



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

# **Arts & Humanities Research Council Career Path Study of PhD Students**

**Final Report**

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December 2006



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**Arts & Humanities Research Council**

**Career Path Study of PhD Students**

**Final Report**

In Association with  
Swift Research

by



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Newcastle  
Northumbria  
Oxford  
Royal Academy of Music  
Royal Holloway  
Sheffield  
Sussex  
Warwick  
University College London  
University of the Arts London  
University of Central England  
University of Wales, Aberystwyth

### **Former Students**

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey. We appreciate the time and effort you put into this and hope you find it interesting.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

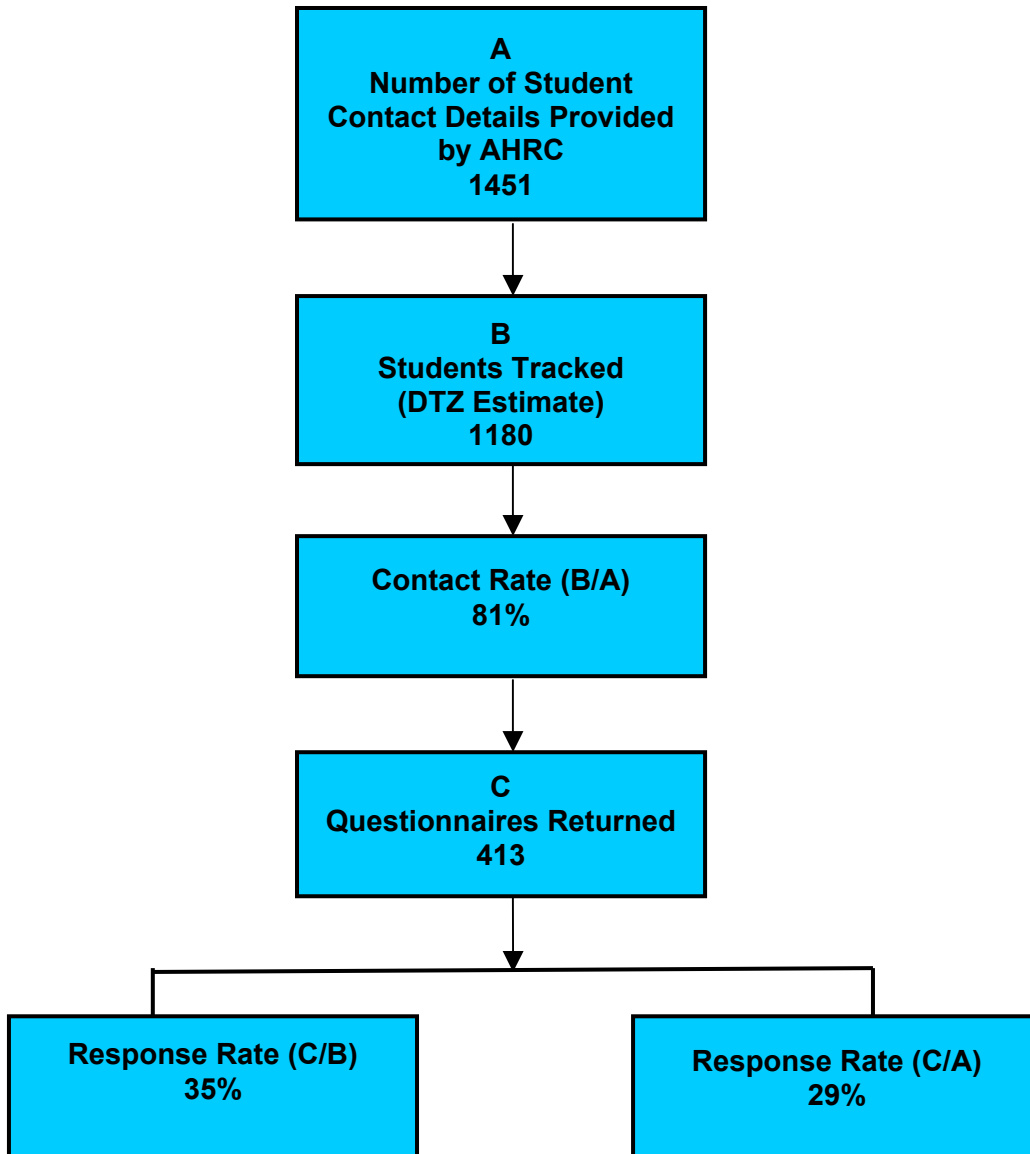
- 1.01 The Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is the UK's leading research funding agency for the arts and humanities. One of its key objectives is to support the development of skilled people for academic, professional and other employment through a range of postgraduate training programmes.
- 1.02 The AHRC funds three types of postgraduate programmes:
- The Doctoral (PhD) Programme
  - The Research Preparation Masters Programme
  - The Professional Preparation Masters Programme.
- 1.03 Over 1500 awards are made across these three programmes each year - @600 PhD, @600 Masters Research Preparation and @350 Masters Professional. It is usual for PhD students to have undertaken a Research Preparation Masters Degree, so there is a strong linkage between these programmes. The Professional Preparation Masters Programme is quite different and has a more vocational focus. The AHRC took over responsibility for these postgraduate programmes from the Arts and Humanities Board (AHRB) on 1 April 2005.
- 1.04 The AHRC feels it is timely to review the impact of its postgraduate programmes in terms of employment outcomes. DTZ Consulting & Research, in association with Swift Research, have undertaken the study on behalf of the AHRC.
- 1.05 The study has two components:
- A survey of former PhD students (which also embraces the Research Preparation Masters Programme as explained above).
  - A survey of former Professional Preparation Masters students.
- 1.06 This report focuses on the survey of former PhD students. A separate report is available on the survey of former Professional Preparation Masters students.

### **METHODOLOGY**

- 1.07 The sample is based on individuals who commenced AHRB PhD awards between 1997 and 2000 (ie. between 6-9 years ago). Assuming a typical three year award, these individuals would have completed their PhD up to 6 years ago – providing a good indication of career direction rather than just first destinations.
- 1.08 The sample of individuals commencing PhD awards between 1997 and 2000 was drawn from 28 universities that are listed at the beginning of this report. The universities were selected to provide a good mix of the type of postgraduates funded by the AHRC:
- A mix of large and smaller institutions, including specialist art monotechnics.
  - A mix of pre and post 1992 universities
  - A good geographical spread of universities.

- 1.09 The AHRC does not have up-to-date contact details for former students. One of the main challenges of the study was tracking individuals who had completed PhD awards up to 6 years ago.
- 1.10 Every effort was made to ensure that the survey data would be **representative** of former students. For example, if the study had relied on university staff for contact details, this could have biased the survey to people who had remained in academia. To guard against bias, a variety of ways were used to track former students:
- Use of student databases held by university alumni offices. For data protection reasons contact details could not be released, but alumni offices despatched questionnaires on our behalf.
  - Use of old AHRC student records (particularly parental addresses).
  - Use of e-mail addresses from old AHRC student records.
- 1.11 Two methods were used to collect the survey data:
- A postal questionnaire
  - A web questionnaire – the web survey was run alongside the postal survey to give respondents a choice in how to provide information. It also served a very important purpose in enabling respondents based outside the UK to participate easily in the survey. It can be difficult for overseas respondents to participate in postal surveys because of time delays and difficulties in using pre-paid envelopes.
- 1.12 The survey ran for seven weeks between 11 September and 27 October 2006.
- 1.13 In total, **413 questionnaires** were received. This provides a robust basis for analysis of the survey data and means a high level of confidence can be placed in the survey findings.
- 1.14 It also represents an excellent response rate for a self-completion postal / web survey. DTZ estimates that 413 questionnaire returns represents a response rate of approximately 35% based on all those that received a questionnaire and 29% based on all those eligible for inclusion in the study.
- 1.15 A summary of the information above is provided in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1  
Survey Overview



#### THE REST OF THIS REPORT

1.16 The rest of this report sets out the findings from the survey and is structured as follows:

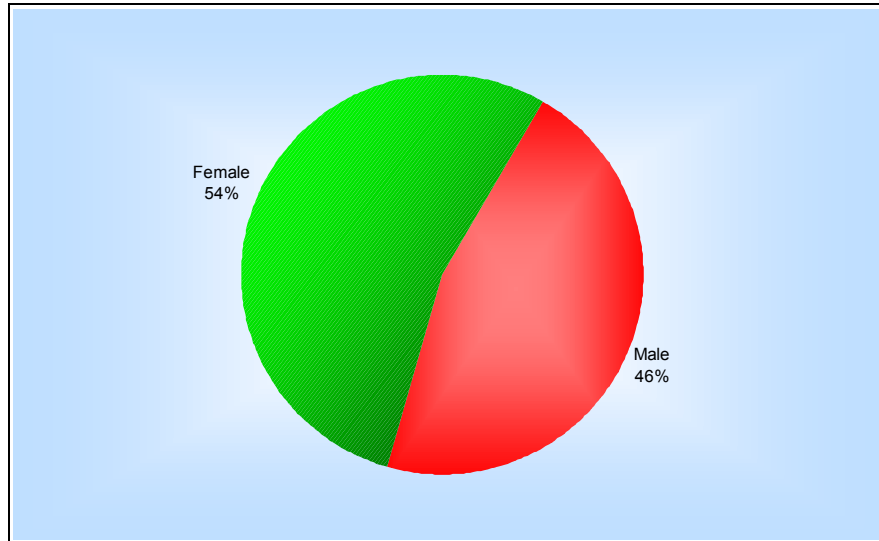
- **Section 2:** provides information on respondents and their PhD research.
- **Section 3:** analyses current employment patterns.
- **Section 4:** provides further information on respondents' current job.
- **Section 5:** presents typical job histories for different types of careers.
- **Section 6:** considers respondents' views on the value of undertaking a PhD.

## 2 INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS AND THEIR PHD RESEARCH

### THE RESPONDENTS

2.01 Figure 2.1 shows that there is almost a 50:50 split in the gender of respondents.

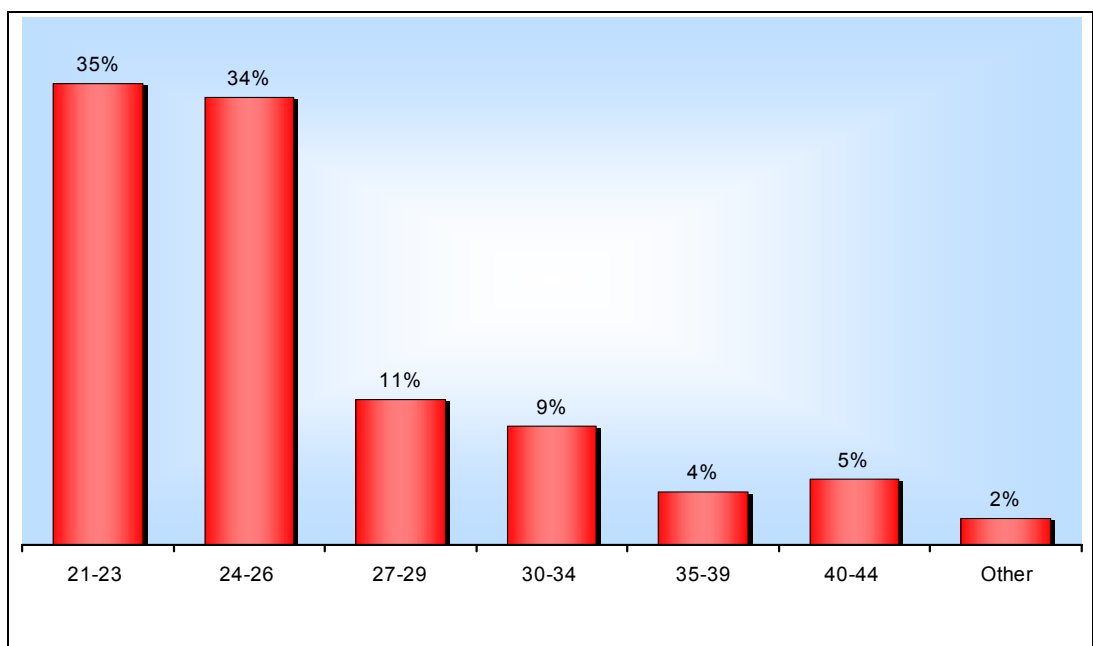
**Figure 2.1**  
**Gender of Respondents**



Base: All respondents (413)

2.02 Figure 2.2 shows that most respondents were in their early/mid twenties when they began their PhD. However, 20% were thirty or more when they began their PhD.

