Career Paths

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy students develop many transferable skills that can be can be utilized in a variety of careers and jobs, demonstrating the flexibility and capacity for growth that employers find valuable. These skills include analytical, organizational, research, as well as oral and written communication. Other skills emphasized in philosophy that are attractive to employers are idea generation, problem formulation and problem solving, diverse data integration, adaptation to change, the ability to elicit hidden assumptions, persuasion, and summarization of complicated material.

It is important for philosophy students to identify potential career goals and seek out the experiences and education required to enter those fields. An undergraduate degree qualifies one for entry-level positions in business, nonprofit organizations, and government. Graduate and/or professional studies usually lead to careers in law, medicine, ministry, finance, psychology, counseling, diplomacy, ethics, and related areas.

Education
Example Career Paths: Teaching | Research | Administration | Student affairs | Academic affairs | Library sciences
Potential Employers: Colleges and universities | Professional or graduate schools, including medical | Adult education programs | Vocational-technical educational programs | Law firms | private practice | Federal, state, and local government | Consulting services |
Professional Associations: American Association for Employment in Education

Ethics

Example Career Paths: Teaching | Research | Medical/Clinical | Bioethics | Environmental | Law-related

Potential Employers: Hospitals | Medical and professional schools | Colleges and universities | Bioethic centers | Research institutes | Medical organizations (e.g., American Medical Association) | Health science funding agencies | Environmental agencies | Law firms specializing in health or bioethics | Consulting services

Professional Associations: [American Philosophical Association](#) | [American Philosophical Practitioners Association](#) | [American Society for Bioethics and Humanities](#) | [Association for Practical and Professional Ethics](#) | [Society for Business Ethics](#)

Law

Example Career Paths: Prosecution | Defense | Contractual | Corporate | Nonprofit or public interest | Government | Mediation | Other specialties | Law assistance

Potential Employers: Law firms | Federal, state, and local government | Private practice | Corporations | Special interest groups | Universities and colleges | Legal aid societies | Nonprofit and public interest organizations | Legal clinics | Other private legal services

Professional Associations: [American Bar Association](#) | [National Association for Community Mediation](#)

Business

Example Career Paths: Sales | Management | Office administration | Human resources | Training and development | Writing/Editing | Underwriting and claims management | Entrepreneurship

Potential Employers: Product and service organizations | Retail stores | Hotels | Restaurants | Wholesalers | Manufacturers | Banks and financial institutions | Insurance companies | Real estate agencies | Consulting firms | Other business corporations | Entrepreneurial/start up, incubators and funding organizations

Professional Associations: [American Philosophical Association, Committee on Philosophy and Law](#) | [Association for Practical and Professional Ethics](#) | [Business Ethics Network](#)

Religiously Affiliated Areas

Example Career Paths: Clergy and other religious leaders | Vocation as Monk or Nun | Chaplaincy | Mission work | Local ministries | Music-oriented ministries | Religious camp administration

Potential Employers: Local churches, synagogues, mosques | Religious organizations | Religious communities (e.g., convents and monasteries) | Religious retreat centers, Christian and Buddhist | Denominational boards and agencies | Monasteries | All branches of military service | Hospitals, hospices | Homes for children, youth, senior citizens | Correctional institutions | Police and fire departments | Missions boards | Local churches | Evangelical organizations (e.g., Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) | Religious-based camps and youth programs

Professional Associations: American Academy of Religion

Social/Community Services

Example Career Paths: Administration/Management | Fundraising/Development | Public relations | Policy analysis | Research | Grant writing | Direct service | Social entrepreneurship

Potential Employers: Local and national nonprofit agencies | Foundations | Charitable organizations | Trade or professional associations | Special interest groups | Labor unions | Research organizations and think tanks | Government Agencies | Incubators, start up investors

Professional Associations: Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory

Government/Politics

Example Career Paths: Public policy | Research | Regional planning | City management | Intelligence | Foreign Service | Law enforcement | Legislative, executive, or judicial services | Program administration | Elected or appointed leadership | Campaign management | Staff administration | Special interest advocacy

Potential Employers: State and local government | Federal departments and agencies | Foreign Service | Federal Municipal Archives | National and State Endowments for the Humanities | Legislative, executive, or judicial officials | Political action committees | Special interest groups | Political parties | Campaigns (national, state, or local)

Professional Associations: American Political Science Association | International Political Science Association | Philosophy of Science Association

Communications

Example Career Paths: Writing | Editing | Technical Writing | Journalism

Potential Employers: University and commercial publishing companies | Magazine and newspaper publishers | Professional and trade associations | Electronic media organizations | Websites

Professional Associations: [International Association for Media and Communication Research](#) | [National Communication Association](#) | [International Communication Association](#)

Information Systems/Technology

Example Career Paths: Information security | Consulting | Information architecture | IT administration | IT analysis | IT training | Network administration | Ontologist | Programming | Software design | Systems analysis | Technical support network | Web development/Maintenance

Potential Employers: Libraries (public, academic, and special) | Data processing centers | Corporations | Software and computer companies | Financial firms | Manufacturing firms | Research centers | Government | Universities | Consulting firms

Professional Associations: [International Association for Computing and Philosophy](#) | [Association for Computing Machinery](#)

Preparing for your Career

- Become an effective writer.
- Earn a master's degree in a specialized area (e.g., College Student Personnel, Higher Education Administration, or Library and Information Sciences to work in other roles at postsecondary institutions).
- Seek campus leadership positions such as peer mentor, orientation leader, or resident assistant.
- Build strong interpersonal skill.
- Plan to obtain a doctorate in philosophy for academic research and teaching positions. Some hospitals and healthcare organizations prefer to hire individuals who also have a clinical background in nursing or medicine. Another potential educational path is to earn a law degree.
- Complete an internship in a relevant setting while in graduate school to gain experience.
- Participate in professional organizations in ethics.
- Develop excellent research skills as well as verbal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrate commitment to ethical issues through involvement and volunteer experiences.
- Investigate interdisciplinary degrees in bioethics offered at some universities.

This resource was adapted from What Can I Do With My Major.
For more, visit https://web.uri.edu/career/wcidwmm/

WCIDWMM

What Can I Do With This Major? features 100 major profiles with information on common career paths, types of employers that hire in the field, and strategies to maximize opportunities. Scroll to the...

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