

## Finding Astronomy Jobs

When I graduated with a degree in astronomy, I thought that the world was my oyster. I believed that it would be no problem to find an astronomy job at one of the top research institutes and do what I had always dreamed of. I think in retrospect that I was just a bit too optimistic. Finding the perfect job in astronomy has been somewhat of a personal odyssey for me.

The real problem is that there is a lot of competition for the best astronomy jobs. It all depends where you want to go. Most of the astronomy and astrophysics work is done in universities all over the world. The best thing that an astronomer can do is to get a position as a junior professor at a school with a great observatory, or contacts with some government astronomy satellite. That way, he can teach classes and get a gig working on important research. There is nothing like working at a major research institution. Not only are the opportunities for intellectual exploration stupendous in university astronomy jobs, but the pay is pretty good as well.

Of course, many of the best astronomy jobs are with NASA itself. Working for the government, you will have access to some of the best technology there is. NASA Astronomers help design and test the next generation of unmanned probes for planetary exploration, look for new black holes with space telescopes, and do many other fascinating and interesting things.

Then again, you can not discount the number of astronomy jobs in the private sector nowadays. Perhaps the easiest private sector astronomy job to get is designing textbooks. One of the great things about this particular job is that it lets you pass on your own knowledge to the next generation of students. Explaining astronomy to others can be a lot of fun, and writing textbooks is surprisingly easy. Then again, an even better private sector astronomy job in my opinion is working as a science reporter. Most science reporting is lousy, as it is done by people with little or no formal scientific training. If you understand how to write and understand the science itself, you can do a lot to help get science journalism back on track. Science writers get to travel all over the world and meet some of the best researchers out there. Almost without exception, successful journalists seem to really love the jobs that they do.