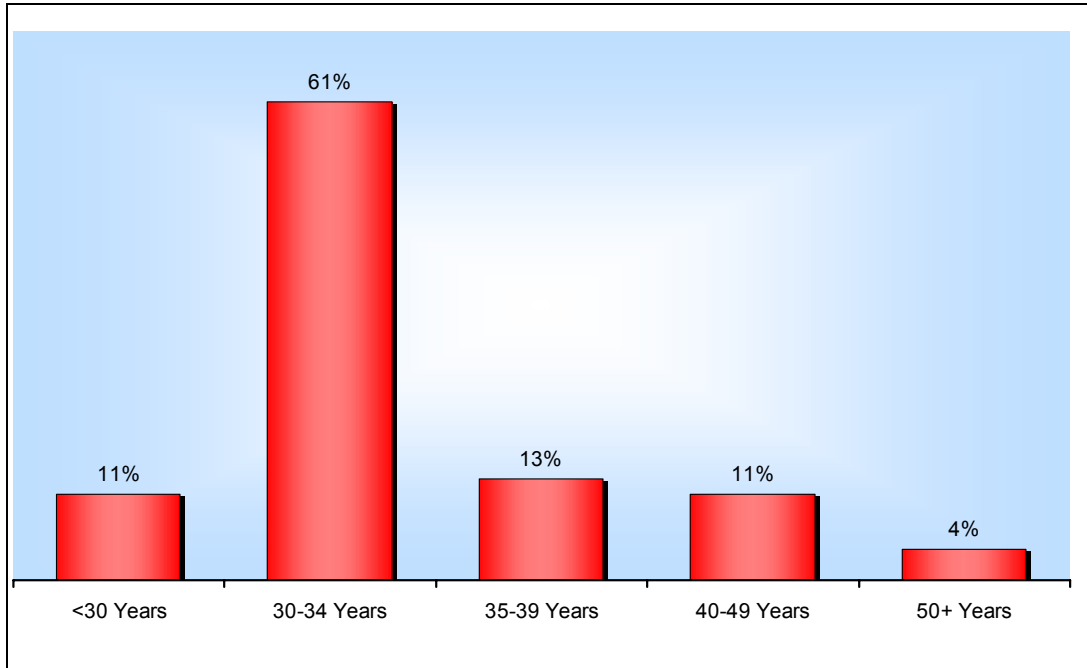
**Figure 2.2**  
**Age of Respondents When Began PhD**



Base: All respondents (413)

2.03 The majority of respondents are now in their early / mid thirties. The age of respondents is such that their current employment should reflect the direction of their long-term career.

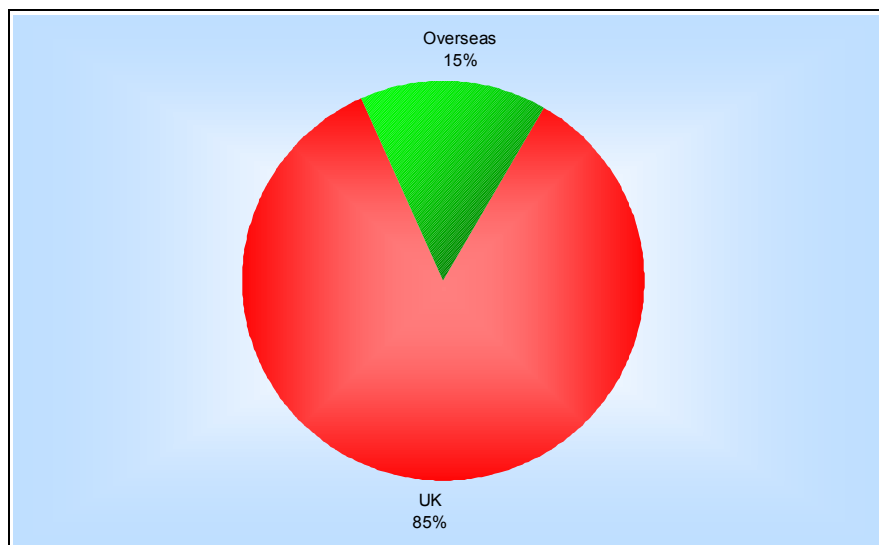
**Figure 2.3**  
**Age of Respondents**



Base: All respondents (413)

2.04 The majority of respondents are from the UK but a substantial minority are overseas nationals.

**Figure 2.4**  
**Nationality of Respondents**



Base: All respondents (413)

2.05 In total, 64 respondents are overseas nationals: 60% of these are from four countries:

- Germany (19 respondents)
- Ireland (8 respondents)
- Italy (6 respondents)
- Greece (6 respondents).

2.06 The remaining respondents are from a range of countries: 20 are from other parts of Europe; 3 are American; and 2 are Australian.

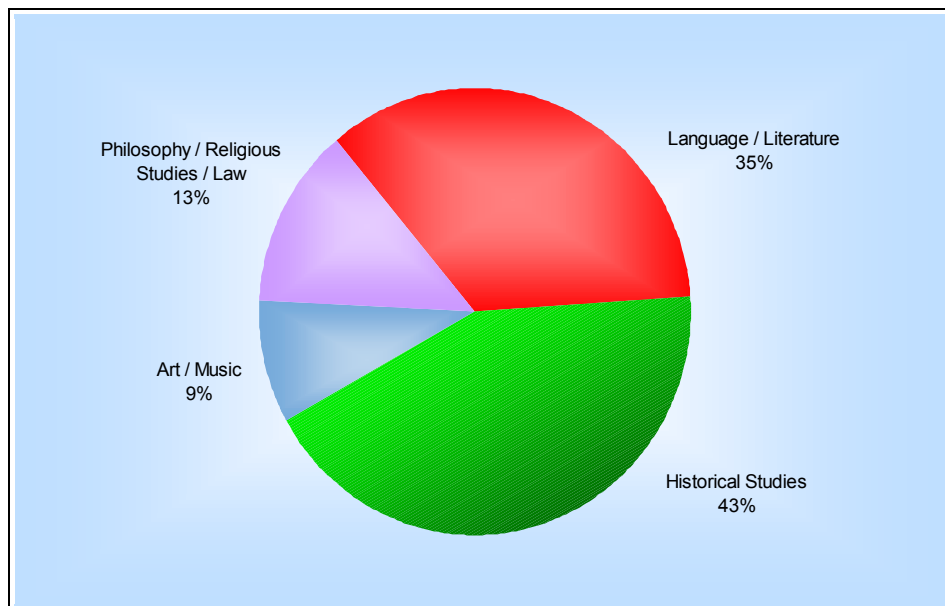
#### **NATURE OF PHD**

2.07 PhD subject areas have been categorised into four main areas for analysis in this report:

- Languages and Literature
- Historical Studies
- Practice-Based Art, Music and Performing Arts
- Philosophy, Religious Studies and Law.

2.08 A detailed breakdown of the PhD subjects studied by respondents is provided in Appendix 1. Figure 2.5 summarises this information.

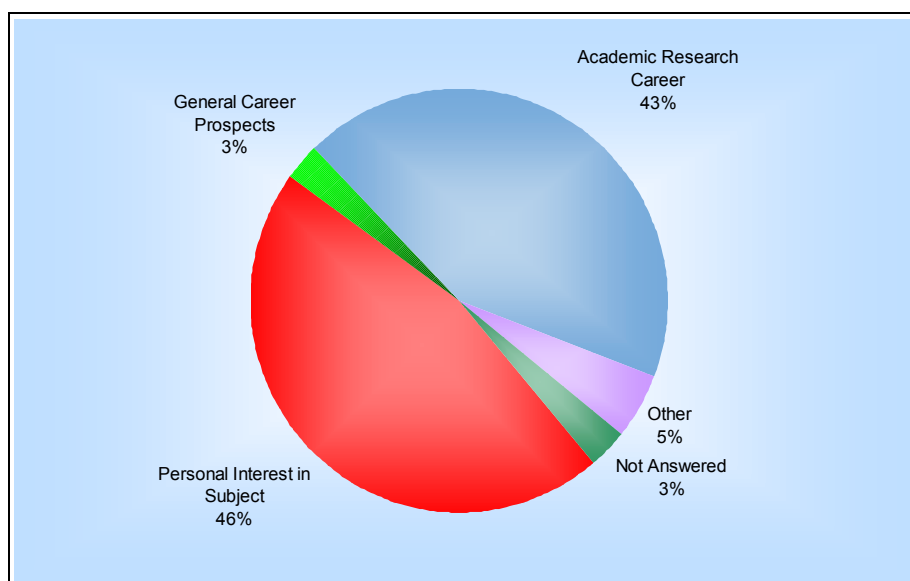
**Figure 2.5  
PhD Subject Area**



**Base: All respondents (413)**

2.09 Figure 2.6 shows respondents' main motivation for undertaking a PhD. Although a desire to pursue a career in academic research is one of the most popular reasons for undertaking a PhD, only 43% of respondents say it was their main motivation for undertaking a PhD. Equally important is personal interest in the subject area (46% of respondents say this was their main motivation for undertaking a PhD).

**Figure 2.6**  
**Main Reason for Undertaking PhD**

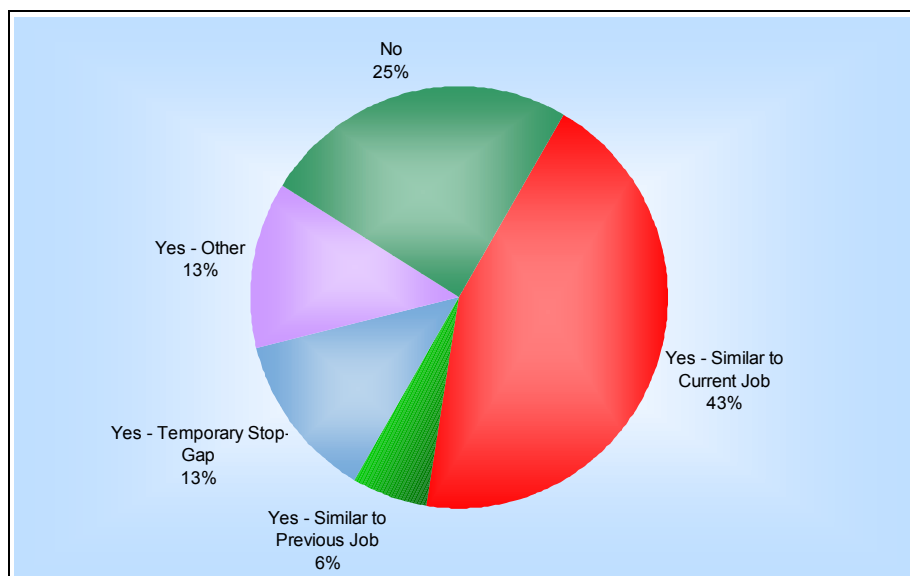


**Base: All respondents (413)**

- 2.10 The vast majority of respondents have been awarded a PhD (94%). Of the 25 respondents who had not been awarded a PhD, 8 said they were still working towards submitting their research. The remaining 17 respondents did not intend to complete their PhD. Reasons for not completing a PhD can be summarised as follows (one respondent did not provide any information):
- Financial (4)
  - Family (4)
  - Lost interest (4)
  - Poor Health (2)
  - Dispute with university (1)
  - Poor supervision (1).
- 2.11 25% of respondents **had another career before they began their PhD**. Almost all these respondents are people who began their PhD later in life, typically from their late twenties onwards. The range of careers that these respondents pursued before starting their PhD is varied:
- Creative – related occupations such as publishing, photography, writing, artist (18% of those who had a previous career)
  - Teaching (13% of those who had a previous career)
  - Administration (12% of those who had a previous career)
  - HE/FE Lecturing (11% of those who had a previous career)
  - Civil Service (6% of those who had a previous career).
- 2.12 The remaining 40% of respondents who had another career before embarking on their PhD worked in many diverse areas including: nursing, law, retail, translating, librarianship, marketing and social work.
- 2.13 Almost three-quarters of respondents **worked while undertaking their PhD** as shown in Figure 2.7. A significant proportion described this work as being relevant to the job they

are now doing. This is particularly the case among respondents now employed in universities.

**Figure 2.7**  
**Whether Respondents Undertook Paid Work During PhD**



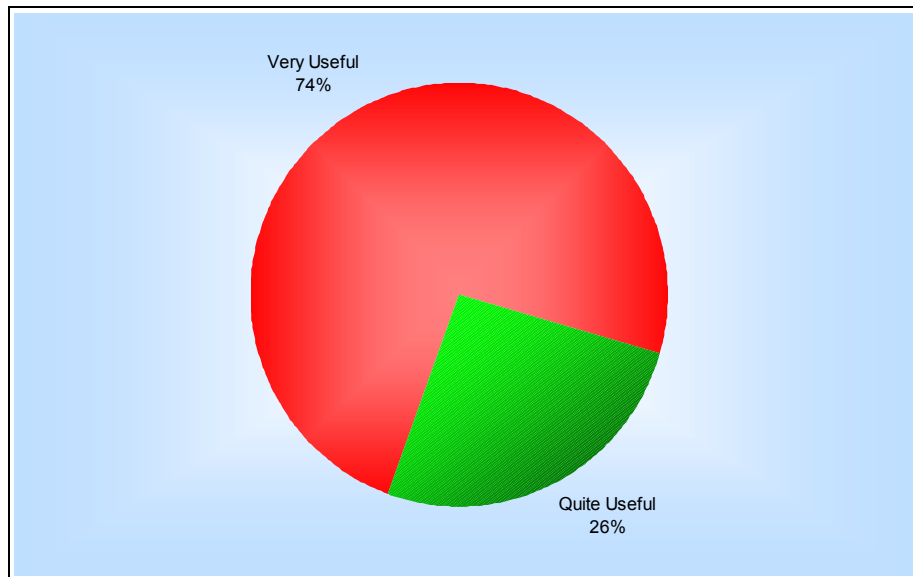
**Base: All respondents (413)**

- 2.14 Very few respondents undertook a **work placement** during their PhD. 7% of respondents said they had undertaken a placement but analysis of the responses shows that some of the activities reported by respondents would not be regarded as conventional work placements. For example, some respondents said they taught students in their department. The vast majority of respondents who had undertaken a work placement (or had at least been engaged in an activity that they perceived to be a work placement), found it helpful in getting a job subsequently (81%).

