

Thanks for joining us!

We hope you enjoyed our #VitaeWednesday webinar, “7 Tips for Going Beyond the Professoriate.”

The material in this handout package will help you wrap your head around the career transition process and give you some practical advice for successfully launching a career campaign beyond the professoriate.

The information, tips, and strategies we shared in the webinar are ones you can use right now. This is true whether you’re an early-stage graduate student hedging their bets given the extremely tight academic job market or you’re long graduated and actively seeking non-faculty positions.

Here’s what you’ll find in this package:

- The 7 Tips
- Transferable Skills List
- Reflections on the CV to Resume Process
- Resume-Writing Tips for Academics
- Combination Resume – What to Include & Where
- Why You Should Do Informational Interviews
- How to Conduct an Informational Interview

These materials can get you started. If you need more information about anything covered or not covered in this package, feel free to reach out to Jen or Maren.

Want to learn more and get support for your own transition process? Sign up for our group coaching program, launching this fall! Jen and Maren are collaborating with Heidi Scott Giusto, PhD, from [Career Path Writing Solutions](#) to coach people like you in a small-group setting. More information about our program is included at the end of this handout.

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Beyond the Professoriate
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TIP 1

Academic Culture Sets You Up To Fail: Don't Let It Define What Success Means To You

TIP 2

When All Else Is Uncertain, Root Yourself in Your Values, Priorities, Strengths, and Interests

TIP 3

Research Potential Career Fields and How Other PhDs Transitioned

TIP 4

Learn to Talk about What You Do Instead of What You Know

TIP 5

Learn to Love the Resume (Even If It Probably Won't Get You a Job on Its Own)

TIP 6

Networking: Embrace It

TIP 7

Don't Have Skills or Experience You Need? There Are Creative Ways to Get It

Is Your Job Search Stalled?

Make Sure Your Gremlins Aren't to Blame

Dealing with the psychological and emotional aspects of transition is one of the biggest challenges PhDs face. Years of academic socialization, expectations from the people around you and society at large, and your own “gremlins” (inner critics or negative self-talk) leave doctoral candidates and grads vulnerable to a host of hurdles. These make tackling the not inconsiderable practical aspects of career change all the more difficult.

Watch out for:

- Conflating what you do with who you are
- The myth of meritocracy in the academy – “there are good jobs for good people” is *not* true
- Thoughts about “failure” and “leaving” and “waste”
- Feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness
- Untested assumptions about work in and beyond the professoriate
- Uncertainty about your own values, priorities, strengths, interests, and goals – academic culture may have imposed a false set on you over the years

What to do:

- Invest time and energy in self-reflection and -assessment
- Give yourself permission to feel vulnerable and uncertain – it’s okay
- Exercise your research and critical thinking skills – explore and learn about other forms of work
- Reframe your thinking from “failure” to embarking on a new, better-for-you journey
- Separate self-conceptions of yourself as an “academic,” “scholar” “scientist,” etc. from specific jobs – you can absolutely *be* an “intellectual” while *working* as _____
- Listen to your gut, not your gremlins

As you go through this transition, remember that it is at least as much a personal emotional journey as it is a practical reality. You know yourself best, but be open to broadening out your self-conceptions and plans. Advice to “follow your passion” is only useful in the abstract – root strengths, values, and interests will manifest themselves in innumerable, unpredictable ways throughout your life and career.

If you’re struggling, know that you’re not alone! And that this takes time. In my experience it’s a rare PhD who doesn’t struggle with challenging thoughts and feelings. There is a way forward. If you need support for the journey, check out my [Resources page](#) for some suggestions, join me on Twitter or at my in-person events on campuses and at conferences, or consider working with me.

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Website: <http://fromphdtolife.com>

Twitter: [@FromPhDtoLife](#)

Identifying Transferable Skills Helpful Definitions

Verbal Communication:

- public speaking skills
- facilitating/teaching skills
- answer questions, give directions, provide feedback, explain ideas clearly, synthesize information, etc.
- concise, articulate, adapt communication style to specific audiences

Written Communication:

- drafting letters of recommendation
- providing feedback to students & colleagues
- writing reports/ papers/ presentations, corresponding with fellow academics or thought leaders, etc.

