

Explorando Non-Academic Careers

A short guide for your exploration of non-academic careers.

Dr. Lorena Aceves created this guide to help you in your exploration of what you can do with your PhD outside of academia. Please feel free to share!

www.lorena-aceves.weebly.com
Twitter: @lacevesphd2020



A. Reflect

B. Active Exploration

C. Full Immersion

D. Evaluate

E. Persist



Exploring beyond the ivory tower.



Reflect

To determine if you want to pursue a non-academic career, it is important to reflect.

Start by doing some intentional reflection using these questions to learn more about yourself and your career goals!



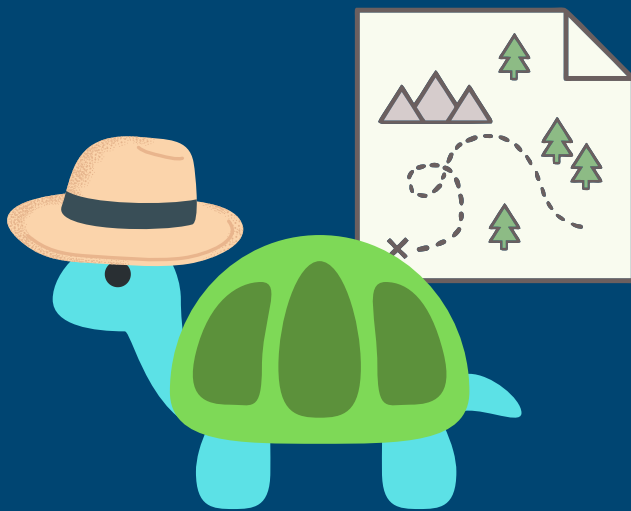
Ask Yourself These Qs

- What strengths do I have as a researcher?
- What is the impact I want to have?
- Do I enjoy academic research or am I looking for different types of work?
- Do I enjoy teamwork or independent work?
- Do I like conducting research analyses or am I more interested in communicating and translating research?
- Do I have any personal life goals (e.g. marriage, kids, living in a certain location, being close to family, traveling, etc.)? How do these goals fit in with my potential career?
- Why am I drawn to a career outside of academia?
- How does a non-academic career fit with who I am as a person and my strengths as a scholar?

Active Exploration

After doing intentional reflection, it is important to do some active exploration.

Actively exploring what your future career path may look like is important for discovering your ideal career path!



Here is Where to Start

- Develop a set of questions that will help guide your active exploration. Think about what you want to learn from conversations and panels you will attend during this stage. Click this link for sample questions: <https://bit.ly/3xbMiz4>
- Attend career exploration webinars and panels! These events are a great starting point to learn the basics.
- Connect with scholars and researchers in positions you are interested in. Do not be afraid to send "cold" emails or ask to be connected to other folks!
- Set up informational interviews. This step helps build your network.
- The informational interviews also help you learn to communicate your career goals because most folks that you connect with will want to hear a little about you and why you are interested in this path!

Full Immersion

Pursue experiences that can help you fully explore diverse career opportunities!

By fully immersing yourself, you will gain skills that will benefit your future career aspirations.

Immerse Yourself in an Experience

- If you are interested in community engagement work: reach out to local organizations and volunteer some time! It will help you build relationships, potentially inform the work you are doing in graduate school, and could eventually lead to paid work or a job!
- If you are interested in policy/federal/state level work: consider doing an internship or fellowship.
- If you are interested in think tank work: look into pursuing a summer internship! Most organizations are always looking interns year round.
- If you are interested in higher education administration/work: consider connecting with offices at your current university that could potentially offer you a graduate assistantship or where you can volunteer to learn the ins and outs of the work.

Explore this link for sample organizations, internships, and fellowships:

<https://bit.ly/2OcsxFF>



Evaluate

After some reflection and active exploration, it is important to evaluate and learn from your experiences!

It is crucial to know how to communicate and reflect back some of these experiences back to yourself and others.



How to Evaluate Your Experiences

- After your active exploration, spend some time reflecting and detailing the skills, projects, and experiences you gained.
- Create a spread sheet that lists all the projects you worked on and how you engaged in the projects.
- Talk with your friends and colleagues! Spend some time articulating your experiences out-loud.
- Another easy and formulated way you can do this, is by updating your CV and resume regularly (1-2 times per semester).
- If you do not have a resume, create one! Creating a resume gives you the opportunity to succinctly communicate concrete skills and experiences you have gained. This will be great practice for when you are on the job market.

Persist

Once you have made it this far, you have done a lot of purposeful work to actively explore your non-academic career options.

Kudos!

Here are a few more tips that will help you as you prepare for the job market.

Tips for Your Future

- Keep doing informational interviews! This practice will help you grow your network.
- If you did some active exploration, and still are unsure in what direction you want to take your career, do another round of active exploration! You also do not need to have all the answers all at once. Sometimes the right path shows up for you when you least expect it.
- Keep your CV and resume up to date.
- Create a personal website or "academic" Twitter. Many jobs are often initially shared on Twitter. Websites and Twitter are also great platforms for networking and building relationships with others in the field.
- Finally, connect with someone who you think could serve as a mentor through your job market process. Having someone that has been through the process will help answer questions or concerns you may have, especially if your current adviser is not an expert on non-academic careers!



Good Luck With Your Future Career!

I hope this guide was useful in helping guide you in your exploration of non-academic careers. If you have any additional questions or need further guidance, please feel free to reach out to me! I look forward to all the amazing things you will do with your PhD!

www.lorena-aceves.weebly.com
Twitter: @lacevesphd2020

