

The PhDs@Work project

Enhancing career development of early stage researchers through interuniversity and intersectoral cooperation

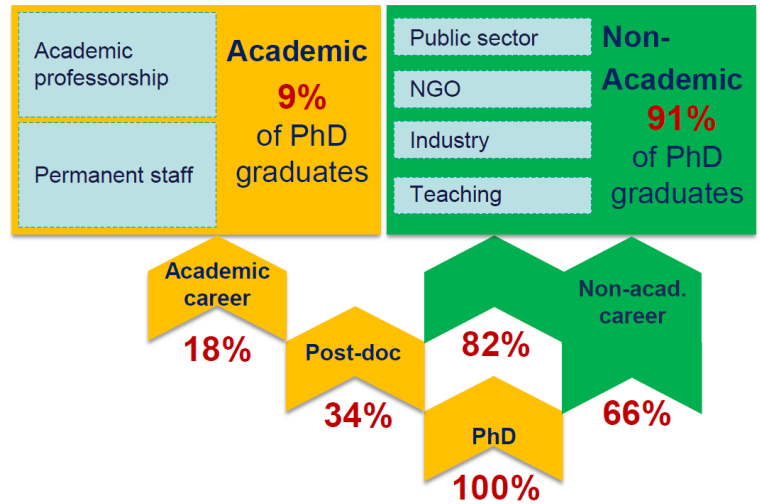
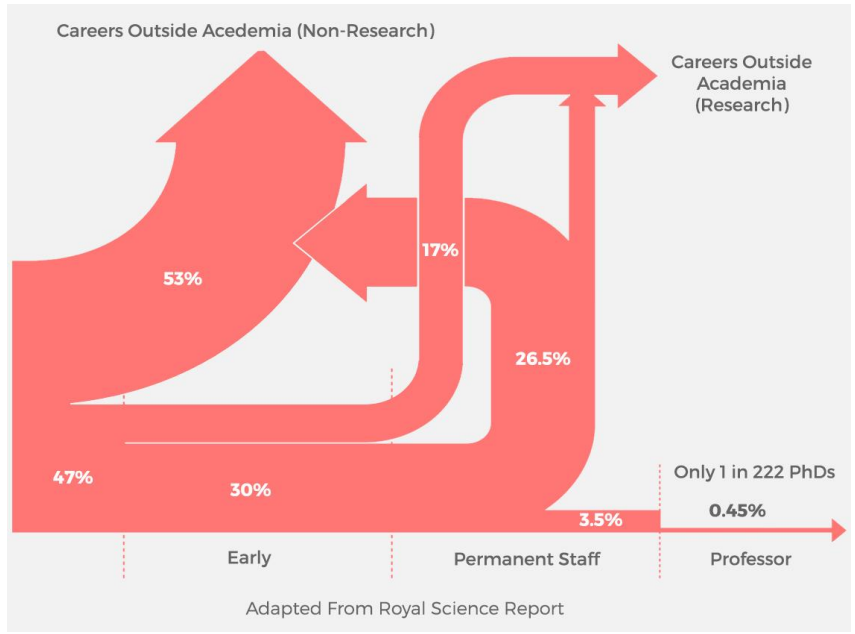
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CONTEXT

Career of PhD holders



Source: *The Scientific Century: Securing our Future Prosperity*, Royal Society Policy document, 2010

Source: VRWB, via John Kreemers (KULeuven), *ERA Implementation Day*, Brussels, May 2018.