Train: Teaching others skills

- mentoring
- coaching
- supervising
- teaching skills
- evaluating others
- breaking down complicated procedures into logical steps
- providing feedback

Consult: Using your expertise to advise others and provide advice & feedback.

- Usually peers & advisors
- May also include advising student groups, or working with a community organization in a volunteer capacity.

Analyze: Investigate complex situations, identify problems, and find solutions

- gather/collect information
- synthesize information/data
- problem solving
- qualitative and quantitative analysis

- create a plan to effectively solve a problem (design a research agenda)

Problem Solve

- Evaluate problems and provide solutions

Interpersonal Skills: Communicating and working with others

- empathetic listening
- presenting materials clearly and concisely
- team work
- team leadership
- conflict negotiation
- supervising others

Plan & Organize

- plan events
- identify resources
- schedule/time management
- handle details
- coordinate tasks
- meet deadlines
- set goals
- multi-task
- manage competing needs/deadlines

Project Management: “application of knowledge, skills and techniques to execute projects effectively and efficiently. ” - From Project Management Institute

- plan, organize and schedule
- assigning and delegating and directing others
- set standards and measure production
- work with people and work under stress
- time management
- lead, oversee, and supervise the activities of others

- Initiating
- Planning
- Executing
- Monitoring and Controlling
- Closing

Financial: Manage budgets and funds

- grant writing
- locate funding sources
- determine financial cost
- manage budgets
- reconcile and balance statements
- working with numbers
- purchase software/equipment
- prepare invoices
-

Administrative

- scheduling
- managing finances

- data entry
- word processing
- prepare presentations
- prepare meeting materials
- social media
- data base management

Create & Innovate

- Creative Writing
- Digital/Media/Web design
- Design
- Photography
- Painting/ Sculpting
- Animation/Digital Media Creation
- Cinematography
- Music
- Digital Humanities
- Computer Programming

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[JANUARY 13, 2013](#) BY [JENNIFER POLK](#)

CV to resume

It's a standard exercise [advice columns](#) and career centres assign post-PhDs seeking non-academic employment: turn your CV into a resume. Unfortunately, doing so isn't straightforward. And completing the exercise isn't necessarily the best way of going about things. Trouble is, one's academic path is only that. What it leaves out may well be the aspects of your skills and experiences most valuable to you on your job search.

Take my CV, for example. I've got three degrees, multiple awards, several conference presentations, a bunch of teaching assistant experience, and many entries in my professional and administrative service sections. Depending on the job, education can stay at the top or go to the very bottom. Details about my dissertation and thesis titles, supervisors, and comprehensive fields get deleted. Easy, done. Awards: ? My sense is that unless the resume will be for a position within a university—where hiring managers might know what SSHRC is—I can leave this section out. (Psychological crisis!) Conference presentations can be folded into one sentence or phrase: “present research findings at international conferences.” Having done them means I have communication skills. Same with teaching, which probably merits a few sentences, but these could appear in different places on a resume. Being a teaching assistant gives me administrative experience, judgement and assessment skills, and a number of other things depending on the resume's intended audience. So far, so good. The rest of my CV items can be similarly judged with an eye to what employers are looking for.

Now, all that wasn't so taxing. But the accomplishments of my university life are only some of my many potentially relevant skills and experiences. Even while I was enrolled in graduate school, I was doing all sorts of other things, most of which were neither strictly academic or for money. The sum total of my academic experiences turned into a “real-world”-ready resume is hardly the sum total of what I want to emphasize and celebrate about myself. And that's why writing a resume is so much more difficult than the standard “CV to resume” approach leads us to believe. Translation is the easiest bit. Much more challenging is figuring out what I should be when I grow up... and then figuring out how I can craft a resume-based narrative to bolster my cause. No wonder I still don't have a resume I'm comfortable sending out.

There's still value in the “CV to resume” [exercise](#), but only as part of a longer process. Building a resume is a major construction project, and making CV material resume appropriate is only a small part of the job. Sigh.

