CAREER PLANNING IN THE RESEARCH SECTOR

AILASA 2020 WORKSHOP

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bit.ly/ailasa-career

OUTLINE

Aim: to help you consider how to position yourself for a meaningful career over the next five years

1. Navigating opportunities in the current job market
2. Preparing for work across sectors
3. Marketing your skills
   - General skills as ECRs HDRs
   - Specialist skills as Latin American scholars
4. Tips for navigating challenges

What is your ideal job, or place to work?

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1. NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CURRENT JOB MARKET

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What is an applied career?

Using theories and methods outside academic settings 'to produce positive social change through active intervention'*

Academic careers

→ Driven by researcher's focus

→ Theory-focused, primarily generating knowledge that contributes to academic literature

→ Longer-term, more comprehensive projects (often 3-5 years)

→ Focus on publications, grants and further research

Applied research careers

→ Shaped by client's needs

→ Solutions-focused, concerned with practical outcomes that can be directly measured

→ Shorter time frames, bounded projects (a few weeks to 2 years)

→ Focus on measuring impact (e.g. increased program sign-ups, lower rates of violence, return on investment)

* This is the definition of applied sociology. Adapted from Bruhn 1999: 1 and Steele and Price 2007: 4. See: https://sociologyatwork.org/about-2/what-is-applied-sociology/

1. NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CURRENT JOB MARKET

COVID-19

- Recession and budget constraints
- Stepping back to move forward
- Grants and subsidies

Career planning

- Build your public portfolio
- Use social media strategically

Explore new options at entry-level

- Social marketing
- Graduate programs

1. NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CURRENT JOB MARKET

Consider how your skills can contribute to pressing social issues

Review organisational mission to see how your work fits in

Consider federal and state priorities and local council plans

Practice your "1-minute thesis" explanation

Perfect your "2-minute elevator pitch" about the benefits of your research

2. PREPARING FOR WORK ACROSS SECTORS

Thinking beyond academia, what sector would you most like to work in?

Mentimeter

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Not-for-profit (e.g. community organisation)	Government (e.g. social policy)	Industry (e.g. consultancy firm)	Own business

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2. PREPARING FOR WORK ACROSS SECTORS