#### RESEARCH PREPARATION MASTERS DEGREE

- 2.15 44% of respondents had undertaken a Masters Degree funded by the AHRB before embarking on their PhD. There was some variation by PhD subject: Languages / Literature (55% had undertaken a Masters Degree); Historical Studies (45% had undertaken a Masters Degree); Practice-Based Art / Music (24% had undertaken a Masters Degree); Philosophy, Religious Studies and Law (31% had undertaken a Masters Degree). There was a distinct difference in terms of the nationality of respondents: 50% of UK nationals had undertaken an AHRB funded Masters Degree compared to only 16% of overseas nationals.
- 2.16 With two exceptions all had been funded under Competition A – the Research Preparation Masters Programme. On the whole, respondents felt their Masters Degree had been a good preparation for their PhD. No respondents said their Research Preparation Masters Degree had not been useful.

**Figure 2.8**  
**Respondent Views on Research Preparation Masters Degree**



**Base: All respondents who had undertaken an AHRB Funded Masters Degree (183)**

- 2.17 Respondents were asked whether there was any way in which their Masters Degree could have been improved or whether anything else could be done to prepare people for doctoral research. The responses are listed in Appendix 2. They are wide-ranging but some points that arise are highlighted below.
- 2.18 Although a Masters Degree is useful it should not be seen as essential for undertaking a PhD:
- “Apart from language skills, the MPhil was research-based. This was great if unsure about a PhD, but I felt I could have gone to PhD without any MPhil”*
- “I don't feel I needed any extra preparation - wanted to get straight down to independent research after BA”*
- 2.19 There should be more emphasis on actual research:
- “More focus on research throughout the course. Encourage students to identify a topic that could form the basis of a long term research project”*
- “More freedom to study self directed”*
- 2.20 There should be more interaction between Masters and PhD students to get a better insight into doctoral research:
- “Research skills mentoring with PhD students would have been useful to gain insights into doctoral research”*
- “A talk from someone who had completed/was undertaking a PhD would have been useful to discuss life as a PhD student”*

- 2.21 There should be more opportunity to acquire presenting skills because presentation of research at meetings / conferences is an important part of undertaking a PhD:

*“I would have welcomed more opportunity to present "research in progress" in the form of informal colloquia. In the course of my Masters, I officially presented my project only once. As this presentation was part of the final result, it was more a case of "selling" my research than of openly discussing questions and problems.”*

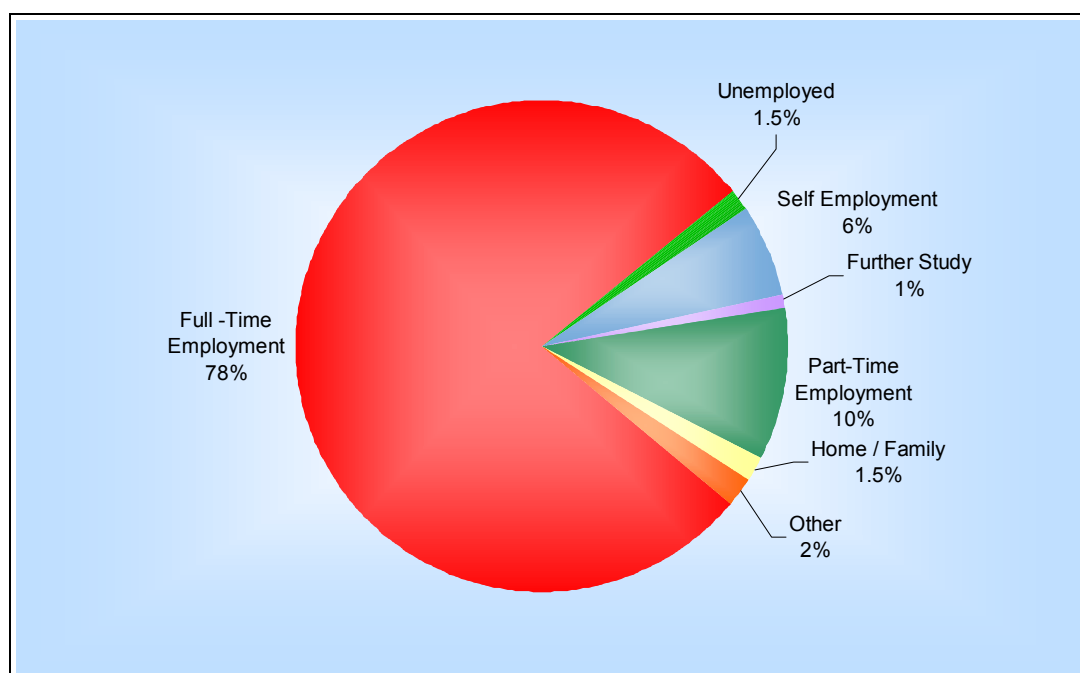
*“I would also have benefited from more general courses (giving presentations etc).”*

### 3 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT – SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

#### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

3.01 Figure 3.1 shows that 94% of respondents are working. Overall, 78% are in full-time employment, 10% in part-time employment and 6% are self-employed. Only 6 respondents said they were unemployed and looking for work.

**Figure 3.1**  
**Employment Status of Former PhD Students**



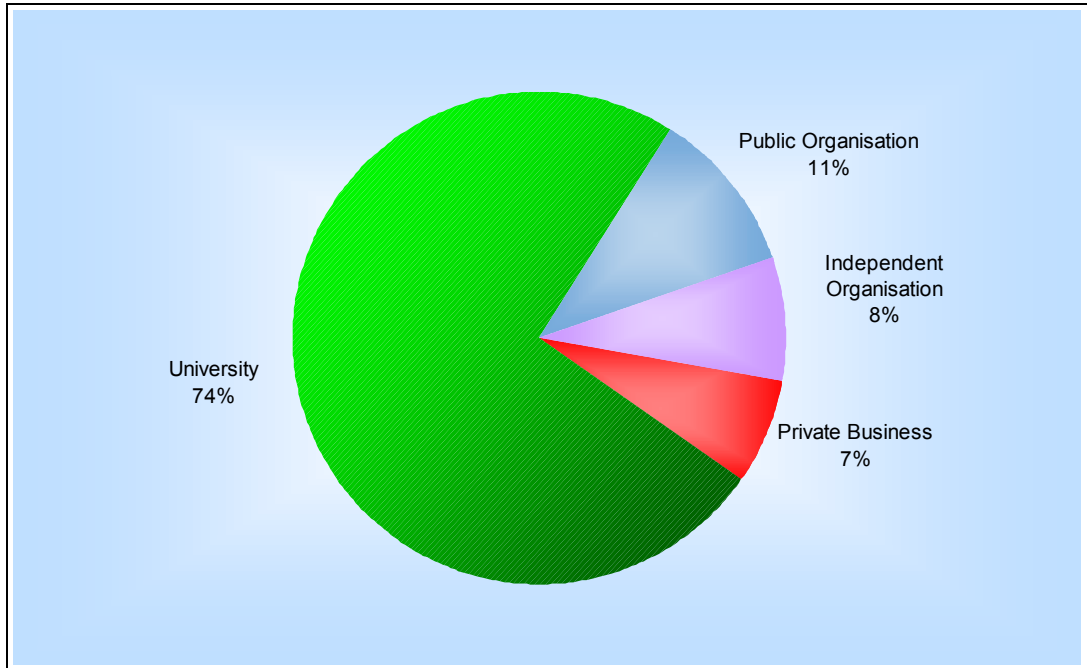
**Base: All respondents (413)**

#### SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT

3.02 Figure 3.2 shows the types of organisations in which respondents are employed. It is based on those in full-time and part-time employment:

- 74% work in universities. This is a large proportion of respondents but reflects the size of the university sector for arts and particularly humanities subjects. Many people choose degrees in arts and humanities subjects where a specific vocational degree is not required.
- 11% work in public sector organisations – such as government departments, local authorities, health authorities, NDPBs, and other organisations mainly funded through the public purse i.e. museums, galleries, research establishments.
- 8% work in independent organisations – defined as charities or not-for-profit organisations such as the National Trust, independent schools and academic / professional bodies.
- 7% work in the private sector.

**Figure 3.2**  
**Sectoral Analysis of Employment**

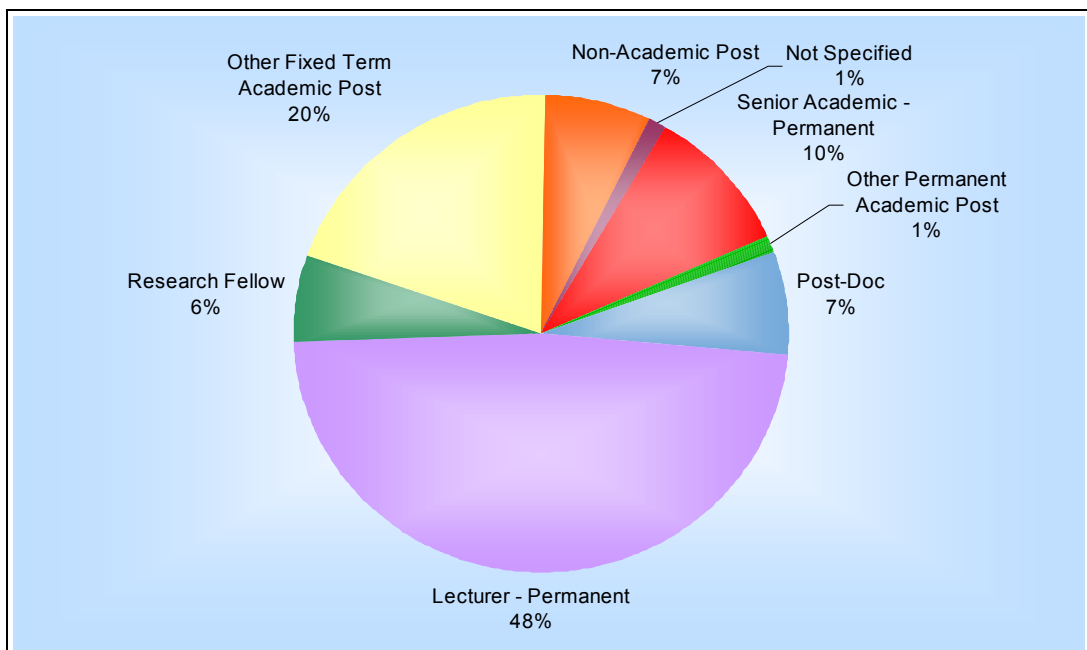


Base: All respondents who are employed full-time or part-time (364)

**The University Sector**

3.03 Figure 3.3 provides a more detailed breakdown of employment in the higher education sector.

**Figure 3.3**  
**Occupations in Universities**



Base: All respondents employed in universities (269)

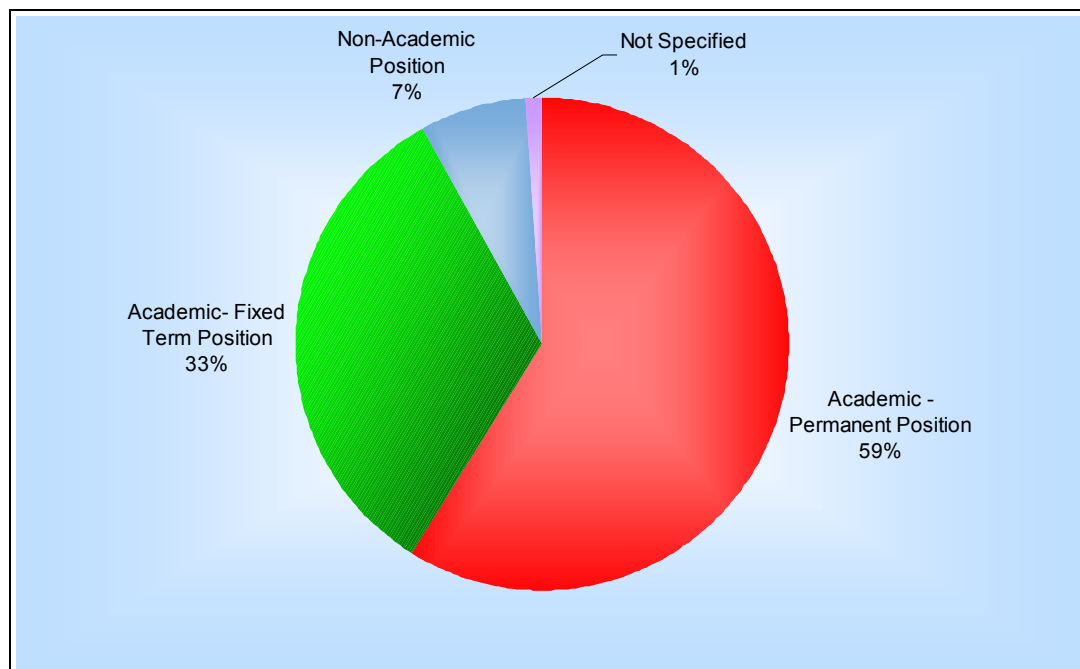
3.04 Key points are:

