

## Findings from the *Social Science PhDs – Five + Years Out Survey* Report for the ALL Field of Study Programs



The *Social Science PhDs—Five Years Out* survey is the latest contribution to PhD career path and retrospective evaluation by the Center for Innovation in Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE) at the University of Washington with the *PhDs—Ten Years Later* and *Art History PhDs: A Decade Later*. As graduate dean of a participating institution, you are among the first to receive information and selected findings from this national study that are of central interest to you: time-to-degree, academic goals, current employment, and assessment of doctoral program, among others.

This study surveyed PhD recipients who received their degrees between 1995 and 1999 from 65 U.S. universities in Anthropology, Communication Studies, Geography, History, Political Science, and Sociology. It provides extensive data on the education outcomes, career trajectories, the intersection of career and family paths, and the usefulness of doctoral degrees and program curriculum offered by universities.

The results presented in this report are based upon ALL survey respondents who participated in the *Social Science PhDs – Five + Years Out* survey, by Field of Study. Detailed findings are included on the following pages.

	<b>ANTHROPOLOGY</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>	<b>HISTORY</b>	<b>POLITICAL SCI</b>	<b>SOCIOLOGY</b>
<b>Selected findings for ANTHROPOLOGY</b>	<b>All 56 Programs [n = 432]</b>	<b>All 39 Programs [n = 343]</b>	<b>All 32 Programs [n = 164]</b>	<b>All 61 Programs [n = 839]</b>	<b>All 62 Programs [n = 701]</b>	<b>All 59 Programs [n = 546]</b>
<b><u>Respondent Background</u></b>						
Percent female	58.4%	55.6%	34.0%	44.8%	37.8%	63.0%
Age at PhD award (median years)	35.8	34.9	35.8	33.6	31.8	32.9
Time from PhD award to survey (median years and range)	7.7 [5.8 - 10.6]	7.8 [5.8 - 10.4]	7.9 [5.9 - 10.2]	7.8 [5.8 - 10.5]	7.8 [5.8 - 10.6]	7.8 [5.8 - 10.3]
<b><u>Program Background</u></b>						
Years to degree completion (median)	7.8	5.2	5.8	7.2	6.8	6.8
Ever registered part-time	26.2%	29.1%	25.8%	20.5%	18.2%	20.3%
Ever interrupted graduate studies	20.7%	16.7%	16.9%	17.5%	15.0%	17.4%

	ANTHROPOLOGY	COMMUNICATIONS	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY	POLITICAL SCI	SOCIOLOGY
<b>Four most prevalent reasons to pursue PhD (percent who said yes):</b>						
1. Intense interest in the field	85.2%	61.8%	78.7%	86.5%	77.0%	69.2%
2. A necessary credential for my desired position	50.0%	58.9%	41.5%	57.1%	56.5%	50.5%
3. For the challenge; it was a goal for its own sake	38.9%	42.6%	45.7%	41.0%	34.5%	37.2%
4. Encouragement from faculty in my undergraduate program	33.6%	31.5%	23.8%	44.1%	38.8%	39.0%
Pursued other degree since PhD	11.0%	4.6%	4.1%	5.5%	5.8%	5.4%
<b>Career goals at PhD completion</b>						
Professor	73.3%	77.7%	68.0%	86.0%	78.3%	75.6%
Other academic	9.1%	6.1%	8.2%	4.6%	5.6%	6.2%
Non-academic	15.1%	13.9%	21.8%	6.5%	13.8%	16.2%
No specific goal	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	3.0%	2.3%	1.9%
<b>Percent with same goal at PhD start AND completion</b>	45.9%	56.4%	52.6%	64.8%	56.8%	56.8%
<b><u>Employment History</u></b>						
<b>Current Employment Status, 2005/06 (6-10 years following PhD award) :</b>						
Full time	82.0%	89.6%	84.7%	85.3%	91.9%	89.0%
Part time	7.6%	2.0%	4.9%	4.6%	2.6%	3.8%
Self-employed	3.4%	2.3%	2.1%	1.8%	1.5%	0.6%
Not employed	1.1%	2.7%	1.4%	2.7%	1.1%	3.0%
Working multiple jobs	5.9%	3.4%	6.9%	5.6%	2.9%	3.6%

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<b>Current job sector:</b>						
Tenured	16.6%	29.1%	30.8%	33.2%	30.6%	30.7%
Tenure track, not yet tenured	32.6%	36.8%	18.2%	28.9%	32.0%	28.8%
Other academic	24.3%	16.6%	23.8%	17.6%	12.4%	17.8%
Business/Gov/Non-profit (BGN)	26.5%	17.5%	27.3%	20.3%	25.0%	22.7%
<b>Percent who did postdoc (ever)</b>	15.4%	1.0%	9.5%	6.6%	6.7%	16.5%
<b>“Lifetime” job sector</b> (may not sum to 100% due to “multiple crossovers” between categories):						
Always academic (Tenured/ Tenure Track/Postdoc/ Other Academic)	60.5%	76.5%	65.0%	73.5%	67.7%	66.3%
Always Business/Gov/ Non-profit	18.5%	14.9%	20.3%	14.3%	17.5%	16.2%
Academic to BGN	7.2%	2.0%	6.3%	5.2%	6.6%	5.7%
BGN to Academic	9.7%	3.6%	5.6%	3.7%	5.8%	8.4%
<b>Job satisfaction with the following <u>current</u> job attributes</b> <b>[percent who said “very satisfied”]:</b>						
Intellectual challenge of work	52.8%	49.7%	49.0%	50.7%	57.1%	55.3%
Career growth opportunities	30.6%	34.2%	27.2%	29.4%	37.2%	35.0%
Autonomy of work	64.0%	65.2%	62.9%	62.3%	68.8%	64.7%
Contribution to society	42.9%	38.8%	45.0%	45.2%	40.3%	40.6%
Use of doctoral education	52.6%	50.7%	43.0%	53.1%	53.6%	54.5%
Job security/stability	42.3%	51.0%	51.7%	49.3%	54.5%	47.5%
Salary	19.5%	17.1%	16.0%	21.0%	25.2%	25.8%