Resume writing tips for academics

By JENNIFER POLK | April 28, 2014

I was recently chatting with a friend here in Toronto who's ABD and looking for full-time employment. He told me that when he "buried his degree" on his resume — placed education last instead of closer to the top — that he'd received much better responses from potential employers. Previously, his applications hadn't resulted in anything; now, he'd been on two interviews in the past month.

This is an anecdote, but talking with him got me thinking about my own relationship with my resume. So did [a Twitter chat](#) I hosted last week on the topic of non-academic resumes.

My friend's decision to "bury" his PhD candidature makes sense to me, not because he should hide what he's been up to over the past few years, but because his impending doctorate is not of prime importance in the eyes of the vast majority of would-be employers. When I was in the early stages of my career transition after my PhD, I had a hard time moving education from its prime location on my resume. *I was focused on what I believed was most important about me.* Understandably after nearly 10 years in graduate school, my identity was wrapped up in the three new letters after my name.

With the passage of time, I've come to see myself as much greater than the sum of my educational parts. Yes, I have a PhD, but that's not what makes me who I am, nor does it define my place in the world. Having done a dissertation and all the many other varied tasks I carried out in conjunction with my time in academia makes me an experienced researcher, writer, educator, whatever. I can draw on that "job experience" — that's what it is, after all — when crafting a resume. But I can't stop at that. To convince a potential employer to give me a chance after spending six seconds glancing at my resume, I'd have to present a compelling argument for why I am the ideal candidate for their job. *I have to address myself to their needs, not my own.* The sentiment implied by the phrase "buried my degree" is telling: death, loss, grief. Removing education from above the fold of my resume doesn't have to mean this; instead, it would be about embracing a new identity, one that includes (below the fold, on the second page) but isn't dependent upon educational achievements. ...

1. Emphasize skills over (academic) content knowledge.
2. Translate your experiences into language meaningful to your audience.
3. Use specific action words to convey what you've done.
4. Don't underestimate what you've accomplished and tackled, in and outside academia.
5. Focus on the solution you will provide to the problem your potential employer is seeking to solve.
6. Keep it short; only include information that's helpful: necessary and relevant to position.

Combination Resume

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- **Profile**
 - A description of who you are as a professional
- **Key Skills**
 - 6 to 8 key skills relevant to your chosen profession or specific job
- **Relevant Experience**
 - Chronological order
Paid or unpaid work (if it is relevant)
 - A description of your positions followed by bullet points listing key responsibilities, tasks, and results (selected for their relevance to the position/career path)
- **Other work experience**
 - A brief blurb, but no bullet points
- **Selected Publications** (if relevant to the job)
 - No Need to differentiate between peer and non-peer reviewed).
- **Presentations**
 - List where you presented (American Historical Association, 2016). No need to list paper titles
- **Computer/technical/skills/language**
- **Education**

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



The Ph.D. Placement Project

Investigating graduate placement rates.

August 27, 2013 by L. Maren Wood

Comments (3)

What Informational Interviews Can Do for You

Ph.D.'s in the early stages of a career transition out of academe express frustration at how difficult it can be to find a nonacademic job. They don't know what else they can do that will be interesting or where to look for job ads. They spend hours crafting résumés and job letters, send them out, and then never hear anything back. "What am I doing wrong?" they ask.

My advice: Begin your career transition by setting up informational interviews. For most Ph.D.'s, that is news to them. What is an informational interview? It is pretty much what it sounds like: an opportunity for you, the job seeker, to learn about someone else's job, organization, or company. It is not—and this is critical—an opportunity for you to ask for a job.

Informational interviews will introduce you, as a Ph.D. job seeker, to career paths you've never considered. As people who have been inside academe for upwards of a decade, we often have a limited understanding of the work force. Many of us chose academe because it promised an escape from the perceived dullness of the business world. As such, we have pretty limited imaginations when it comes to nonacademic careers.

Through these interviews, you will build a network of people who can help you land your first job. Most employers prefer to hire people they know or those who were referred by a trusted source. Networking will connect you to people who can

recommend you for opportunities. Your new contacts can also give good advice on how to enter your new field: What experience should you acquire while you're searching for a job? How can you tweak your résumé?