- 59% of respondents working in universities hold permanent academic positions:
  - Lecturer (48%)
  - Senior Lecturer (8%)
  - Reader / Professor (2%)

1% have other permanent academic posts (for example RCUK fellowships which lead to permanent posts).
- A third of respondents employed in universities (33%) hold fixed term academic positions:
  - Post-doctoral research assistant (employed on a research grant) – 7% of respondents
  - Personal research fellowship – 6% of respondents. For example, junior university fellowships, Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowships, Wellcome Trust Fellowships.
  - Other fixed term academic position – 20% of respondents. Analysis of the survey data indicates that most of these respondents hold fixed term lecturer posts. However, there are also some respondents who hold research fellowships but did not classify themselves as a fellowship holder – perhaps because the organisation funding the research is their university rather than an external organisation.
- A small proportion of respondents working in universities (7%) are employed in non-academic positions. For the most part (but not exclusively) these are permanent positions. The types of jobs undertaken by these respondents (where specified) is listed below:
  - Librarian / archivist (4 respondents)
  - Learning and teaching services manager / officer (3 respondents)
  - Advisor for newly appointed teaching staff
  - Professional development advisor for academic staff
  - Teaching enhancement officer
  - Faculty registrar
  - Research training manager
  - Research administrator
  - Administrator
  - Fundraising project manager
  - Welsh language development officer
  - Chaplain.

3.05 Figure 3.4 provides an overview of employment in the higher education sector distinguishing between academic and non-academic employment and permanent and fixed term positions.

**Figure 3.4**  
**Overview of Employment in Universities**



**Base: All respondents employed in universities (269)**

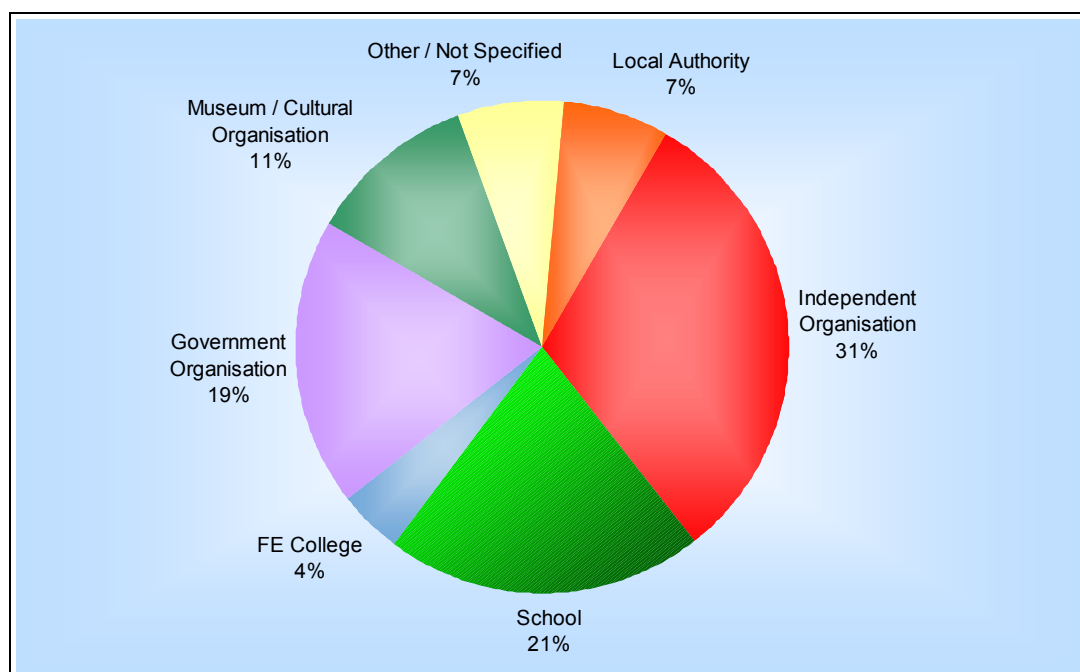
3.06 Respondents were asked why they had chosen to work in the higher education sector. The overwhelming response was an interest in the subject area and a desire to teach and to undertake research in this area. This is not surprising given one of the main motivations for undertaking a PhD in the first place is to pursue a career in academic research.

#### **The Public / Independent Sector**

3.07 Overall, nearly 1 in 5 respondents (19%) who work full-time or part-time are employed in either the public or independent sector. Figure 3.5 shows the type of organisations in which they are employed.

3.08 The majority of respondents who work in this sector have permanent positions (82%).

**Figure 3.5**  
**Employment in the Public / Independent Sector**



**Base: All respondents who work in the public or independent sector (68)**

3.09 A summary of the types of organisations in which respondents are employed is provided below:

- 11% are employed in museum / cultural organisations which include: the British Museum, Australian War Memorial, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, the National Gallery, Welsh National Opera, National Theatre and the National Archives. Most respondents who work in this sector are employed as curators / conservators.
- 19% are employed in Government Departments, Agencies and NDPBs. These include HM Treasury, DfES, Cabinet Office, National Audit Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Respondents are employed mainly in professional research, policy and management roles.
- 21% are employed in schools, of which about half are in the independent sector. Most respondents work as English, History or Modern Languages teachers.
- 31% are employed in charities or independent organisations such as the BBC, National Trust, academic or professional bodies (The Wellcome Trust, The Royal Society, The Royal Academy of Engineering, The Royal College of Physicians) and the Church of England. Respondents undertake a range of work but there is an emphasis on research, policy, communications and development work.
- 7% are employed in local authorities (outside schools) in a range of professional occupations.
- 4% are employed mainly as lecturers in FE Colleges.

3.10 A full listing of all jobs / occupations in this sector is provided in Appendix 3

3.11 Respondents were asked why they had chosen a career in the public / independent sector. The survey findings show that most respondents made a positive choice to pursue a career

in this sector. In many cases, it enables them to use skills acquired through their PhD in an interesting and challenging environment.

*“Interested in public policy & current affairs, could adapt skills that I acquired during my academic research.”*

*“I wanted to pursue a research career, and this job gives the opportunity to do so without the teaching commitments that come with most university research posts in my field.”*

3.12 A minority of respondents report their principal motivation was money or disillusionment with academic employment.

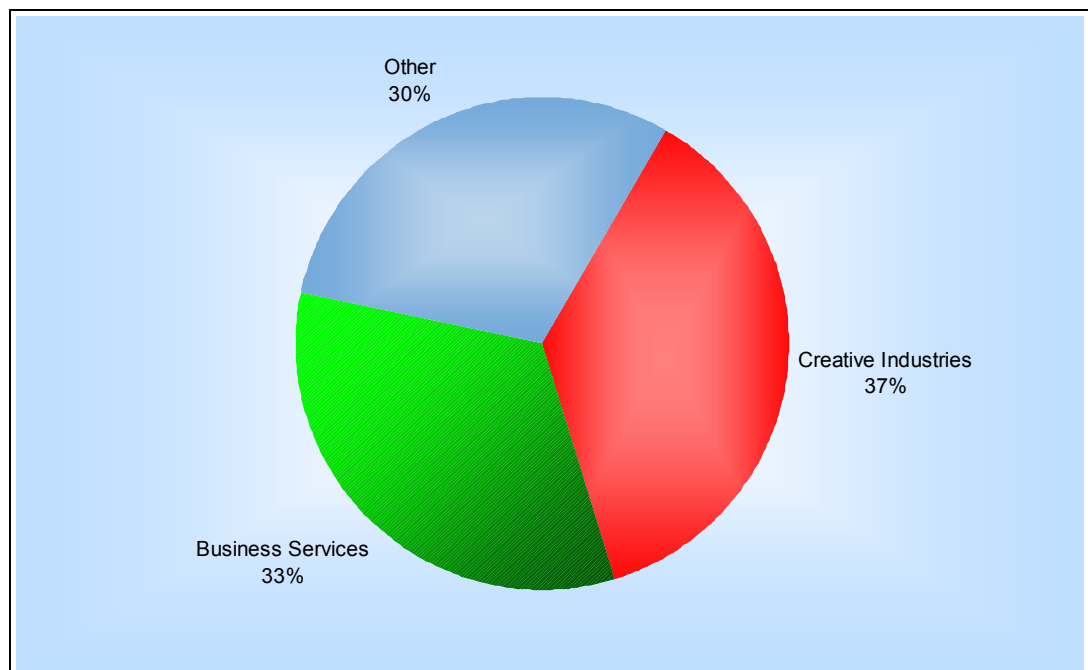
*“Found post-doctoral research too arcane, teaching too little valued, too unprofessionally conducted in higher education sector. Jobs to apply for too few, far between, no job security.”*

### The Private Sector

3.13 Only 7% of respondents who are employed either full-time or part-time work in the private sector. They are employed in two main sectors:

- Creative industries – which has been defined to include not only art, music, and fashion but activities such as publishing, architecture and advertising in accordance with the government definition of this sector.
- Business Services and Finance – which embraces activities such as law, consultancy and accountancy.

**Figure 3.5**  
**Employment in the Private Sector**



**Base: All respondents employed in the private sector (27)**

3.14 The majority of respondents employed in the private sector have permanent positions (82%).

3.15 The types of businesses in which respondents' are employed are listed below. A full listing of jobs / occupations in this sector is provided in Appendix 4.

<b>CREATIVE INDUSTRIES</b>
A SMALL PUBLISHING COMPANY. WRITING ABOUT COMPANY SUPPLY CHAINS WITHIN THE FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS SECTOR.
PUBLISHING (EDUCATION/ACADEMIC)
BOOK PUBLISHING - TRADE NON-FICTION/ACADEMIC HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, ESPECIALLY POLITICS
PUBLISHING
AUCTION HOUSE
PUBLISHING - ACADEMIC BOOKS
PUBLISHING
AN ASSAY OFFICE. THE MAIN SERVICE PROVIDED IS THE INDEPENDENT TESTING & HALLMARKING OF PRECIOUS METALS. DIAMOND CERTIFICATION & VALUATION ARE FURTHER SERVICES PROVIDED.
ON-LINE SUBSCRIPTION-BASED PUBLISHER OF NEWS AND DATABASES COVERING INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIOS (E.G. PENSION OR CHARITY FUND AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL ASSET-MANAGEMENT ADVISORS).
CINEMA PROGRAMMING: PROVIDES CINEMA PROGRAMMING SERVICE TO VENUES OPERATED BY PARENT COMPANY AS WELL AS INDEPENDENT CINEMA OPERATORS.
<b>BUSINESS SERVICES</b>
ACCOUNTANCY FIRM
SOLICITORS
STRATEGY CONSULTANCY.
PROPERTY INVESTMENT - COMMERCIAL
SOLICITORS AND PARLIAMENTARY AGENTS
BANK
COMMUNICATIONAL/PR - PUBLIC POLICY CONSULTING
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY FIRM
MARKET RESEARCH AND BUSINESS CONSULTANCY
<b>OTHER</b>
RETAIL CHAIN OF GIFT SHOPS
DESIGN AND OPERATE SUMMER STUDY PROGRAMS IN THE UK, FRANCE, AND SPAIN.