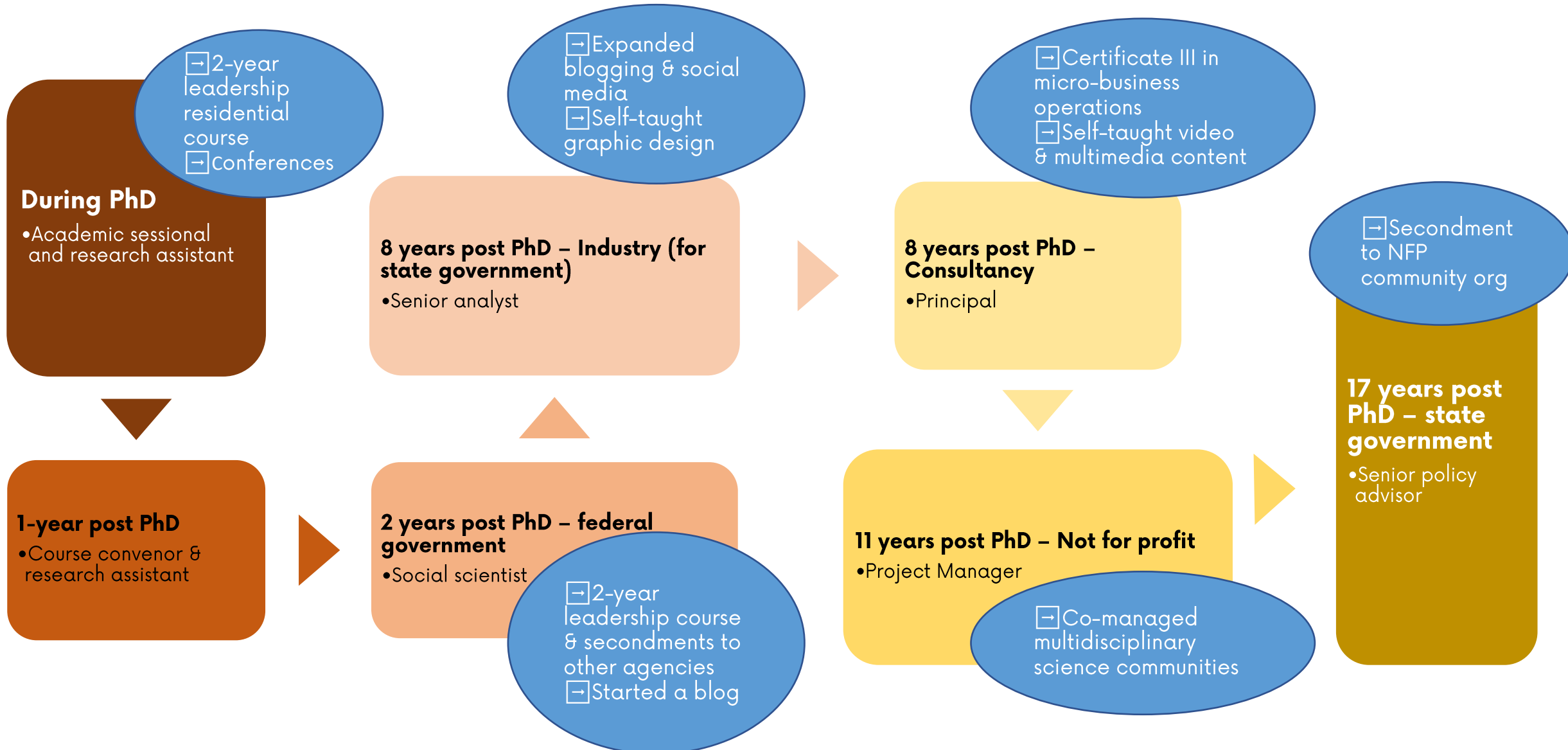| Example activities	Not-for-profit	Government	Industry	Own business
Role	Program & service delivery	Social policy development & program evaluation	Large-scale consultancy & audits	Stand-alone deliverables & facilitation
Project	Supporting youth program to reduce binge drinking	Evaluation of effectiveness of rehabilitation services across the state	Reducing cost and time taken on customer transactions	Develop social impact assessment for local council
Team	Multidisciplinary	Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary	Generalist	Solo specialist
Literature skills	"Grey literature"& public sources	"Grey lit" & policy reports	Academic & "grey lit"	Public sources
Research activities	Community engagement Surveys Workshops	Quick turnaround primary research Quant analysis of administrative data Scaling programs	Stakeholder engagement Market research Focus groups	Develop internal procedures Boutique training
Reporting output	Public report	Cabinet briefs or Government reports	Blog posts and client reports	Client reports

2. PREPARING FOR WORK ACROSS SECTORS

Pros and cons	Not-for-profit	Government	Industry	Own business
Budget	Low: short-term contracts, fundraising is time-consuming	Medium: fixed but enables longer-term projects	High: well resourced but projects have rapid turnaround	Low: you wear all costs & profits must be re-invested
Project choice	Medium: some autonomy to shape projects. Satisfying to see immediate benefits to public	Low: you can choose your portfolio, but policy remit determines focus	Medium: broader repertoire of projects	High: you choose your clients, but market may drive demand
Work/ life balance	Medium: orgs value balance	High: flexible hours & work arrangements. Can build up flex	Low: rapid pace, often lots of travel	Low: there's no one to relieve you unless you plan forced breaks
Stakeholder variety	High: local communities or disadvantaged groups, but driven by org mission	Low: mostly deal with other Gov agencies unless working in front line services	High: mostly corporate clients but across many sectors	Medium: mostly sole business owners or small businesses, but you learn a lot about many industries
Career opportunities	High: many opportunities to build experience and move into leadership	High: strong professional development, acting up, secondments, subsidised study	Medium: move up swiftly, but long hours. Experience highly regarded in other sectors	Low: you're your own boss, and success of your business can be precarious and stressful
Pay	Low: lower earning potential and job insecurity	Med-high: guaranteed pay increases and job security	High: large salary, bonuses & perks. Strong surveillance of your time	Medium: you set your rates but can be tricky to get right. Personally satisfying to provide NFP discounts
Challenges	Vocational burn-out	Constant restructure	Competitive culture	Professional isolation

