POST GRADUATE CAREERS: THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO DO...

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http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/
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Thinking about what to do...

Thinking about your career whether in academia or other areas can be difficult at any time, and, during your Doctorate or Master’s it may seem that there is no time. In fact, there is a framework to support you at Imperial to research, make decisions, and take steps to ensure that you have the necessary experience, network and qualifications for a smooth transition into your chosen career.

Career thinking can be broken down into four stages: Self-awareness, Opportunity awareness, Decision learning and Transitions (Law and Watts, 2003). In each of the sections that follow this help sheet briefly defines the stage and provides a summary of what is available at Imperial College London to help you through it, via:

- the Careers Service ([http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers)) (exploring the options, finding opportunities);
- the Graduate School ([http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/)), access the courses via [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/);
- Prospects ([https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/your-phd-what-next](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/your-phd-what-next)) an external provider of career resources.

An academic Department / Division Careers Adviser, is also available to you, information regarding this service can be found through your Department / Division or the Careers Service ([https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/team/dcas/](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/team/dcas/)).
Self-awareness

It is important to consider your interests, what you enjoy, what is important to you and your values. To help you to do this, think about:

- your actual, preferred and potential personal strengths (qualifications, abilities, aptitudes, practical skills, personal qualities and physical strengths);
- limitations to the above and commitments (personal/time/money etc);
- personal needs, satisfactions, aspirations, your most valued experience.

Workshops from The Graduate School and Careers Service: Understanding Yourself and Others and Successful Interactions courses including Introduction to MBTI (Myers Briggs) and Assertiveness, Finish Up Move On +,

Career Planning

Careers Service: advisory interviews, books and files of resources, online quizzes, psychometric tests, Personal Development Planning, Assessment Centres workshops, Getting started with career planning

http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/exploring-your-options/career/ , Hand outs e.g. Creating ideas

http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/handouts/ and external links to websites

ProspectsPlanner can help. It’s an online questionnaire, you’ll have to register, but it’s free. It matches interests to possible jobs, ranking them as poor or good matches. Some results may seem surprising or interesting. It is designed for university graduates but it may come up with relevant possibilities that you hadn’t considered):

https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner

Talk it over: Careers consultant, friends, family, tutor/supervisor, get some relevant work/voluntary experience, think about what you have enjoyed about previous courses/work and outside work experience.
Opportunity awareness

This section is about your understanding of the:

- range of opportunities open to you;
- rewards, satisfactions and demands of possible careers.

Workshops from The Graduate School and Careers Service: Networking, Careers, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Working in the UK for International Students, Want to do a postdoc? Webinar Ask the Doctor, relevant retreats

Careers Service: advisory interviews, PhD forums and fairs, subscribe to Jobslive for updates on jobs and events, employer led-presentations. Visit the office/website for info. (e.g. http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/ http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/handouts/

Experience: work/voluntary/job shadowing/mentoring/networking opportunities (New Innovation-Placements via the Graduate School)

Forums and events: Careers Service, Graduate School, Departmental / Divisional, Outreach, Imperial Hub, Student Union events make sure that you’re on the right lists so that you get the information e-mailed to you

Prospects: once you have narrowed down what you would like to do, have a look at Prospects job profiles, salaries, options with specific degrees and links to useful organisations (other areas of the site will be useful too):
http://www.prospects.ac.uk ; https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles
https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree

Consider your options, what you would like to do, any constraints on your choices, look at the Careers Service advice on networking http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/handouts/ and arrange to speak to someone working in the field ask friends/of friends e-mail and alumnus:
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/networking/ask-an-alumnus/

Talk it over: careers advisers, friends, family, tutor / supervisor, get some relevant experience. Think about possible connections for relevant experience / an informational interview...networking:
https://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/15-helpful-questions-ask-informational-interview
Decision learning

This section can help you to consider; using your preferred skills to make decisions (e.g. collating information, ordering priorities);

- the most appropriate decision making style for a situation (e.g. from impulsive to deliberate);
- risks – balance hopes, priorities and probability of desired outcome occurring;
- accepting responsibility, authority and accountability for your decisions.

**Workshops from The Graduate School and Careers Service:** Professional Effectiveness Programme: Project and Time Management, Assertiveness, Introduction to MBTI, Research Communication Programme courses and Professional Progression Programme courses.

**Careers Service:** resources books and handouts, downloadable information sheets and web links, 1-to-1 advice:

- [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/exploring-your-options/career/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/exploring-your-options/career/)
- [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/exploring-your-options/career/making-choices/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/exploring-your-options/career/making-choices/)
- [http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1215/making-decisions-about-your-career](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1215/making-decisions-about-your-career)
Transitions

This section is considered by some to put the previous stages into practice. Use your skills to cope with changing lives and priorities, and provide relevant evidence of your skills and experience as you:

• prepare and implement: applications, interviews, CVs etc for your career;
• use your understanding of work culture (in departments / organisations / countries);
• relate past experience to future situations to market yourself effectively.

Workshops from The Graduate School and Careers Service: Professional Progression Programme courses
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/students/doctoral/professional-development/professional-progression/ Networking, Effective CVs and applications, Preparing for interviews, Research Communication and Industry and Enterprise Programmes

Careers Service: information sheets/ web links/ interviews/ forums and events/ job search skills (CVs, interviews etc)/ generating opportunities, recruitment and selection methods, Charity Insights placements, employer led workshops, case studies and games, information on working in the UK for International students
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/internships/
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/workingintheuk/
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/application-process/

Experience: work/voluntary/ mentoring/teaching/networking opportunities, Innovation-Placements
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/be-inspired/student-recruitment-and-outreach/ ;
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/

Forums and events: Graduate School, Departmental, Careers Service

Prospects: job profiles, options with specific degrees, links to useful organisations, and information on applications, cvs and interviews https://www.prospects.ac.uk/

Bibliography

Careers Service http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/events/
Graduate School http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/ and
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/students/
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