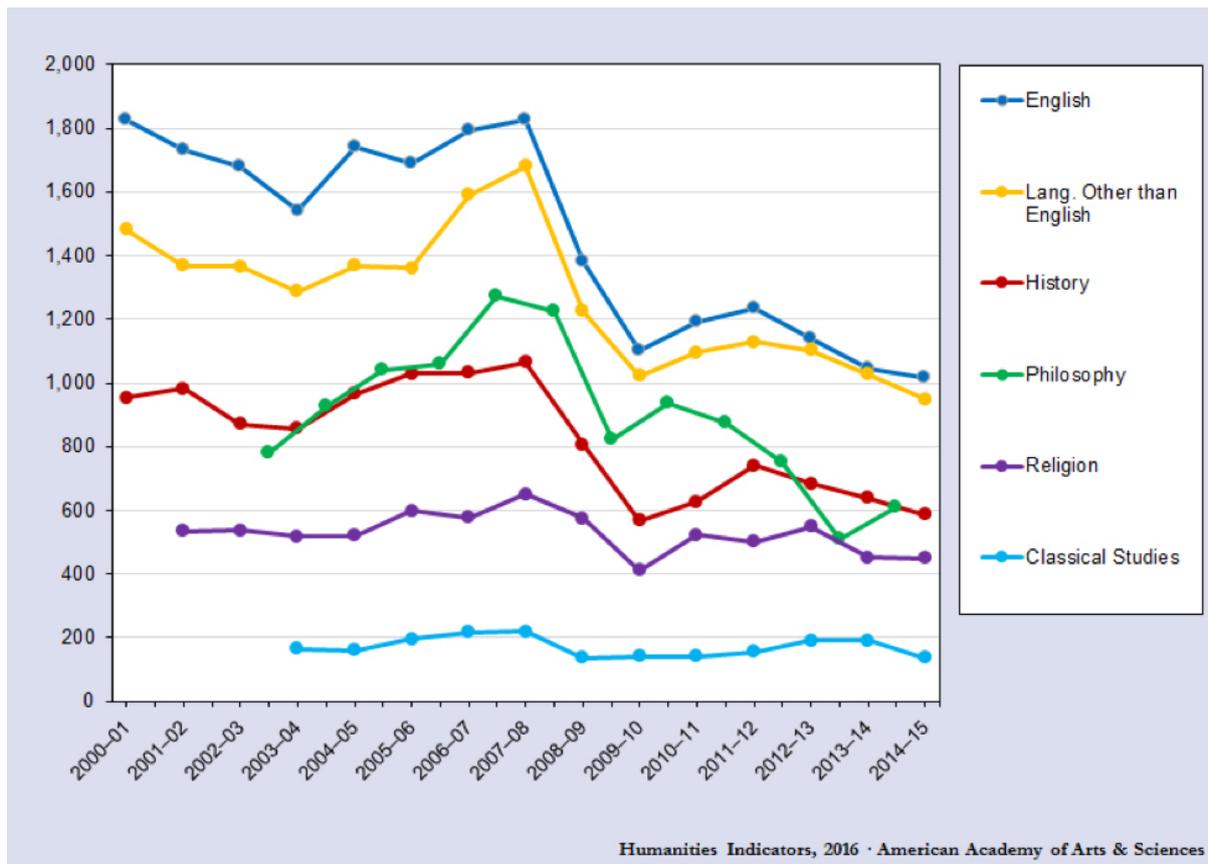


# Doing a PhD (Abroad<sup>1</sup>)

## Really?

Where do you want to move toward?

- A. Industry, government, NGOs, civil service, teaching, arts ➡ PhD (generally) not needed, may even hinder [see: resources at end of handout]
- B. Academia (research post, lecturer) ➡ PhD required for professorship roles



- But beware!
- (i) Positions in academia are rapidly declining, especially permanent ones
  - (ii) Oversupply of PhD on the job market (e.g. 1000+ candidates for one job)

A PhD might be personal milestone for you. You don't need to be in academia to change the world. Most likely outcome after doing a PhD is still one of the **many**, varied options in (A).