2. PREPARING FOR WORK ACROSS SECTORS

PhD Latin American & Turkish women

Chapter on management of health & safety

Marketing plan for health business. Discourse analysis of equity & diversity

Managing randomised control trials, plus scaling education & training projects

2001: Start PhD
- Academic sessional and research assistant (5yrs); manager of supermarket deli & seafood department (3yrs)
- Teaching, interviewing (one-on-one, CATI), setting up database and resources; teamwork, managing staff, budgeting

2012: 8 years post PhD – Industry (for state government)
- Senior analyst managing research team as part of independent investigation (6 mth)
- Managing multidisciplinary team (23 people), setting up databases, qualitative analysis, reporting

2012: Consultancy
- Principal providing research and social media services (~2yrs)
- Website, graphic design, social media writing, marketing plan, philanthropic partnerships, research reports

2017: 13 years post PhD – state government
- Senior policy advisor in behavioural insights (3 yrs)
- Managing research and scaling projects to improve policy and programs, co-facilitating workshops, communications management, reports

2005: 1-year post PhD
- Course convenor & research assistant (1 yr)
- Time planning, coordinating teaching program, leadership, qualitative research

2006: 2 years post PhD – federal government
- Social scientist in social modelling team (APS6 – 3 years) & (EL1 – 2 years) (2 yrs+)
- Leading interdisciplinary research projects (20 people), managing student and mentoring staff, co-developing social models, research reports

2015: 11 years post PhD – Not for profit
- Project Manager establishing national gender equity program/ research program manager (~2yrs)
- Managing team (2 people), senior stakeholder liaison, research and implementing program, training workshops, communications and events coordination, developing guidelines, contracts

2020: 19 years total as a research practitioner

Vulnerable consumers study

Guide to intercultural communication. Social model of political violence

Evaluation program and training materials

2. PREPARING FOR WORK ACROSS SECTORS

→2-year leadership residential course
→Conferences

→Expanded blogging & social media
→Self-taught graphic design

→Certificate III in micro-business operations
→Self-taught video & multimedia content

→Secondment to NFP community org

During PhD
- Academic sessional and research assistant

8 years post PhD – Industry (for state government)
- Senior analyst

8 years post PhD – Consultancy
- Principal

17 years post PhD – state government
- Senior policy advisor

1-year post PhD
- Course convenor & research assistant

2 years post PhD – federal government
- Social scientist

11 years post PhD – Not for profit
- Project Manager

→2-year leadership course & secondments to other agencies
→Started a blog

→Co-managed multidisciplinary science communities

3. MARKETING YOUR SKILLS

3. MARKETING YOUR SKILLS: GENERALIST

Thesis

→ Time planning

→ Project management

→ Budgeting

→ Synthesise relevant insights from available evidence
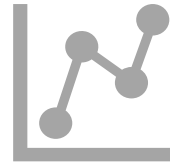
Research