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<b>Job satisfaction, continued</b>						
Ability to balance or enjoy work and other aspects of life	33.2%	39.2%	34.7%	38.3%	39.1%	39.3%
Opportunities for spouse /partner in area	28.2%	37.5%	29.3%	34.6%	38.3%	34.3%
Geographic location	42.7%	40.3%	39.1%	41.1%	43.4%	46.6%
Flexibility of work (schedule or location)	52.7%	54.9%	55.0%	52.9%	55.3%	55.3%
Recognition of my work	32.4%	32.0%	34.4%	33.1%	34.2%	33.0%
Good fit with abilities and interests	50.5%	52.0%	51.7%	52.9%	59.0%	52.4%
<b><u>Program Evaluation</u></b>						
<b>Teaching experience in program:</b>						
Yes – required	26.4%	33.0%	24.2%	31.1%	33.8%	21.7%
Yes – but not required	61.1%	58.8%	62.1%	62.3%	60.4%	64.7%
No – never taught during program	12.5%	8.2%	13.7%	6.6%	5.8%	13.6%
<b>Evaluation of doctoral program (percent who said “excellent”)</b>						
Overall program quality	40.9%	51.5%	52.1%	50.9%	49.3%	49.8%
Academic rigor	58.9%	63.6%	66.4%	72.0%	69.9%	60.9%
Clear program requirements	53.5%	58.0%	48.6%	59.0%	50.8%	52.5%
Feedback on student progress	31.0%	35.4%	39.3%	35.0%	25.6%	32.1%
Financial support	28.5%	26.8%	45.7%	33.8%	40.6%	37.9%
Socializing students into an academic community	29.1%	31.4%	44.9%	30.5%	31.4%	35.2%
Having a diverse student population	32.4%	29.0%	30.0%	25.1%	24.9%	32.9%

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<b>Evaluation of doctoral program, continued</b>						
Preparation for qualifying exam	32.7%	41.2%	42.3%	43.8%	34.5%	30.6%
Support/guidance during dissertation writing	37.8%	52.3%	44.0%	45.3%	39.0%	39.5%
Academic career preparation	24.5%	35.4%	34.8%	31.2%	32.1%	33.9%
Non-academic career preparation	3.8%	8.1%	9.2%	4.8%	5.4%	7.9%
<b>Support from dissertation chair/advisor (percent who said "very satisfied")</b>						
Quality of advice developing topic	50.4%	62.6%	61.0%	56.0%	50.1%	57.1%
Quality of guidance to complete PhD	49.7%	61.5%	62.4%	56.3%	51.4%	55.2%
Quality of help publishing PhD	20.9%	29.0%	27.5%	30.3%	25.3%	30.3%
Support in job search	36.0%	44.1%	44.7%	46.6%	40.2%	45.3%
Support in career decisions	42.5%	54.5%	50.0%	52.4%	52.6%	50.6%
Overall quality of mentoring	43.4%	53.4%	52.1%	49.4%	45.3%	48.2%
<b>Quality of doctoral education and training (percent who said "excellent"):</b>						
Analyzing/synthesizing data	56.4%	62.3%	68.3%	65.4%	60.7%	67.7%
Thinking critically	78.2%	78.0%	80.3%	83.6%	79.1%	74.4%
Research design	34.4%	40.7%	42.5%	30.0%	40.6%	50.9%
Writing proposals for funding	26.5%	3.9%	18.4%	20.5%	10.7%	13.8%
Writing/publishing reports/articles	26.4%	27.8%	27.3%	34.7%	28.5%	31.4%
Managing people/budgets	7.6%	4.1%	4.0%	5.2%	4.0%	3.7%
Working collaboratively	20.1%	21.8%	21.7%	9.6%	15.7%	27.1%

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<b>Quality of doctoral education and training, continued</b>						
Working in interdisciplinary context	38.9%	37.4%	52.1%	35.4%	29.3%	30.9%
Working with people of diverse educational and social backgrounds	34.7%	34.7%	35.3%	29.5%	22.2%	27.5%
Developing presentation skills	29.2%	42.4%	51.6%	36.1%	32.1%	34.0%
<b>Publications at PhD completion (refereed journal articles, papers or book chapters published or in press) among respondents whose last employment is:</b>						
<b>In the academic job sector</b>						
None	34.3%	36.8%	26.1%	42.4%	45.4%	23.7%
1-2	42.7%	39.7%	47.8%	38.5%	40.2%	46.7%
3 or more	23.0%	23.4%	26.1%	19.1%	14.4%	29.6%
<b>In the BGN job sector</b>						
None	37.3%	60.7%	32.3%	46.9%	45.9%	34.8%
1-2	30.5%	14.3%	32.3%	36.5%	39.8%	40.9%
3 or more	32.2%	25.0%	35.5%	16.7%	14.3%	24.2%

### About CIRGE

The Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education is a resource of information on graduate education research and practice. Its mission is to establish empirical bases for trend assessment, policy decisions, and innovations in graduate education. CIRGE is supported by the University of Washington, its Graduate School and its College of Education.