PRODOC project (2009-2013)

Goals

- Enhancing employability of PhD holders
- Boosting socio-economic competitiveness of Belgian-French cross-border Region

Partners

- 8 French universities (Lille)
- 5 Belgian "French-speaking" universities
- Focus Research Association (BE)



Actions

- Training and coaching for PhDs
- Annual *Doctoriales* week (75 PhDs, 25 experts/year)
- Annual PhD Job Fair (500 PhDs, 25 companies/year)
- Study on perception of PhD holders in private sector

Follow up initiatives (2013-)

Meetings

- Interuniversity informal meetings on career development (3-5/year)



Annual event

- Interuniversity event, open to all PhD candidates and postdocs from Belgian "French-speaking" univ.
- Goal: improving skills and employability of PhD holders, outside Academia

Training

- Continuous development of transferable skills training programme
- Individual career coaching (Focus Research)

PhDs@Work network (2016-)

7 partners

Universities

Non-academic
organisation



comprehensive

other

non-profit organisation


~6400 PhD candidates

~900 PhD candidates

90 career coaching/year
40 one-day training/year

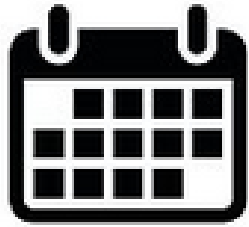
Aim of the network



A vertical bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: grey, pink, teal, orange, blue, green, purple, black, red, and dark green.

THE PHDS@WORK PROJECT (2016-2019)

Facts and figures



3 years
(2016-2019)



7 partners



10 work
packages

Target:
PhDs from all
fields



1,545,000 €

- ~900,000 € for 6 universities
- ~550,000 € for Focus Research Association

Funded by
Walloon
Region



Main goals

Comprehensive model

(from will to start a PhD until "postdoc" phase)





Boosting
employability
of PhD holders
(by supporting career
development)

Linking PhDs and
non-academic
sectors

Raising awareness
about recruitment
of PhDs
outside Academia

Information, tools, training, events, coaching

This project is not

- 
-  Research collaboration with industry (KTOs)
 -  Industrial PhDs (KTOs)
 -  Internships

Actions:

1. employability and career development

The PhD path

- **Understanding:** new guide on the doctorate and postdoc (Unamur)
- **Building and managing** the PhD path (ULg)
- **Supervising:** training and development of supervisors (ULg-ULB)

Transferable skills

- Training programme (all)
- Interactive auto-evaluation tool of skills
→ tailored training programme (UCLouvain)

Actions:

2. Linking PhDs and non-academic sectors

SSH

- Visibility and valorisation of research in SSH outside Academia (USaintLouis)

Alumni

- Networking events alumni/PhDs (ULB)
- Mentoring alumni/PhDs (ULB and UMons)

Coaching

- Training (all)
e.g. Summer School "Boost your career" - ULB
- Individual career coaching (Focus Research)

Doc2Business

- 5 start-ups with 1 issue each; 5 teams of 8 challengers (PhDs), providing consultancy for 7 days; 1 jury of professionals (Focus Research)
- [separate funding]*

Actions:

3. Recrutement of PhDs outside Academia

Information

- Information about PhDs profiles for companies, NGOs...: meetings, PhD fairs, social media... (Focus Research)

Online tools

- Jobs database
- Marketing (visibility of job offers)

Main benefits (institution)

Quality

- Stronger and comprehensive project, thanks to optimisation of resources and expertise among partners

Innovation

- Boosting innovation for the support of PhDs
- Collaboration with non-academic organisation: increased reactivity

Contacts

- Collaboration with non-academic organisation: facilitated contacts with non-academic sectors

Funding

- Facilitated access to funding

Attractivity

- Improved offer for PhD candidates

Main benefits (PhD candidate)

Career

- Improved career development plan

Training / coaching

- Access to training: improved programme / increased number of sessions / different locations
- Access to individual coaching: Focus research

Networking

- Networking opportunities: other PhD candidates, alumni, non-academic sectors...

Main benefits (Professionals)

Exchange

- Facilitated access to last development in DE, tools...
- Exchange of experiences
- Gain of expertise

Development

- Train the trainer opportunities
- Faster professional development

Main challenges

Sustainability

- Sustainability of projects (external funding)
- Evaluation of impact on PhD holders' career

Coordination

- ≠ strategic priorities, resources and needs
- Co-opetition and involvement in other networks
- No further integration: e.g. interuniversity transf. skills training programme

Expertise

- Certain skills not developed internally e.g. individual career coaching, link with private sector... via Focus Research



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