The impact of a doctoral career

Information for doctoral students and those considering undertaking a doctorate

Biological Sciences Doctoral Graduates Factsheet

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About this factsheet

This factsheet has been produced for current or potential doctoral students and those who support and advise them. It is informed by the Doctoral impact and career tracking study conducted on behalf of Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the higher education funding bodies for England and Wales (HEFCE and HEFCW).

The factsheet provides key statistics and examples of achievements and impact for graduates of the Biological Sciences. It is complemented by a briefing containing a general overview of the findings of the Doctoral Impact and Career Tracking Study.

Employment status seven to nine years after graduation (%)

Survey response: 250

Where are doctoral graduates working seven to nine years on? (%)

Excluding graduates working in higher education. Survey response: 120

Find out more

A copy of the full report, along with shorter briefings targeted at policy makers, employers and current and potential doctoral students can be found here:

http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/impact/

Survey data from the study will be deposited with the UK Data Archive for other researchers to use:

http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/
How satisfied are doctoral graduates with their career to date? (%)
Survey responses: Biological Sciences graduates: 249 / Total Sample: 1,818

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
<th>Not very satisfied</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Science graduates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All doctoral graduates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“For me, and I know for a lot of people, it is quite often the hardest thing we’ve ever done. So it sort of puts things into perspective a bit. It teaches you life skills, you know how to deal with difficult situations.”

Biological science graduate.
‘I came out of it thinking I could do anything and that feeling has continued just because you have gone through the process of doing a PhD, doing a new piece of research that no one else has ever done before. [...] and you can take both the transferable skills and the more specific skills into any job that you wish you apply for.’

Biological Sciences graduate.

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**Extent to which doctoral experience enabled graduates to... (%)**

Survey responses: 245-260

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Some extent</th>
<th>A great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate complex information to non-specialists</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think creatively</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be innovative in the workplace</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Since graduating Biological Sciences graduates have...**

- Provided analytical solutions for one of the world’s biggest infrastructure projects
- Developed new genetic material, providing a platform for new drugs
- Produced software to help manage endangered animal populations
- Led and secured funding for a successful project supporting socially excluded families
- Contributed to the success of the London 2012 Olympics

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**In the words of their employers...**

**“Usually the expected potential [of doctoral graduates] is higher. [...] So firstly if someone has a PhD you expect a higher education, you expect a higher potential of the person within the organisation. And second reason is usually that people with specific knowledge proven by a PhD are usually more competitive in the market, and then of course it can be that they get a higher salary.”**

Large employer, manufacturing and engineering.

**“The level of understanding and the area of research that doctoral graduates have helps with the customer requirements for technical ability. It helps us sell more. [Without doctoral graduates] we would have problems, because most of our customers have doctorates as well, so we may have trouble communicating on a similar level to them.”**

Small employer, other sectors.

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