

Careers for Philosophy Majors

There are a great many career fields which build on studies in Philosophy. In exploring options, reflect on the skills you have developed through your major, the ones you prefer using and the careers which are most strongly related.

What skills and knowledge do I develop by studying Philosophy?

Philosophy undertakes systematic inquiry into central areas of human concern. Philosophy can be highly theoretical and abstract, but it can also be applied to issues that arise in our lives, such as moral dilemmas with which we may be confronted. Philosophers ask a variety of fundamental questions, such as: What is reality? What is truth? What is knowledge, and are we able to have knowledge? How should we behave? Is there an objective difference between right and wrong? Are there good arguments for the existence of God? What is a good argument? What is a good reason?

The study of philosophy requires the analysis and evaluation of arguments that are given for various philosophical positions. In the course of studying philosophy, students acquire a range of generic skills and capacities, such as the ability to analyse argument, critical thinking, clarity of thought, the ability to adopt a broad perspective, as well as communication skills. These generic skills and capacities are highly valued by employers in a wide range of different areas. Students of philosophy have gone onto careers in many different fields outside of academic philosophy. Philosophy majors perform the best of all humanities graduates on the LSAT exam, which is required for entrance into the JD degree at the University of Melbourne JD. They also score highest of all humanities graduates on the verbal and analytical reasoning components of the GRE which is required for admission into many graduate schools in North America.

What careers build on these skills and knowledge?

The table below lists a range of careers which make use of studies in Philosophy. The list is not definitive – depending on your own interests and experiences, there may well be other ways to build on your major.

More information on many of these career areas is available at:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options

(Career Exploration - Career Links by Degree – Arts)

Next Steps

The table also provides some information about ‘next steps’ ie what you might need to do to start a career in the particular field, specifically whether graduate study is required or whether immediate employment is possible.

There are two employment types for Bachelor graduates:

- General employment positions suitable for new graduates
- Graduate Employment Programs

Graduate Employment Programs are offered by some employers – generally large commercial organisations and government. Graduate Employment Program positions are jobs that include a substantial component of training and development. Recruitment for these programs takes place early in the year (around March-May). Final year tertiary

students and recent grads can apply. For some of the career areas discussed, Graduate Employment programs are available.

For more information on Graduate Employment Programs:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/find_a_job/professional_and_graduate_work

Role	Employment setting	Next Steps – employment or graduate study
Research/Academia	Universities Research Institutes	Honours/Masters/PhD Honours generally required for Research Assistant roles
Public Policy	Government/Public Service Large NGOs	Government Graduate Employment Programs Few NGOs have GEPs, so Graduate study in Public Policy
Law	Law firms Corporates (in-house legal) Government/Public Service	Graduate study – Law eg JD
Intelligence	Intelligence agencies eg ASIO, Defence, Australian Federal Police	Government Graduate Employment Programs
Teaching	Schools - Secondary (must have 2 teaching areas) Universities	Graduate study - Teaching Honours/Masters/PhD
Journalism	Media Organisations	Graduate study – Journalism, or Some cadetships may be accessible without specific journalism training – generally rural and regional
Management Consulting	Management Consultancies	Graduate Employment Programs eg Boston Consulting Group, or Graduate study - Business

What other careers could I consider?

Philosophy majors may also pursue careers which are not directly related to the study of Philosophy but make use of transferable skills and/or pick up on other interests.

- **Careers via graduate study** – many careers are available via graduate study which is accessible to all Bachelor of Arts graduates; these include both Arts-related careers eg Information Management/Librarianship, International Development, Communications, Publishing and Editing; and careers in more diverse fields such as Urban Planning, Nursing, Information Systems, Accounting.
- **Careers via Graduate Employment Programs** - in addition to government, some other large organisations have programs open to all disciplines where graduates are generally recruited for general management careers. Some management consultancies also consider applicants from all disciplines. Opportunities are advertised (generally early each year) on *Careers Online*, and graduate recruitment sites eg Graduate Opportunities, GradConnection.

Where can I find out more?

Further information on career areas:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options
(Career Exploration - Career Links by Degree – Arts)

Other discussions about what you can do with a major in Philosophy:

- University of Tennessee <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
- University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand:
www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/careers/Resources/career_publications/career_view/index.aspx

Professional Associations:

http://careers.unimelb.edu.au/student/online_career_tools/exploring_your_options
(Career Exploration – Professional Associations by Degree - Arts)

Graduate study at University of Melbourne:

<http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/courses/graduate>
<http://graduate.arts.unimelb.edu.au/>
<http://government.unimelb.edu.au/>

Researching courses which are not offered at Melbourne: www.myfuture.edu.au