



A mind set to explore.

The PhD in Perspective: guidance for a mindful career development

What will I do after my doctorate?

How do I decide if I should pursue an Academic career or aim for something else?

What will I lose and what will I gain if I will choose corporate work after my PhD, or set up my own business?

What does my Ph.D. give me outside the University, and how can I describe my experience to potential employers and non-academic stakeholders?

The “PhD career management” course was created as a career support for doctoral students to explore questions such as the above, helping learners develop the skills needed to consciously build and manage their own professional development.

The goal is to stimulate the development of an “orientational intelligence”, that is, the ability to perceive the internal signals capable of guiding our choices toward satisfaction and relate them to the opportunities offered by one’s context.

A help not to get lost, a guaranteed time for guided reflection on oneself and the doctoral program in relation to contemporary society and the economy. A moment that will help counteract the decline in well-being and the demotivation that are unfortunately a known risk during the doctoral journey, intervening in one of the dimensions of doctoral students’ stress: the uncertainty about the future.

The program is a series of two-hour online training modules taught by *dockto* - a *mind set to explore* (an agency focusing on career guidance for researchers, founded by two Ph.D.s who developed an extra-academic career) that will be held in April 2026.

It is best suited for PhD students from the second year of course.

The program in short:

Module 1	Part 1	Holding a PhD in the current economy: meaning and perspectives
	Part 2	Skill analysis: the language to describe a PhD
Module 2	Part 1	Well-being during and after the PhD: psychological variables in career orientation
	Part 2	Navigating a career transition
Module 3	Part 1	The job search and the job description
	Part 2	The selection process: cover letter, curriculum and interview
Module 4	Part 1	Workshop: from the ideal job to a real plan - guidance tools for informed career designs
	Part 2	Networking for research and beyond



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Module 1

Part 1. Holding a PhD in the current economy: meaning and perspectives

Supported by ISTAT data and the decade-long experience of the instructor (a PhD in Astrophysics specialized in bridging the gap between research and industry), we will analyze the significance of pursuing a PhD within the contemporary social and economic landscape. We will explore strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that lay along the path of a doctoral holder and investigate their specificities, to identify the competitive advantages this title offers today, as well as the challenges to overcome to fully leverage it.

Part 2. Skill analysis: the language to describe a PhD

We will delve into the concept of "competence" and address one of the main hurdles for those communicating their research journey to non-academic stakeholders: language. We will reflect on the complexity of articulating transferable skills—often acquired tacitly during research—and how to express them in a way that resonates with employers. Furthermore, we will discuss how to use language effectively to communicate one's value across different channels.

Module 2

Part 1. Well-being during and after the PhD: psychological variables in career orientation

Starting from the doctoral experience, we will examine the variables that determine workplace well-being and explore the dynamics of motivation. This session will help participants reconnect with the signals that indicate whether they are in the right workplace, how to constructively address "red flags," and how to use these insights to identify a fulfilling professional path.



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Part 2. Professional destinations, cultural shock and the challenges of career transition

When thinking about what job to pursue, it is common to focus on the “what” and forget the “where”. However, as well as corresponding to the interests and skills of the worker, a satisfactory work environment should also match one’s values and motivation drivers. Through a combination of the psychology of professional transitions and practical tools, participants will gain a better understanding of the effect of organizational culture on work satisfaction, and will become aware of the main obstacles and gaps to bridge when adapting to the non-academic labor market. We will analyze common biases faced by PhDs and provide effective coping strategies based on motivation and strategic planning. We will also map the main organizational structure that participants may want to target in their job search, providing elements to imagine a job searching strategy towards satisfactory future career plan.

Module 3

Part 1. The job search and the job description

We will clarify some basic notion about what the job market is, who are the actors and how it works, analyzing the tools that are available for job searching in such framework. We will reflect on the opportunities and limits of the more conventional tools, and suggest some less standard approaches to the search that can increase success for researchers. The lecture will conclude by proposing a method to rationally approach a job post, extracting information that will lead the production of self-branding material and the strategy of the job selection phase.

Part 2. The selection process: cover letter, curriculum and interview

Participants will learn the different phases, the key players, and the “rules of the game” of a typical recruitment process, while examining



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the common mistakes and difficulties PhD holders encounter during this experience. They will also acquire knowledge on how to develop their own self-branding by highlighting skills and achievements, to create an impactful professional description of self.

Module 4

Workshop: from the ideal job to a real plan – guidance tools for informed career designs

Participants will engage in practical exercises to:

- Build their own "professional compass."
- Gain awareness of their specific skill set and objectives.
- Map out directions to explore in order to finalize a concrete career plan.

Networking for research and beyond

Participants will put into practice what they have learned regarding PhD market positioning, the language of skills, and self-branding while reasoning on how to build their professional network. We will move from an analysis of common misconceptions about what networking is, explain why this is relevant and how it can be done with different approaches, so that each professional can find the most suitable one for him or herself. We will talk about physical and remote networks, with a zoom on the LinkedIn profile as a useful tool to build connections, map the job market and exercise the skills acquired during the lectures.



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Proposta date:

Aprile	1	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 1a	Holding a PhD in the current economy: meaning and perspectives
Aprile	2	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 1b	Skill analysis: the language to describe a PhD
Aprile	8	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 2a	Well-being during and after the PhD: psychological variables in career orientation
Aprile	9	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 2b	Navigating a career transition
Aprile	15	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 3a	The job search and the job description
Aprile	16	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 3b	The selection process: cover letter, curriculum and interview
Aprile	22	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 4a	Workshop: from the ideal job to a real plan – guidance tools for informed career designs
Aprile	23	10:30-12:30	UniTs	PhD career management - mod 4b	Networking for research and beyond