- C. Also consider: #AltAc ('alternative academic') careers, other roles in research + education

End of scary talk. So, you really want to do a PhD (abroad)?

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<sup>1</sup> I'll mainly be talking about the US/Canada and the UK.

## Choosing a program

Where to do a PhD? Of course, overall info about the program and institution: Scholarly focus, program requirements, facilities, strengths, atmosphere, funding, job market support  
➡ find out via the institution's website, word of mouth, maybe a prior visit

Go to the highest ranked program you can get into. Unfortunately, rankings matter ...

- Universities: QS World University Rankings; Times Higher Education Univ. Rankings
- Programs: the above for specific subjects; Philosophical Gourmet Report (controversial!)

Find a program that helps you move forward:

- Placement record: How well has the program done in placing people in jobs (academic or otherwise)? ➡ sometimes on institution's website; can check PhilAppointments (<https://philjobs.org/appointments>) for self-reported placement data; Carolyn Dicey-Jennings et al.'s (2015) report on Academic Placement Data and Analysis for philosophy (<http://bit.ly/2jTQzjR>)

\*\* NB: Don't go into debt for doing a Philosophy PhD, always ensure that some means of funding is available (either through the institution or external scholarships) \*\*

North America or UK (Europe)? (see: fn 1)

- Common US/Canada structure: 2 years coursework + 3 years dissertation phase
- Common UK (Europe?) structure: 3 years dissertation phase

## Applications

There's a long lead-up. You'll probably need:

- Writing sample \*
- 3 academic reference letters (preferably from people beyond your own supervisor(s)) \*
- CV
- Personal statement (a good one can make you shine)
- Academic transcript (i.e. your grades) \*
- Standardized test results (Graduate Record of Examination, or GRE; TOEFL English language test)

*Case study* NYU Philosophy Graduate Program: <http://philosophy.fas.nyu.edu/page/graduate>

*Case study* University of Oxford DPhil in Philosophy: <http://bit.ly/2j482pW>

### Applications Timeline (rough indication)

Summer (-1)	Get letters of recommendation; writing sample; statement; test results
Fall (-1)	Applications open
Dec-Feb	Applications close (beware of early deadlines!)
Feb/Mar	Offers, open day visits for prospective students (mainly in US/Canada)
April	Accept or decline offer
Fall	Program starts

## During the program

Primary rule: “Graduate school is not your job; graduate school is a means to the job you want.” (Kelsky 2015: 55)

- Keep a professional academic CV, seek out opportunities to expand it
- Go to conferences, submit work to present at them
- Be strategic about your writing, plan a trajectory to have at least one article out upon completion of the program
- Meet people (‘networking’ if you like), both in and from outside your department
- Have a life as well, take breaks (if you’re continuously stressed out and miserable, it’s not worth it)
- There’s no such things as ‘smart’ (all stereotypes); everyone has different learning/working strategies. Find out what works well for you.
- Start orienting abt where you want to end up; prep a competitive record \*

“[U]se every year in graduate school to produce a record oriented precisely to the demands of the tenure track market, while keeping an eye open to nonacademic options ... prepare for the academic an nonacademic job market even before you enter graduate school ... deliberately adapt your strategy as you move through the program”. (Kelsky 2015: 27-28)

## Some resources

American Philosophical Association (APA) Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy:  
<http://gradguide.apaonline.org> (stats on programs, mainly North America)

Berit Brogaard and Brain Leiter, *Philosophical Gourmet Report* 2014-15: <https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com> (program rankings)

Karen Kelsky, *The Professor Is In*: <http://theprofessorisin.com> (real life advice from a former tenured professor)

Tanya Golash-Boza, *Get a Life, PhD*: [getalifephd.blogspot.nl/](http://getalifephd.blogspot.nl/)

Beyond Academe: <http://www.beyondacademe.com> (careers outside academia)

Jobs on Toast: <http://jobsontoast.com> (careers outside academia, humanities focus)

Versatile PhD: <https://versatilephd.com> (careers outside academia, history angle but also relevant for philosophers)

Good luck!

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