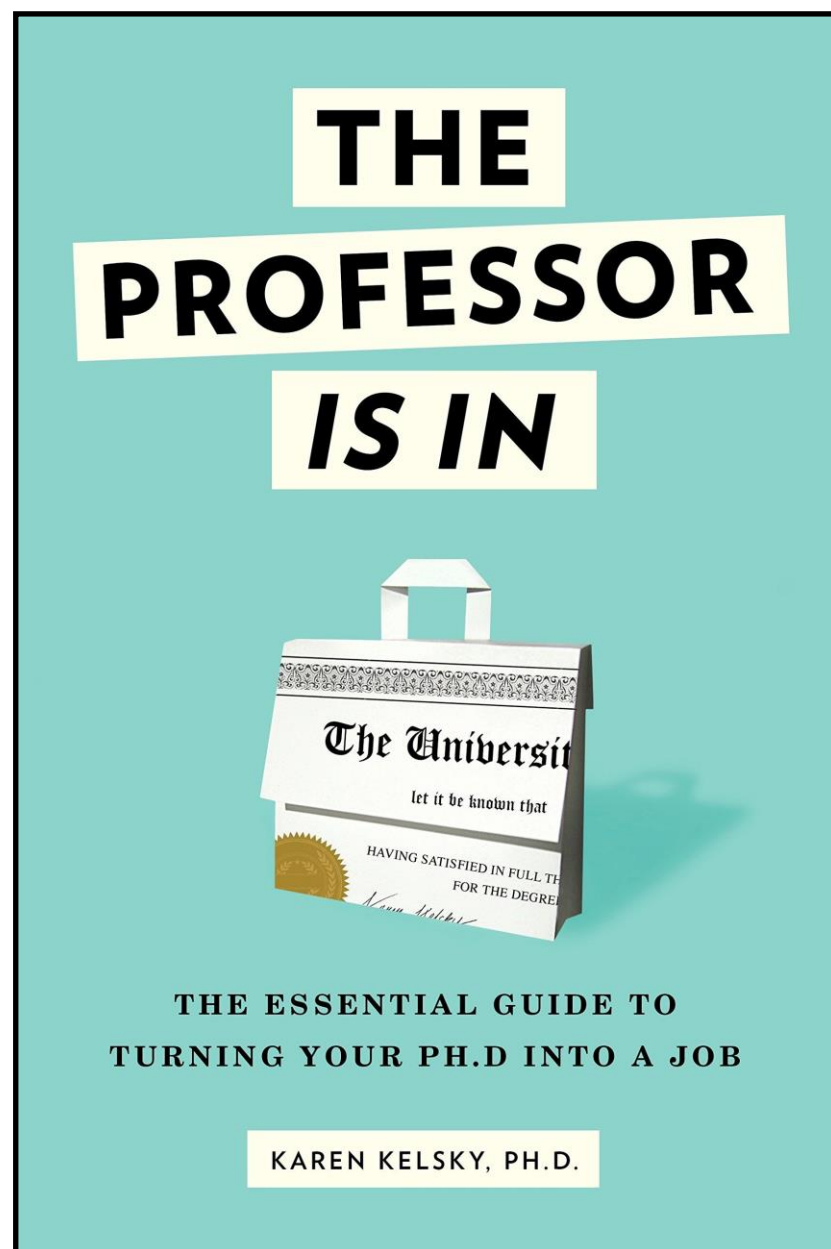
“Academia and the World Beyond”

- Check if your university has it in the library, if not, request they get a copy!



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Further Reading



Summary

- Academic positions have diversity and variability in responsibilities
- PhD training involves many skills, use this to your advantage



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- PhD training involves many skills, use this to your advantage

Beginning a PhD doesn't mean you're expected to commit to academia for life