RETAIL BOOKSELLER
ELECTRICITY AND GAS SUPPLIER.
RETAIL STORE
RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF AN INDUSTRIAL CONGLOMERATE. IT ENGAGES IN ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER: FULL SERVICE & ISP SUPPLIER.
RETAIL STORE
Based on respondents who provided information on their employer

3.16 The majority of respondents employed in the private sector have high-level, professional jobs:

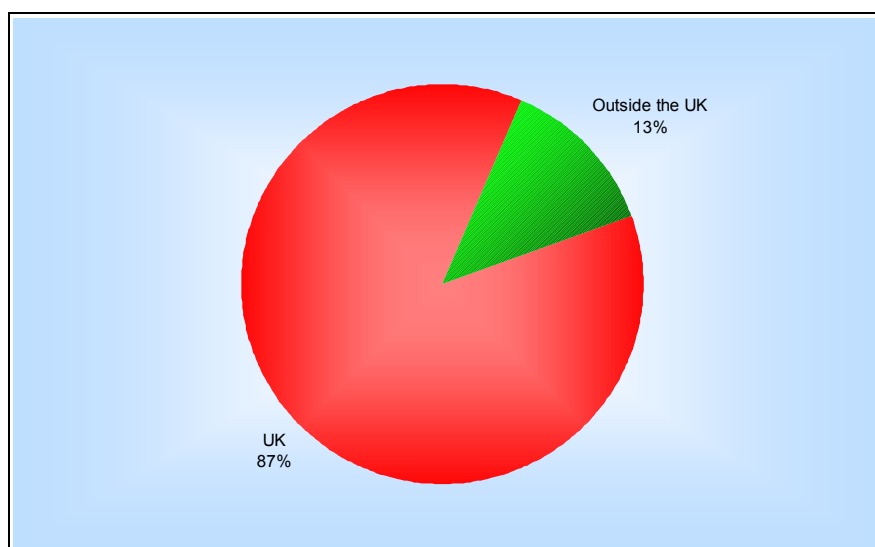
- Respondents who are employed in the creative industries sector work mainly as editors and programmers
- In the business services sector, respondents are employed mainly as business professionals.

3.17 Respondents were asked why they had chosen a career in the private sector. Was this a positive choice or was it an option of last resort because of lack of opportunities elsewhere? The survey findings indicate that most respondents chose to work in the private sector for positive reasons – because they were interested in the work. Only a minority report they took the job primarily for money reasons or because no academic jobs were available.

#### **WORK LOCATION**

3.18 The majority of respondents who are employed either full-time or part-time are working in the UK but a substantial minority are employed outside the UK as shown in Figure 3.6. Not surprisingly, only 6% of UK nationals are working outside the UK compared to 49% of overseas nationals.

**Figure 3.6**  
**Where Respondents Work**



**Base: All respondents employed full-time and part-time (364)**

3.19 In total, 46 respondents who are employed full-time or part-time work outside the UK: 50% of these work in four countries:

- USA (7 respondents)
- Germany (7 respondents)
- Ireland (5 respondents)
- Netherlands (4 respondents).

3.20 The remaining respondents work in a range of countries: 15 work in other parts of Europe; 3 respondents work in Australia, 2 respondents work in New Zealand and 1 respondent works in South Africa, Canada and Hong Kong respectively.

3.21 It is interesting to consider whether there are any significant differences in employment patterns depending on whether respondents are working in the UK or overseas. The survey findings show that the pattern of employment for respondents working in the UK is very similar to the pattern reported above for all respondents:

- 74% of respondents employed in the UK work in universities. Similarly, 72% of respondents employed outside the UK work in universities.
- 7% of respondents employed in the UK work in the private sector. This rises to 11% for those employed outside the UK (however the sample base is small).
- 19% of respondents employed in the UK work in the public / independent sector. Similarly, 17% of respondents employed outside the UK work in the public / independent sector (again the sample base is small).

3.22 Thus, there is no significant variation in employment patterns between respondents working in the UK and respondents working outside the UK.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESPONDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT A PHD

- 3.23 It is also interesting to consider whether there are any significant differences in employment patterns depending on whether respondents have a PhD or not. The main difference is that respondents without a PhD are much less likely to be employed in a university (only 20% work in universities). 55% of respondents who have not been awarded a PhD work in the public / independent sector and 25% work in the private sector.

### SELF EMPLOYMENT

- 3.24 A small proportion of respondents are self-employed (25 respondents which represents 6% of the sample). None of these respondents is running a business that employs other people. They are all, in various ways, working for themselves or freelancing. Most respondents who are self employed are working in areas relevant to their research. The types of work they are undertaking can be summarised as follows from those that provided information:

- Artist - *I am a full-time painter, self-employed, selling my own work and paying for a studio*
- Artist - *I mainly work for one studio, whose clients include large institutions, large & small private collectors. I also work directly for some small private collectors*
- Artist - *making artwork and doing exhibitions for museums and galleries*
- Art importer - *I import oil paintings from Eastern Europe and sell them wholesale*
- Barrister - *Self-employed barrister in private practice specialising in employment law and public law.*
- Barrister – *intellectual property barrister*
- Barrister
- Lawyer and teaching fellow
- Journalist /Writer - *freelance journalist & author; went freelance because similar to study/research/writing*
- Journalist / Writer – *author of children's novels*
- Journalist / Writer
- Professional book indexer - *I set up after becoming interested in indexing in connection with my writing and research work*
- Media consultant
- Freelance historian - *currently work for an academic society, an academic journal, and as a researcher*
- Freelance legal adviser - *I am a freelance legal adviser and researcher working on internationally related issues. I work with academic institutions and private sector clients*
- Freelance tutor
- Freelance singing teacher
- Business consultant - *previously doing agency work, I identified a need for people to deal with school bureaucracy. I work for a variety of schools now. I also tutor and lecture for universities.*
- Business consultant / adviser on ethical issues
- Wedding service consultant.

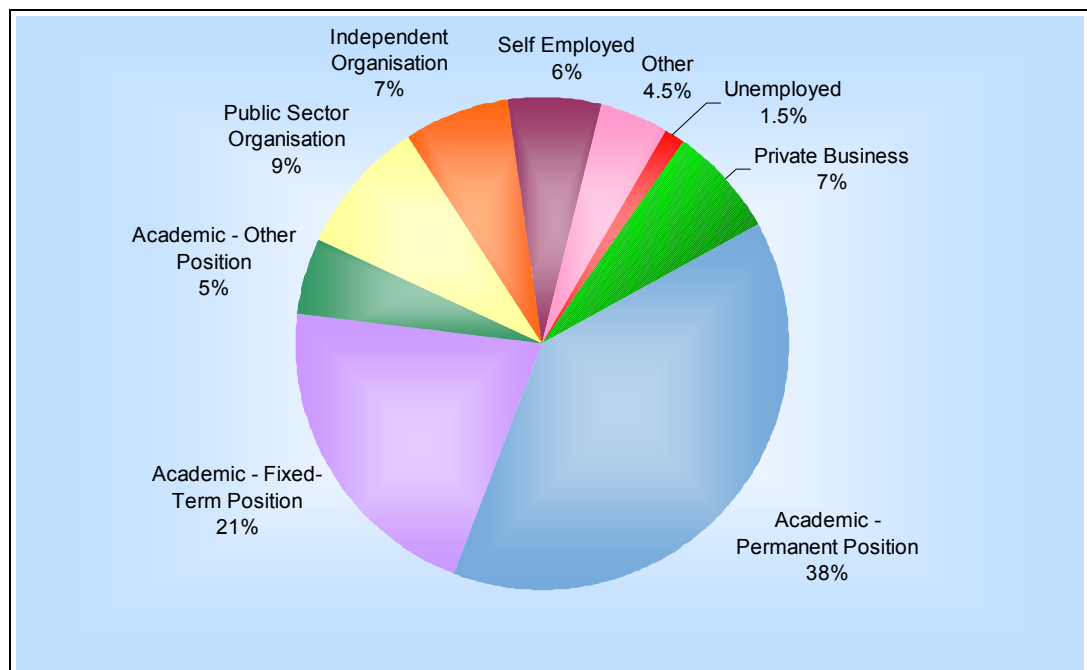
- 3.25 Many respondents who are self-employed combine their freelance work with some academic research / teaching. The breadth of work undertaken by some people who work on a freelance basis is illustrated by the following respondent:

*“I love working as a freelancer: it allows me a lot of flexibility, and means I can combine several types of work, all of which I enjoy. During term time, I tutor undergraduates, plus students from a private tutorial college in philosophy and theology subjects. I also work as an editor for two organisations and for a writers' correspondence service (providing appraisals of pieces of creative writing.”*

**OVERVIEW**

3.26 Figure 3.7 provides an overview of the employment status of former PhD Students.

**Figure 3.7  
Overview of Employment Patterns**



**Base: All respondents (413)**

3.27 It is clear from the analysis in this section that former PhD students are generally working in professional occupations commensurate with their skills / experience.

3.28 They are also making an important contribution to society and the wider public realm. Recently Lord Leitch published a report on the UK’s long-term skill needs – *Prosperity for All in the Global Economy: World Class Skills*. A key target is that by 2020 more than 40% of adults are skilled to graduate level and above – up from 29% in 2005. AHRC PhD students will play an important part in achieving this target through their work in universities. Furthermore, former PhD students are making an important contribution to society through their research / policy work in the public sector and through the various (mainly professional) roles they are undertaking in charities / independent organisations.

**CASE STUDIES**

3.29 Appendix 5 provides more personal information on the current careers of former PhD Students. Case studies are presented for thirteen former PhD students and are structured as follows:

**Arts & Humanities Research Council  
Career Path Study of AHRC PhD Students  
December 2006**

- Occupation
- Employer
- PhD Subject
- Why respondent undertook a PhD?
- Description of current job
- Why respondent decided on this career / occupation
- What was their job search strategy?
- Why they think they got the job?
- Whether PhD has had a positive impact on their career? Any why?
- What advice they have for PhD students to improve their employability.

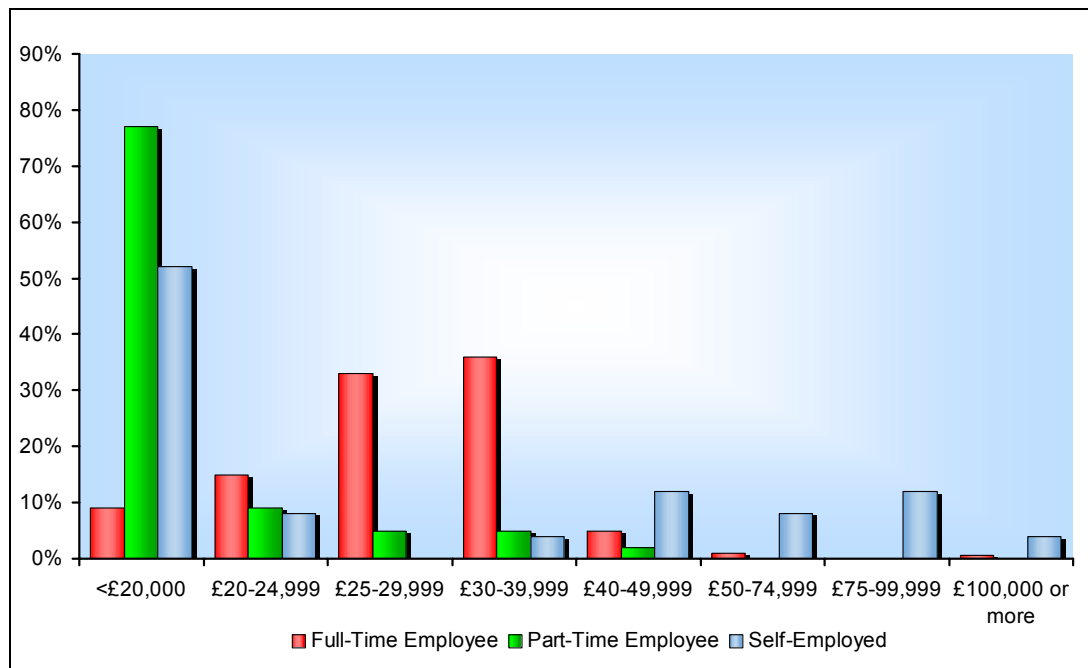
## 4 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### PAY

4.01 Figure 4.1 shows annual gross pay according to whether respondents are employed full-time or part-time, or on a self-employed basis. Key points are as follows:

- The majority of respondents who work full-time earn either between £25-29,999 or £30-39,000 per annum. This is similar to the average annual gross pay for full-time employees in the UK which is £29,000. It is also similar to the average annual gross pay for full-time employees aged 30-39 which is £31,000 (this is the age group that corresponds most closely with the sample). It is lower (for most respondents) than the average annual gross pay for full-time professional employees which is £38,000.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of respondents employed on a part-time basis earn less than £20,000 per annum. A small proportion earn higher salaries, which may reflect the fact that they work almost full-time. Part-time work was defined as up to 30 hours per week.
- There is a large variation in pay for respondents who are self-employed. Many earn less than £20,000 perhaps because they are working on a part-time basis. Conversely, a substantial proportion earn relatively high salaries.