Ph.D.'s are simultaneously overqualified and underexperienced, and, on paper, may not look like a good fit for an entry-level or midlevel position. But when you meet, face to face, with people in an informational interview, you can showcase your talent and highlight your abilities. It may take 20 interviews, but you'll eventually talk to someone who knows of an opportunity and can put in a good word.

How do you set up informational interviews? One key way is through alumni networks. Your Ph.D. department may not keep accurate lists of alumni (or share that information with students), but you can find them yourself. I obtained a list of recent Ph.D.'s in my department through an alumni database and tracked people through LinkedIn and company Web sites.

Conduct research on organizations and companies in your area, and contact people who work there. In seeking an informational interview, make sure you phrase your e-mail as an opportunity for you to learn, and not as a request for employment.

Informational interviews are common, and most people will agree to meet with you.

You are probably already connected to people who can help you. Write a short e-mail that describes your education and background, and the type of work or opportunities you wish to explore, and send it to everyone you know. Someone will know someone who works somewhere who will agree to speak with you.

Within a few months, you will build a network, narrow your job search to a specific industry or field, and (with luck) land a starting position. So save yourself the frustration of applying for jobs online and start speaking directly to people. That is how you'll get your foot in the door.

L. Maren Wood earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the founder and lead researcher of Lilli Research Group, a small education-consulting firm in the Washington, D.C., metro area. She will be blogging regularly for the Ph.D. Placement Project about nonacademic career issues for Ph.D.'s.

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INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW TIPS

1. An informational interview is an opportunity for you to **learn** about a new career field, connect with people working in that field, to research businesses and organizations in your area, and to learn about opportunities. **It is never an opportunity to ask for a job.**

- You can tell someone you are “looking to transition” into their particular line of work.
- You can tell people you are currently looking for work.
- You should ask people if they know of any opportunities or people you should talk to.

2. When emailing to set up an informational interview, specify how long you would like to speak with that person (keep it to no more than 30 minutes). **Make sure you arrive promptly and keep to the time limit.**

3. Prepare for an informational interview.

- Research the company thoroughly. You do not want to ask questions you can learn on a website.
- Research your potential career field. What are the leading trends? Concerns? Obstacles?
- Have a clear sense of what you can bring to the organization.
- Prepare your elevator pitch so you can articulately explain what you do and what types of opportunities you are looking for
- Prepare your work experience stories so you have concrete examples that showcase what you can do for a company.

4. Have a strategy

- What do you hope to gain from your informational interview?
- What type of information do you want to learn from this person?
- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask (see below for tips). It is o.k. to pull out a piece of paper to remind yourself of the questions. It will show the person you are prepared and aren't wasting their time.
- Be prepared to ask for names and contact information of others who you should contact.

5. Bring a resume, but don't force it on a person.

- If you are lucky, a person will ask you for your resume. A resume is like a business card - it is a great thing to leave behind, but not something you should lead with.
- If the interview goes well, you can ask the person if you can email them your resume to review and critique. You want to make sure your resume meets the criteria of your potential career field.

6. Write a hand-written thank you letter the evening after the interview and mail it the next day. Thank them for their time, for providing any contacts or leads, and mention one specific thing you learned through your meeting.

SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you end up/why did you choose this particular career?
2. What do you enjoy most about your work?
3. What do you enjoy most about your place of work?
4. How would you describe the organizations' culture?
5. What types of employment training programs are available at your place of work?
6. What positions did you hold prior to your current job?
7. Is this a growing or shrinking industry? In what ways?
8. What is a typical day like for someone in your position?
9. What are the biggest challenges your company/organization are currently facing? What are some of your company's strategies for handling these challenges?
10. What types of skill sets do people need to enter this line of work?
11. How would someone with my background enter this particular field?
12. What is the typical career trajectory, from entry level to upper management.
13. Do you know of any professional organizations or networking events I should join or attend?
14. Do you know of any current openings or opportunities – internships, part-time, or full-time?
15. Do you know anyone else who I should speak to to learn more about this career field? I'm eager to make more contacts within this profession.