→ Qual: #interviews

→ Quant: data sources

→ Data privacy, confidentiality, ethics

→ Translate theory into practice

→ Presenting to different audiences

Interpersonal skills

→ Teamwork

→ Conflict resolution

→ People management

→ Stakeholder engagement

→ Equity and diversity

→ Communication skills

TYPES OF CAREERS

- **NFP: "Social science" - Women's Counsellor (Brisbane)**
  - Tertiary qualifications in Behavioural or Social Science ← Thesis
  - Thesis → Knowledge, skills and services relating to women's health
  - Effective in networking, collaboration and communication skills ← Interpersonal
  - Research → Demonstrated commitment to maintaining confidentiality
- **Local Gov: "Social science" - Health Promotion Officer (Regional Vic)**
  - A tertiary or higher degree in health promotion or related field ← Thesis
  - Thesis → Knowledge of public health in local government environment
  - Evidence of participation in effective partnerships ← Interpersonal
  - Research → Understanding of research, policy and community outcomes
- **Fed Gov: "Policy officer" - Graduate Policy Officer (Tasmania)**
  - Research → Ability to undertake research and analysis
  - Commitment to personal development ← Interpersonal
  - Interpersonal → Ability to build relationships and relate to people at all levels
- **Industry: "Social research" - Research Consultant (Melbourne)**
  - Research → 3-4 years Market and/or Social Research experience
  - Experienced in using Q or SPSS for analysis ← Research
  - Interpersonal → Excellent communication skills
  - Research project management experience ← Thesis
  - Research → Desirable: Qualitative research experience

3. MARKETING YOUR SKILLS: SPECIALIST

Cultural analysis	How does your analysis of Latin groups relate to the advertised role? (E.g. culture, religion, potential clients, program delivery)
	What are some similarities between multiculturalism in Latin America and Australia? (E.g. refugee resettlement, social welfare, communicating with diverse audiences)
	How could your work support the organisation's mission? (E.g. healthcare responses, innovation and technology, global social movements)
Socioeconomics	How does your thesis framework help us understand patterns of inequality?
	Identify one clear example of how your thesis illustrates political relations
	What economic factors impact decision-making among Latin populations and why is this relevant here?
	What behavioural change opportunities can we see from your findings?
Policy context	In lay language, how could your thesis methods benefit policy analysis?
	How does Latin American scholarship support practical solutions to social problems? (Hint: provide an example of potential social change)
	What is your one top recommendation from your project that decision-makers can start implementing today?

BREAK OUT GROUP ACTIVITY

🪑 BREAK OUT GROUP ACTIVITY (20 MINS)

Think about how your thesis can contribute to policy <u>or</u> community outcomes in the sector you most want to work in
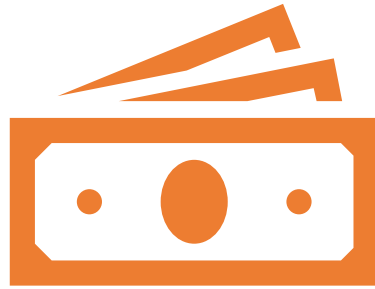
Activities

1. **Working solo**, come up with **one** example of how your specialist skills fits the job description above (5 mins)
2. **Discuss your skills** with the group (10 mins total)
3. **As a group,** write down one thing you have in common or found most interesting about your collective skills (5 mins)

4. TIPS FOR NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

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Negotiating salary
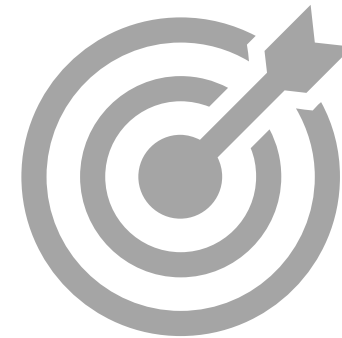
Expectations on promotions and career progression

4. TIPS FOR NAVIGATING CHALLENGES: GENERAL ADVICE

Weigh up the pros & cons before diving in. E.g. project satisfaction vs sector contribution

Build in "career health" check-ins

Prioritise your wellbeing as much as possible

Remember your degree can have an impact outside of your paid work

CHECKLIST: EQUITY & DIVERSITY IN CAREER PLANNING

Does the organisation make their equity & diversity policies public?

Are there Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other minorities in Executive and senior roles?

Does the company blog and social media meaningfully address multiculturalism and other forms of inclusion?

Does their website reflect diversity? (E.g. inclusive language, accessibility)

Does the job ad include a useful statement on workplace adjustments?

Is the job role able to be made part-time and do they outline policies of work/ life balance?

- [How to Look for Work in Applied Sociology](): how to find graduate opportunities and optimise your job search

- [Creating a CV and Resume for Applied Sociology Jobs](): tips for how to write and samples

- [Applying for an Applied Sociology Job](): preparing your application, equity and diversity considerations, how to market your skills, and writing a cover letter

RESOURCES

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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