**Figure 4.1**  
**Gross Annual Pay**



**Base: Full-time working respondents (321), part-time working respondents (43), self-employed respondents (25)**

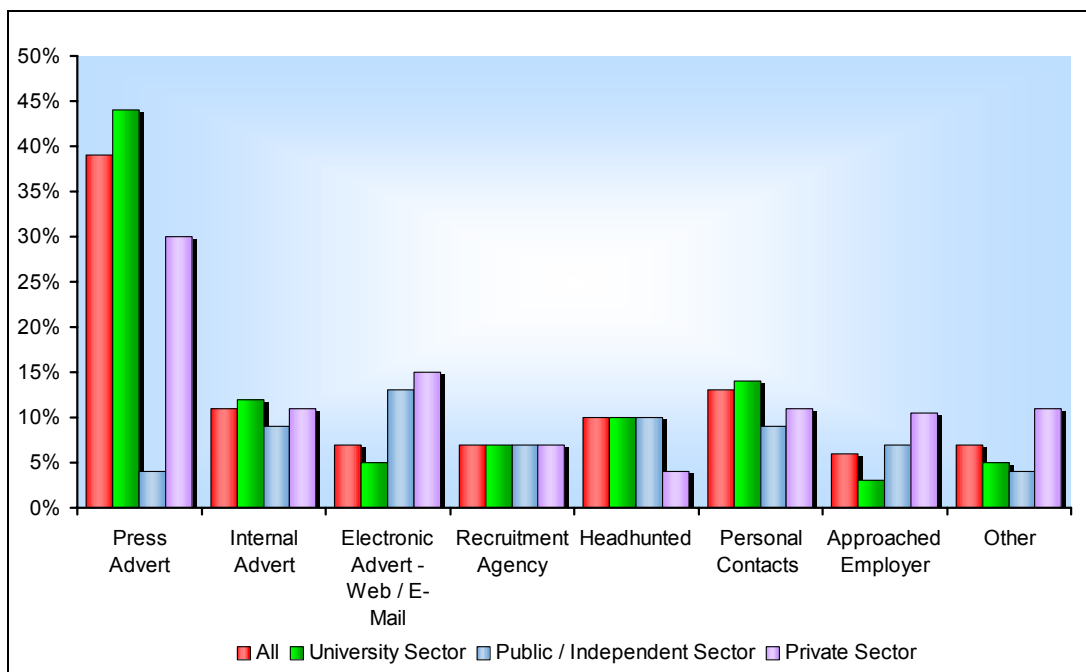
### JOB SEARCH METHODS

4.02 Figure 4.2 shows how respondents found out about their current job according to the sector in which they are employed. Key points are:

<sup>1</sup> 2006 Annual Survey of Hours and Employment

- A press advert (national, local or industry press) is the main way in which respondents found out about their current job. This applies across all job sectors.
- Thereafter, respondents found out about their current job in a variety of ways, all of which are of roughly equal importance.
- It is interesting that a number of the case studies emphasise the importance of networks / personal contacts in finding job opportunities particularly in academia (see Appendix 5).

**Figure 4.2  
Main Way Respondent Found Out About Current Job**



**Base: All working respondents (389), university sector (269), public / independent Sector (68), private sector (27)**

#### **SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT JOB**

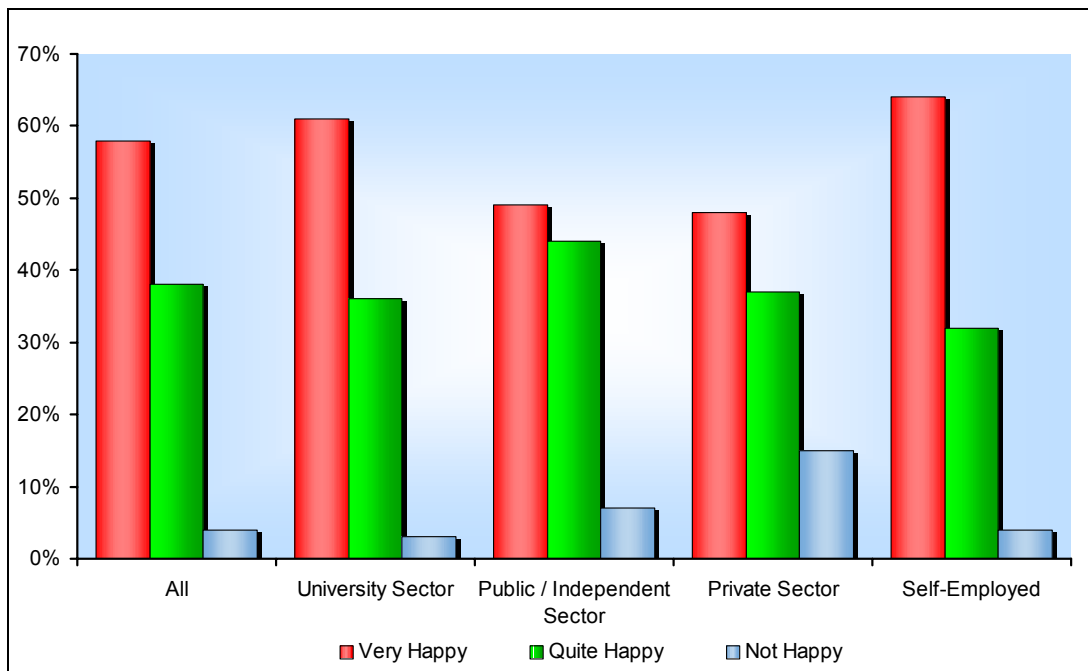
4.03

The vast majority of respondents are happy in their current job: 58% report they are very happy in their current job and 38% are quite happy in their current job. Figure 4.3 shows the extent to which job satisfaction differs across the sectors in which respondents are employed. Key points are:

- The highest levels of job satisfaction are found in the university sector and among respondents who are self-employed: 61% and 64% are very happy in their current job respectively.
- Levels of job satisfaction in the private sector are reasonably high: 48% are very happy in their current job and 37% are quite happy. Only 15% are not happy with their current job. This supports what was said in Section 3 about respondents generally choosing to work in the private sector for positive rather than negative reasons.

- Levels of job satisfaction are also reasonably high in the public / independent sector: 49% are very happy in their current job, 44% are quite happy and only 7% are not happy. Again, this supports the finding in Section 3 that respondents who work in this sector generally chose to do so for positive reasons.

**Figure 4.3**  
**Job Satisfaction**

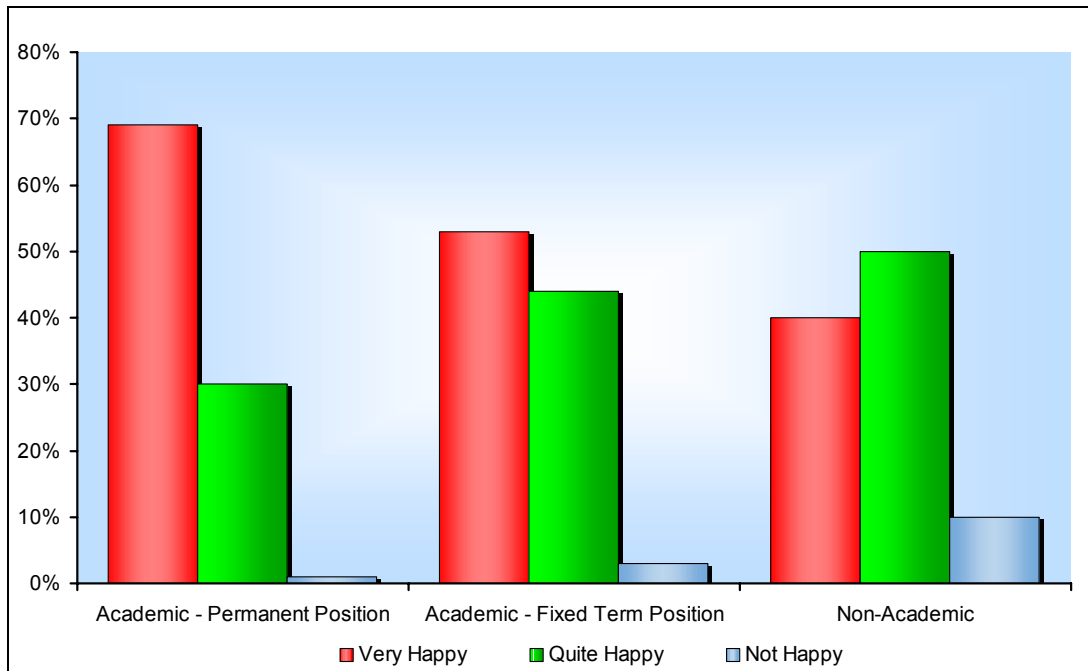


**Base: All working respondents (389), university sector (269), public / independent Sector (68), private sector (27), self-employed (25)**

4.04 As the majority of respondents are employed in the university sector, it is interesting to see how job satisfaction varies across different types of jobs in this sector. Not surprisingly, Figure 4.4 shows:

- Levels of job satisfaction are highest among those with permanent academic positions – 69% are very happy in their current job.
- Not many people employed in fixed term academic positions are unhappy in their job but levels of job satisfaction are lower than for permanent academic staff.
- The majority of respondents employed in other non-academic positions in universities are happy in their jobs, although again levels of job satisfaction are lower than for permanent academic staff.

**Figure 4.4**  
**Job Satisfaction in University Sector**

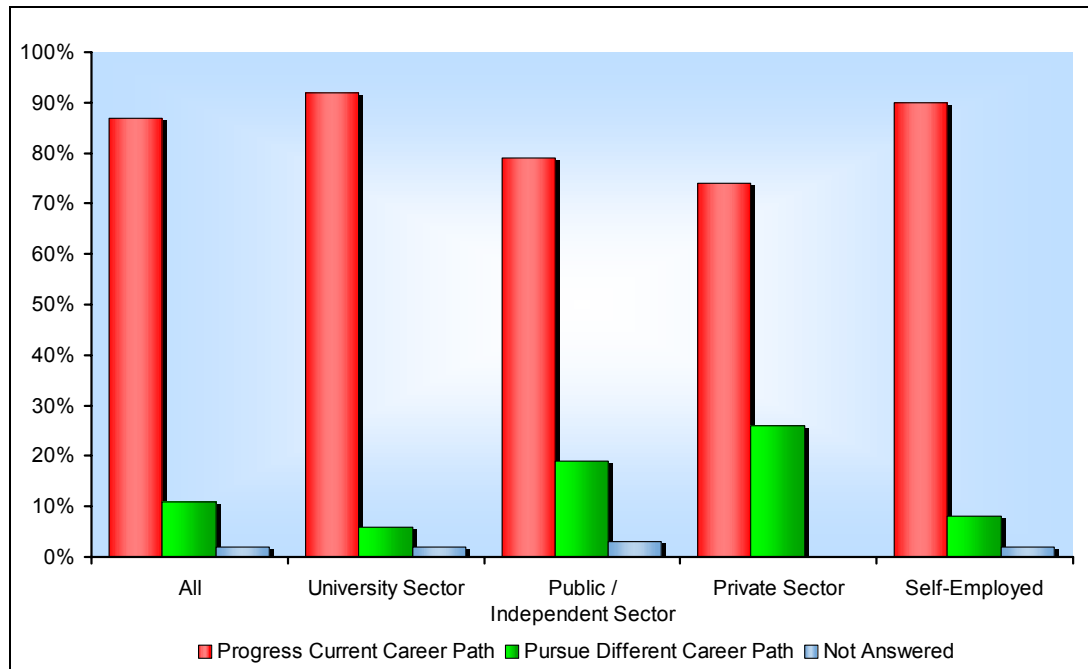


**Base: Permanent academic staff (160), fixed-term academic staff (89), non-academic staff (20)**

**FUTURE CAREER INTENTIONS**

- 4.05 The vast majority of respondents (87%) intend to stay in the same type of career in the future and seek progression or permanent status. The information presented in this report on the career pathways of AHRC funded PhD students 3-6 years after the end of their PhD award is therefore representative of the type of careers most respondents are likely to pursue in the long-term.
  
- 4.06 In the university sector, 92% intend to stay in the same type of career in the future and seek progression or permanent status. This is slightly lower in the private sector (74%) and the public/independent sector (79%). However, as these sectors employ a relatively small proportion of former PhD students, this does not equate to many people overall who intend to change career in the future.

**Figure 4.5  
 Future Career Intentions**



**Base:** All working respondents (389), university sector (269), public / independent Sector (68), private sector (27), self-employed (25)

4.07 The number of respondents who intend to change career direction in the future is as follows:

- University Sector – 17
- Private Sector – 8
- Public / Independent Sector- 13
- Self Employed - 3

4.08 Respondents were asked what type of career change they were considering in the future. The responses are varied and due to the relatively small number of respondents intending to make a career change in each sector, it is difficult to discern specific trends.