Would you be willing to email them to let them know about me and that I will be contacting them? Or, would you be willing to introduce us via email/linkedin?

10 Week Group Coaching for Going Beyond the Professoriate

Fall 2016 we're launching a new, 10-week program for PhDs and graduate students who are preparing, or actively searching, for new careers beyond the professoriate. The group will combine the expertise of:

Jennifer Polk (PhD, University of Toronto), [From PhD to Life](#)

L. Maren Wood (PhD, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), [Lilli Research Group](#)

Heidi Scott Giusto (PhD, Duke University), [Career Path Writing Solutions](#)

Objectives: Empower participants to become confident in their abilities to conduct a non-academic job search and land a job suited to their abilities and skills.

Format: Each group will include up to 10 PhD or graduate student job seekers from across North America. Sessions will include a group coaching and/or workshop component, plus Q&A and/or discussion, as appropriate. The emphasis will be on instruction and learning, as well as coaching and support to help participants plan and implement action. Meetings will be virtually/online. They'll last **for one hour each week** via GoToMeeting.

Cost: \$995 US. We offer a payment plan: pay 1/2 now to reserve your spot, and 1/2 when the course begins in September.

Guarantee: Land your dream job before the coaching session begins? Present a written job offer for a full refund – and congratulations from the three of us!

There are two group options:

Tuesdays, beginning at 12:00 p.m. ET (Starting September 6, 2016)

Thursday, beginning at 8:00 p.m. ET (Starting September 8, 2016)

Join us! To sign up, send your current resume, c.v., or LinkedIn profile to beyondprofessoriate@gmail.com and indicate which group you'd like to join. Don't worry if what you send us isn't perfect: we only want a sense of where you're at.

Why group coaching and learning?

Emotional Support: Job hunting can be lonely. Leaving academia can feel destabilizing. By joining a group, you'll connect with fellow academics who are experiencing similar challenges with their transition: grappling with a shifting identity, building a new network, and reimagining their lives beyond the professoriate.

Expand Your Network: Group coaching allows you to tap into the network of other people in your group. They can introduce you to people they know and send you job leads. You can brainstorm possibilities together, share resources, and learn from the experiences of others.

Enhance Your Job Search: Heidi, Maren, and Jen will provide you with expert advice and coaching to help you create a successful job search campaign. We'll give you tools to work

through the emotional roller coaster of leaving academia and launching a new career, help you learn how to talk about what you do instead of what you know, and communicate your knowledge, skills, and abilities to potential employers through effective professional documents and by networking like a professional.

About Us



Jennifer Polk, Ph.D., works as an academic, career, and life coach. Her clients — graduate students and PhDs — are a diverse group of individuals based all around the world, from Canada, the US, the UK, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere. Jen speaks on campuses and at conferences throughout North America on issues related to graduate education and career outcomes for PhDs, and her writing has appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *University Affairs*, *Vitae*, and *Academic Matters*. Jen earned her PhD in history from the University of Toronto. Jen lives in Toronto with her cat Izzy.

L. Maren Wood, Ph.D., provides career coaching to individual PhD Job Seekers as well as research support and consulting to graduate programs and universities. In addition, Maren speaks on university campuses across North America where she talks about the state of the academic job market (providing hard numbers) and tips and strategies to PhDs interested in careers beyond the professoriate.

Maren earned a PhD in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and knows first-hand the challenges of being an adjunct, having worked as a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of History at UNC Chapel Hill. A proud Canadian, she currently resides in Denver.



Heidi Scott Giusto, Ph.D., helps individuals and businesses succeed when the stakes are high. Whether that's people who are in the job search and need help with their resumes or interview skills, or businesses looking to publish high-quality website or marketing copy, Heidi offers a wealth of experience through her 1 on 1 and small group coaching.

Heidi earned her Ph.D. from Duke University and holds certifications in resume writing, interview preparation, and empowerment coaching. She delights in empowering job seekers to present their best selves to potential employers — on paper and in person. She currently lives in North Carolina with her husband and two children.