



YOU ARE HERE

Start: a map, not yet a path

That's exactly where every PhD begins. Follow the steps below at your own pace, from your first year to launch.

START



YEARS 2-3 · EXPLORE & BUILD SKILLS

Stage 2 · Next Steps

The middle years are where you go from absorbing the field to operating in it. The most powerful move is talking to people who have already taken the paths you might consider.

- We recommend you conduct 2-3 informational interviews, one in academia, one in industry, one in nonprofit/government.
- Read alumni profiles on LinkedIn and your department's site.
- Take a leadership role, graduate student organization, conference organizing, workshop facilitation.
- Present at Grad Slam. Three minutes of clear communication is high-leverage practice.
- Build your LinkedIn profile and pick one curated LinkedIn Learning path.
- Draft a teaching philosophy or professional narrative from the Professional Narrative & Networking handout; see TADP.

2

1



YEAR 1 · BUILD YOUR FOUNDATION

Stage 1 · First Steps

Your first year is for setting your foundation. The goal isn't to know what you'll do after the PhD, it's to know what you have to work with and where to get help.

- Activate UCR Handshake. Where you'll book Career Center appointments and find grad events.
- Take one career assessment: myIDP (STEM), ImaginePhD (humanities/social sciences), or ChemIDP (chemistry).
- Book a first appointment with the Graduate Student Career Specialist.
- Email GradSuccess / GSRC to introduce yourself and ask what's open this term.
- Update or draft a one-page CV or resume using the resume samples for graduate students.

Mentor Note

At your annual advisor meeting, share a copy of your IDP, the conversation goes better with a written reference.

3



FINAL YEAR · START ~12 MONTHS OUT

Stage 4 · Prepare to Launch

Most students under-budget time for the launch. Start 9-12 months out, not the last semester. Two tracks, academic and non-academic, share most of the work but diverge in the last six months.

If you're targeting academic roles:

- Refine your CV, research statement, teaching statement, and diversity statement.
- Practice your job talk before three audiences: lab, department, and friends outside your field.
- Search & apply on AAS Job Register, AcademicJobsOnline, HigherEdJobs.
- Book mock interviews with the Career Specialist and a faculty member outside your committee.

If you're targeting non-academic roles:

- Convert your CV into a resume. Use the Convert-CV-to-Resume guide.
- Tailor each application, generic resumes are filtered out by algorithms and humans.
- Target boards by sector, industry, government (USAJobs), nonprofit (Idealist).
- Practice with the Indeed Job Search Academy + Career Specialist mock interviews.

4



ONGOING

Stage 3 · Work Across Differences

This stage runs through your entire PhD. Employers, hiring committees, and collaborators look at how well you work across roles, disciplines, and communities, and good work depends on it.

- Attend at least one professional-development event on collaboration or working across roles each year.
- Research your target employers' company culture and hiring practices the same way you research their research areas.
- Build your network across communities, same-field peers, different-field peers, and cross-disciplinary connections.
- Engage NCFDD (free via UCR) if you're pursuing academia.

START



READY TO LAUNCH

You made it to launch

You've built the skills, the story, and the network. Time to step into your next role, wherever it takes you.