4.09 In the university sector, the majority of respondents intending to make a career change are currently employed in fixed term academic positions. It is apparent that a number of these respondents do not really wish to move from the sector but feel there is a lack of opportunity to secure good long-term jobs. In some cases, they do not intend to pursue a different career path, only to secure permanent status:

*“Depends - very few jobs are available. I would like to stay in academia but cannot afford to wait until something turns up, so if it doesn't I will have to re-think.”*

*“I wish to research and write as well as teach which I manage to some degree now. Ideally I would like a permanent full-time position and I have applied for many teaching posts and research fellowships with no success. The problem is that I am in my late forties and the chance of gaining a permanent position in a university department is virtually nil. There are so few jobs and they tend to go to young people at the beginning of their academic careers. There is discrimination on the basis of age in academia. I have experienced it.”*

*“When this fellowship ends I want a permanent position not another contract and I will have to look outside higher education for this - though hopefully in a related field.”*

*“I enjoy research but, once the tenure of my research position comes to an end, I am not sure I want it to be converted to a teaching post - will probably be a free-lance writer.”*

*“I really don't know if it will be possible for me to find a permanent post as there are very few positions and it is very competitive. I can't afford to continue part-time for much longer, but will keep trying for the moment as I want to work as a lecturer in a university.”*

*“Because my current post is fixed term, and because there are a very small number of teaching and research jobs in my area; I anticipate that I will need to retrain for another career path”*

*“A different career in so far as I'm looking for a permanent university position”*

4.10 Some permanent university staff would like more time to pursue research specifically.

*“I would like to resume my research interests with a suitable institution.”*

4.11 In the public / independent sector, the respondents who would like to make a career change tend to be the minority who are currently employed in non-professional jobs such as administration. Also a number of school staff fall into this category. Although some respondents would like to re-direct their career back to academia, this is by no means the case for all the respondents in this category. A selection of responses are as follows:

*“Teaching in secondary school/higher education or further education.” (administrator)*

*“Intend to develop my career as a poet, art organiser & possibly broadcaster. This job is just to support myself, not a career.” (administrator)*

*“Intend to move into educational policy, through further qualifications, rather than seeking promotion within teaching environment.” (school teacher)*

*“I intend to get back into academic research as soon as my children are a bit older (currently aged 3 and 1).” (school teacher)*

*“In my spare time, I write papers for publication. So far 37 have appeared in print. All relate in some way to library and information science. I would love to make a career of this type of work.” (study centre assistant in school)*

*“Freelance writing.” (school teacher).*

4.12 In the private sector, the respondents who would like to make a career change tend to be again the minority who are not employed in professional positions:

*“I would like an academic career in musicology. I had my son prior to completing my PhD, and so put pursuing an academic career on hold until such time as I could make reasonable headway with it, which is about no. Although I still need to earn so I'm sure it will take a while since I'll be doing both - plus domestic stuff too.” (Administration in property company)*

*“I only submitted my thesis two weeks ago. I am currently exploring the various options. If I pass, I would consider an academic career, freelance writing, or work in the publishing industry, among other areas”.* (Customer adviser in energy company)

*“I hope to pursue a career in academia although I am far from confident. I have no idea what else I might do.”* (Retail assistant)

#### **MIGRATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

- 4.13 It is interesting to analyse the geographical spread of postgraduate students, especially a number of years after the end of PhD awards. This analysis is based on both PhD and Professional Preparation Masters students funded by the AHRC between 1997 and 2001, since sample sizes are too small for reliable analysis of PhD students only.
- 4.14 All respondents were asked to provide information on where they studied for their postgraduate degree and where they live now. It is known that 13% of respondents who held PhD awards between 1997-2000 and 6% of respondents who held Professional Preparation Masters awards between 1998-2001 now live outside the UK. That leaves 522 respondents who continue to live in the UK. A key issue is whether they have remained in the same region where they studied or whether they have they moved to other parts of the country and if so, which areas?
- 4.15 418 respondents who continue to live in the UK provided information on where they live now (80%). DTZ has grouped the 28 universities where respondents studied into 17 main locations. For example, all the universities in London are grouped together and analysed as one location<sup>1</sup>. Table 3.1 shows the total number of respondents that attended university in each location – and the region in which they live now.
- 4.16 Overall, 41% of AHRC postgraduate students continue to live in the region in which they studied. This rises to 49% for postgraduate students who studied in London and the South East region. It falls to 33% for postgraduate students who studied outside London and the South East region.
- 4.17 Some of the key findings are as follows:
- London is an important centre for AHRC postgraduate awards. The survey data shows that around 55% of postgraduate students who study in London continue to live and work in London. A further 20% live in the South East region – possibly also commuting to London.
  - Cambridge is another important centre for AHRC postgraduate awards. The survey data shows there is a wider geographical spread of students. 28% continue to live in the East of England, many around the Cambridge area. London and the South East attract 25% and 10% of postgraduate students respectively.
  - 45% of postgraduate students at Oxford continue to live in the South East region. Again, around 25% move to London.
  - The survey findings for locations outside London and the South East are based on relatively small samples. However, they indicate that typically about a third of

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<sup>1</sup> All the other locations relate to a specific university with the exception of Newcastle where Newcastle University and Northumbria University were amalgamated into one location.

postgraduate students remain in the region in which they undertook their studies. Only locations where there is data for ten or more respondents are highlighted below:

- **Aberystwyth** – 33% continue to live in Wales
- **Birmingham** – 38% continue to live in the West Midlands (56% live in the Midlands as a whole)
- **Durham / Newcastle** – 38% continue to live in the North East (50% live in Northern England as a whole<sup>2</sup>)
- **Liverpool** – 20% continue to live in the North West (30% live in Northern England as a whole)
- **Loughborough** – 26% continue to live in the East Midlands (nearly 50% live in the Midlands as a whole)
- **Manchester** – 44% continue to live in the North West (56% live in Northern England as a whole)
- **Sheffield** – 30% continue to live in the Yorkshire / Humber Region (this is the same for Northern England as a whole)
- **Warwick** – 33% continue to live in the West Midlands (this is the same for the Midlands as a whole).

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<sup>2</sup> Includes, North West, North East and Yorkshire & Humber

**Table 3.1**  
**Regional Spread of AHRC Postgraduate Students: Analysis by University City/Town where Postgraduate Degree was Undertaken**

Region of Residence	Aberystwyth	Birmingham	Brighton	Bristol	Cambridge	Durham
East Midlands		3		1	2	1
East of England	2	1	1		16	1
London	3	1	3	1	15	2
North East						3
North West	2		1		4	
Scotland					4	1
South East	3	3	4		6	3
South West	3	2		5	2	
Wales	8		1		3	
West Midlands	2	6	2		2	
Yorkshire and The Humber	1				4	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>12</b>

Region of Residence	Edinburgh	Exeter	Leeds	Liverpool	London	Loughborough
East Midlands				1	3	4
East of England	1		1	1	7	
London	3	1	1		61	2
North East		1				
North West				2	6	5
Scotland	1	1		1		
South East				1	24	
South West		4			6	1
Wales					2	
West Midlands			1	3	4	3
Yorkshire and The Humber			4	1	2	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>15</b>

Region of Residence	Manchester	Newcastle	Norwich	Oxford	Sheffield	Warwick	<b>Grand Total</b>
East Midlands					2		<b>17</b>
East of England		1	2	3	2		<b>39</b>
London	3	2	4	11	3	2	<b>118</b>
North East		10		4			<b>18</b>
North West	7	2		3			<b>32</b>
Scotland	1	1				2	<b>12</b>
South East	1	3	2	22	2	2	<b>76</b>
South West	1	2		2	3	1	<b>32</b>
Wales	1			1		1	<b>17</b>
West Midlands					2	5	<b>30</b>
Yorkshire and The Humber	2	1		3	6	2	<b>27</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>418</b>

4.18 Finally, Table 3.2 provides an overview of where the UK-based postgraduates who participated in this study live up to 6 years after the end of their postgraduate award. It shows that around 50% are living in London and the South East but it should be stressed that:

- This is based on data for 28 universities – the AHRC funds postgraduate awards in many more universities
- The 28 universities were not selected to be representative of the exact geographical spread of AHRC awards. However, these universities account for a large proportion of AHRC postgraduate awards and so it is likely that the geographical spread of all AHRC postgraduate students up to 6 years after the end of postgraduate awards, does not differ substantially from the survey findings shown below in Table 3.2.

<b>Table 3.2 Geographical Spread of AHRC Postgraduate Students Up to Six Years After the End of Postgraduate Awards: Regional Analysis</b>		
<b>Current Region of Residence</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
East Midlands	17	4
East of England	39	9
London	118	28
North East	18	4
North West	32	8
Scotland	12	3
South East	76	18
South West	32	8
Wales	17	4
West Midlands	30	8
Yorkshire and the Humber	27	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>100</b>

## 5 JOB HISTORY

5.01 It is interesting to consider the types of jobs respondents had before taking-up their current position.

5.02 The majority of respondents are now employed in:

- Permanent academic positions (lecturer, senior lecturer)
- Fixed term academic positions (fixed-term lecturers, research fellows, and post-doctoral research assistants).

5.03 In order to get an overview of the way in which respondents progressed to these positions, a small random sample of respondents who are now employed in permanent academic positions and in fixed term academic positions were selected. Information on their job history was compiled and the findings are shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below.

<b>Table 5.1 Career History for Respondents Employed in Permanent Academic Positions</b>		
<b>Respondent 1</b>	<b>Respondent 2</b>	<b>Respondent 3</b>
Sept 2003 - June 2004 Hourly Paid University Lecturer (10 months)  2004 – Current Senior Lecturer	Sept 2001 – Jan 2002 Temporary Lecturer (5 months)  Feb 2002 – August 2002 Hourly Paid A Level and Undergraduate Teaching (7 months)  Sept 2002 – August 2004 Lecturer (2 years)  Sept 2004 – Current Senior Lecturer	Sept 2000 – Aug 2001 Lecturer (1 year)  Sept 2001 – Current Senior Lecturer
<b>Respondent 4</b>	<b>Respondent 5</b>	<b>Respondent 6</b>
Sept 2000 – Apr 2004 Lecturer (4 years)  Apr 2004 – Current Lecturer	Sept 2001 – Sept 2002 Junior Research Fellow – Cambridge (1 year)  Sept 2002 – Current Lecturer	Sept 2000 – Sept 2002 Junior Research Fellow – Cambridge (2 years)  Sept 2002 – Current Lecturer
<b>Respondent 7</b>	<b>Respondent 8</b>	<b>Respondent 9</b>
Oct 2003 – June 2005 Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship (2 years)  July 2005 – Current Lecturer	Oct 2003 – June 2004 Lecturer (9 months)  July 2004 – Current Lecturer	Sept 2002 – Sept 2003 University Tutor (1 year)  Oct 2003 – Sept 2005 Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship (2 years)  Sept 2005 – July 2006 Associate Lecturer (10 months)  August 2006 – Current Lecturer

- 5.04 All the respondents in Table 5.1 began their career in academia and have worked continuously in academia. Some went straight into lecturer posts. However, a more typical career path is to undertake a research fellowship or to undertake some temporary academic jobs before securing a permanent academic position.
- 5.05 Table 5.2 shows the job history of a small random sample of respondents who are currently employed in fixed term academic positions.

<b>Table 5.2 Career History for Respondents Employed in Fixed Term Academic Positions</b>		
<p><b>Respondent 1</b></p> <p>Oct 2002 – Sept 2004 Junior Research Fellow – Cambridge (2 years)</p> <p>Oct 2004 – Current 3 year university lectureship and 5 year college lectureship</p>	<p><b>Respondent 2</b></p> <p>Oct 2003 – Sept 2005 Research Fellow (2 years)</p> <p>Oct 2005 – Current Fixed Term Lecturer</p>	<p><b>Respondent 3</b></p> <p>From End of PhD Temporary jobs in admin and numerable teaching stints in academia</p> <p>Currently Fixed Term Tutor / Lecturer</p>
<p><b>Respondent 4</b></p> <p>October 2003 – Oct 2007 Research Fellow – Oxford (4 years)</p>	<p><b>Respondent 5</b></p> <p>October 2002 – Sept 2006 Junior Research Fellow – Cambridge (4 years)</p>	<p><b>Respondent 6</b></p> <p>Sept 2001 – July 2006 Temporary Lecturer</p> <p>2006 – Current Sessional Lecturer</p>
<p><b>Respondent 7</b></p> <p>Sept 2002 – Aug 2003 Pastoral Assistant</p> <p>Sept 2003 – Aug 2004 Teaching Fellow</p> <p>Aug 2004 – Feb 2006 Community Centre Caretaker</p> <p>2006 – Current Post-Doctoral Researcher</p>	<p><b>Respondent 8</b></p> <p>Sept 2003 – Oct 2004 Lecturer (1 year)</p> <p>Oct 2004 – Sept 2005 Lecturer (1 year)</p> <p>Oct 2005 – Current Post-Doctoral Researcher</p>	<p><b>Respondent 9</b></p> <p>June 2003 – Sept 2006 Publications Officer (at cultural organisation) – 3 years</p> <p>Sept 2006 – Current Government of Ireland Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship</p>

- 5.06 There does not seem to be a typical career path for respondents employed in fixed term academic positions. Many respondents in this category are probably on a career path to eventual permanent academic positions. For example, some respondents are still on their first research fellowship because these can run for 4+ years at Oxford and Cambridge. It is likely they will progress to good academic positions in the future.
- 5.07 Respondents in this category seem to have entered the jobs market a little later than those currently employed in permanent academic positions. This could explain why they are in fixed-term lecturing positions – as these have become more prevalent in recent years.

