Humanities Unbound

Supporting Careers and Scholarship
Beyond the Tenure Track

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A note on these slides

The charts that follow present data from the Scholarly Communication Institute’s survey on perceptions of career preparation among humanities scholars. Anyone is welcome to use and share the slides in relevant communications or publications.

For additional information:

- Other SCI reports on graduate education available at [http://libra.virginia.edu/catalog/libra-oa:3266](http://libra.virginia.edu/catalog/libra-oa:3266)

Questions? Contact Katina Rogers ([katina.rogers@gmail.com](mailto:katina.rogers@gmail.com))
Excellent but uneven response rate

- **Main Survey**: 200 Anticipated, 779 Actual
- **Employer Survey**: 100 Anticipated, 73 Actual

Bar chart showing the comparison between anticipated and actual responses.
Top 5 anticipated careers *(beginning of grad school)*

- Professor (tenure track): 74%
- Librarian or cultural heritage professional: 20%
- Non-profit professional: 16%
- Non-tenured university instructor or researcher: 15%
- Writer/journalist: 13%
Certainty of pursuing tenure-track professorship

- Completely Certain: 39%
- Fairly Certain: 41%
- Somewhat Certain: 14%
- Not Certain: 5%
Degree of satisfaction with career advice

- Not satisfied at all: 38%
- Not very satisfied: 18%
- Neutral: 26%
- Satisfied: 12%
- Very Satisfied: 6%
Current employment status

- Full-time: 60%
- Hybrid/Other: 17%
- Part-time: 8%
- Freelance: 6%
- Contract: 5%
- Unemployed: 4%
Current category of employment

- Higher ed (administration): 27%
- Library/cultural heritage org: 27%
- Higher education (teaching): 19%
- Freelance/entrepreneur: 15%
- Non-profit: 14%
- Private sector: 12%
- Writing/journalism: 11%
- Government: 8%
Funding for current position

- Institution: 69%
- Grant(s): 18%
- Clients: 11%
- Other: 2%
Why take an alt-ac job?

- Location: 44% Very Important, 37% Important
- Acquire new skills: 39% Very Important, 37% Important
- Salary: 29% Very Important, 38% Important
- Contribute to society: 28% Very Important, 35% Important
- Apply skills/knowledge: 24% Very Important, 38% Important
- Future advancement: 27% Very Important, 32% Important
- Benefits: 24% Very Important, 34% Important
- Family considerations: 30% Very Important, 24% Important
- Other: 58% Very Important, 13% Important
Most important competencies
(current position)

- Collaboration (Employer perspective: 78%, Employee perspective: 66%)
- Oral communication (Employer perspective: 70%, Employee perspective: 72%)
- Writing (Employer perspective: 67%, Employee perspective: 72%)
- Research skills (Employer perspective: 67%, Employee perspective: 49%)
- Analytical skills (Employer perspective: 68%, Employee perspective: 66%)
- Interpersonal skills (Employer perspective: 60%, Employee perspective: 52%)
- Project management (Employer perspective: 37%, Employee perspective: 61%)
Training needed for alt-ac employees
(employer perspective)

- Project management: 85%
- Technical skills: 78%
- Management: 71%
- Leadership: 64%
- Administrative skills: 59%
- Collaboration: 54%
- Interpersonal skills: 48%
Which skills were acquired in grad school?

- Research skills: 73%
- Analytical skills: 60%
- Writing: 54%
- Content knowledge: 43%
- Oral communication: 19%
- Project management: 9%
- Collaboration: 9%
• Consider evaluating and modifying required aspects of master's- and doctoral-level curricula in favor of including courses that help students to prepare for the wide-ranging career paths that they may pursue upon completion.
• Rethink standard methods courses to structure them around a collaborative project in which students must apply a range of skills toward an end goal centered on methodological understanding.
• Create one-credit courses that center on ecosystems crucial to the academic landscape, such as scholarly publishing.
• Form more deliberate partnerships with the inter- and para-departmental structures—either within or outside their home institution—that are already engaging in this kind of work.
• Cultivate partnerships with the public sphere, both to provide graduate students with valuable experience and exposure, and to make a clearer case for the public value of humanities education.
• Encourage (and provide funding for) students to become members in relevant professional associations, even if the students do not intend to pursue careers as faculty.
• Work to expand the understanding of what constitutes scholarship.
• Graduate departments should critically examine the kinds of careers that they implicitly and explicitly promote, and consider ways to increase the visibility of the varied paths that scholars pursue.
• Make a much stronger effort to track former students (including those who may not have completed a degree), and to encourage current and prospective students to connect with former students.