5.08 Sample sizes are too small for any meaningful analysis of job history for other occupations. However, Tables 5.3 and 5.4 provide some information for respondents now employed in schools and in government / independent organisations (among the most popular employment destinations for AHRC PhD students outside academia).

<b>Table 5.3 Career History for Respondents Employed As School Teachers</b>		
<b>Respondent 1</b>	<b>Respondent 2</b>	<b>Respondent 3</b>
Sept 2003 – June 2004 PGCE (1 year)	Jan 2002 – July 2005 Administrator (3 years)	Nov 2001 – July 2003 Publishing Assistant (20 months)
2004 – Current History Teacher	Sept 2005 – Current Teacher (qualified before PhD)	July 2003 – Sept 2004 Sales and Marketing Coordinator (1 year)
		Sept 2004 – June 2005 PGCE (1 year)
		Sept 2005 – Current English Teacher

<b>Table 5.4 Career History for Respondents Employed in Government / Independent Organisations</b>		
<b>Respondent 1</b>	<b>Respondent 2</b>	<b>Respondent 3</b>
Feb 2001 – Sept 2005 British Academy (4.5 years)	Oct 2003 – Sept 2006 RCUK Fellow (3 years)	March 2001 – July 2001 Consultancy (5 months)
Oct 2005 – Current The Royal Society	Oct 2006 – Current Department for Employment and Skills – Policy Officer	July 2001 – May 2002 Temporary Work
		June 2002 - Current Civil Service

5.09 There is no typical career path for respondents who work outside academia, but it is noticeable that most have never had an academic job. Perhaps they decided that they did not want an academic career from the start or if you do not find an academic job early in your career, it becomes difficult to get back into academia (either because you lose touch with your subject or you get to like the job you are doing and do not want to return).

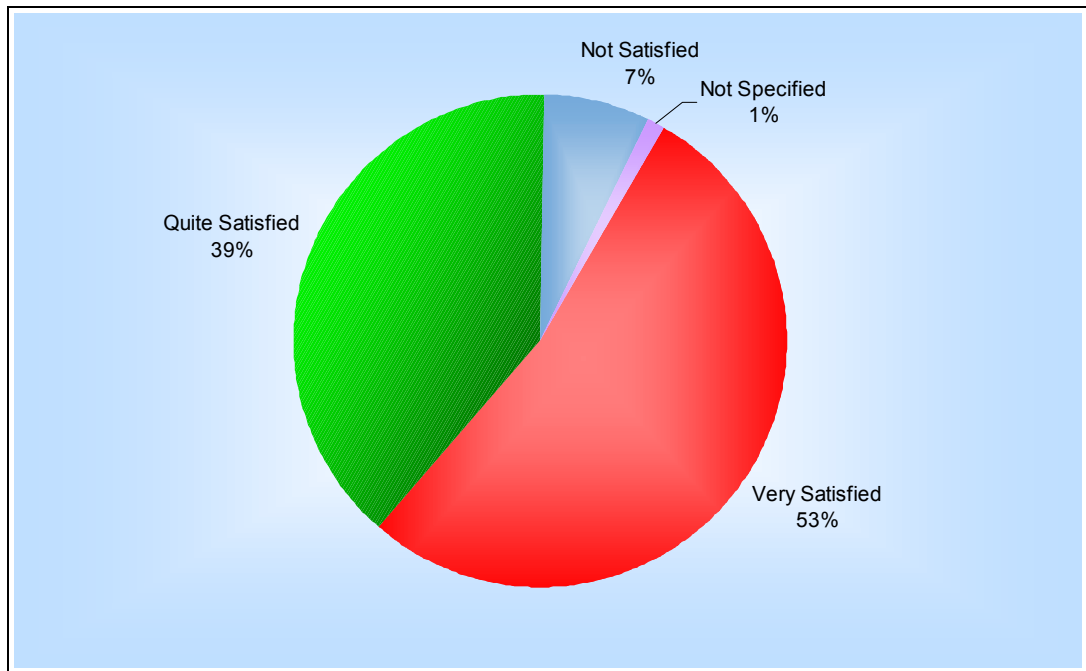
5.10 In relation specifically to teaching, it seems some respondents decide from the start that this is what they want to do whereas others move into it after stints in other jobs.

## 6 VALUE OF PHD TRAINING

### SATISFACTION WITH PHD TRAINING

- 6.01 The majority of respondents are very satisfied or quite satisfied with the quality of PhD training they received. There are a minority of respondents who did not have a happy PhD experience, many of whom are people who ended up not submitting their research.

**Figure 6.1**  
**Satisfaction with PhD Training**



**Base: All respondents (413)**

- 6.02 Respondents provided further information on their PhD experience and suggested ways in which it could have been improved. The comments are wide ranging but some themes emerge:

- The satisfaction many respondents obtained from undertaking a PhD and in some cases, the way that it completely changed their life.

*“Taking a PhD gave me the confidence I needed to make a career change, from a career I had drifted into - to one I really wanted to do. It taught me much about myself and my capabilities. I would never have gone on to become an independent scholar nor become self-employed without this experience. It opened many doors for me - some of which were in my own mind.”*

*“The PhD helped me develop as a personality - and taught me a lot about being an art historian. It is one of the best things I ever did.”*

- The importance of the supervisor to the quality of the PhD experience. Some respondents recommend that there should always be more than one supervisor because it is too risky to depend only on one person.

*"I was very satisfied, but that is down to the personality of my PhD supervisor. I am aware that I was very lucky to have such a supportive (and actively involved) supervisor - many friends did not. The recent emphasis on best practice in graduate education are very welcome, but they still won't reach those old-fashioned supervisors who think they know best."*

*"There was some training in practical skills, computing, oral presentation, on offer by the department, which was marginally useful. The problem is the more permanent research training - critical thinking, interpretation can only be taught by a supervisor and they can often be absent/busy/plain uninterested."*

*"I think that the quality of training depends solely on the allocated supervisor. In my case I had a reasonable supervisor followed by an excellent supervisor. I do think that the AHRC needs to offer a more rigid set of guidelines to supervisors indicating exactly what is expected of them i.e a rigid timetable of consultations etc. In the case of a very good supervisor this occurs naturally, but it would help in cases where supervisors are inexperienced or unwilling to devote their time."*

*"Much depended on the supervisor. St Andrews currently takes joint supervision of PhD students very strictly & I think that often works well, and solves some of the problem."*

- The fact that there is now more formal research and skills training than there was at the time when many respondents undertook their PhD.

*"When I did my PhD there was no skills training at all - just 3 years of isolated research. Skills training on methodologies, conference presentations, submitting work for publication & networking would have been useful."*

- The need for more career guidance and planning both for careers outside, *and within*, academia (although this might also be better organised now).

*"The research training was excellent. Career guidance into academic posts was totally lacking however; not covered by the university careers service at all, and individual members of academic staff do not have time to help and advise."*

*"Generally, it prepared me to begin my PhD & to do preliminary research; actually doing a PhD is the best training you can get! There was very little professional training given during the PhD to prepare future lecturers/researchers - we learned most from watching the mistakes of more senior people. The job search process wasn't addressed at all, nor any subsequent procedures involved in getting a job & this would have been useful."*

*"There is very little awareness among older members of the profession about the difficulty postdoctoral students have in obtaining academic jobs in a career which requires a book in order even to be interviewed for some positions. More realistic help could be given to postgraduates to ensure they are aware of all the options available to them."*

- Related to the above point, the need for opportunities to acquire experience that will help to secure a job later, particularly in academia. For example, the opportunity during a PhD to teach, make presentations, attend conferences.

*“Would have been lost without the training I received at MA level. Don't feel I got enough support in making contacts, getting published etc, vital skills post-PhD.”*

*“I realise that skills training has improved since I took my PhD. One thing does strike me: the teacher training, that many new lecturers have to do comes at a very bad time, when there are many other demands on time, and would be more useful if available (optionally) to PhD students, at least in some form.”*

- The value of the research process itself in terms of skills development. Formal training courses can enhance the PhD experience but the research process itself is the most important training provided through a PhD.

*“I received no formal training, but my supervisor was excellent at providing the right kind of evidence. PhD training needs to be very closely focused to needs of individuals.”*

*“Don't agree with the skills-based training model of PHD study - enjoyed the intellectual freedom of PhD study and too much emphasis on formal skills training might have put me off doing a PhD.”*

6.03 A full list of respondent comments is provided in Appendix 6.

#### **VALUE OF PHD TO CURRENT JOB**

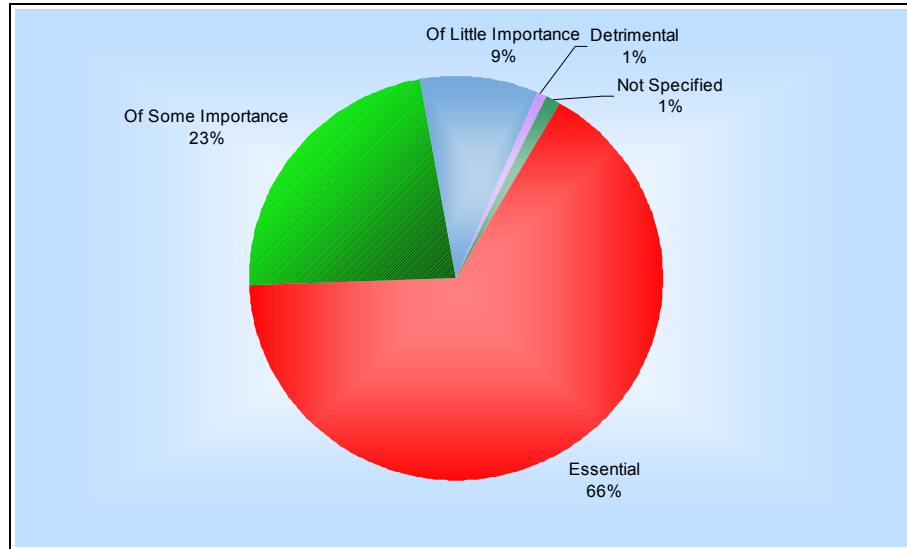
6.04 Respondents were asked about the value of their PhD training in terms of how it had contributed to the development of their career to date:

- Essential – a PhD is generally required for my job / career
- Of Some Importance – a PhD is not a general requirement for this job / career but it helped to get into this job / career and/or progress more quickly than I would otherwise have done.
- Of Little Importance – a PhD is of no material significance in this job / career
- Detrimental – a PhD has reduced my employability.

6.05 Most respondents believe their PhD has had a positive impact on their career development as shown in Figure 6.2.

6.06 Figure 6.2 includes respondents who are not working currently. It is relevant to include these respondents in the analysis because most are probably taking only a short break from the labour market.

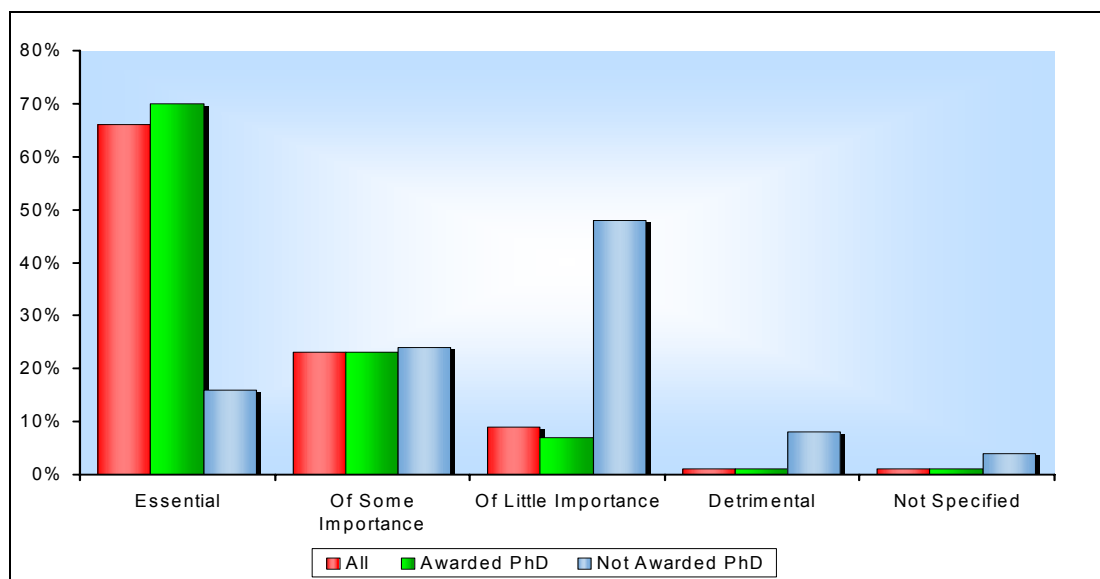
**Figure 6.2**  
**Value of PhD to Individual Career Development**



Base: All respondents (413)

6.07 Figure 6.2 includes respondents who have not been awarded a PhD. It is relevant to include these respondents in the analysis because although they were not awarded a PhD, they all spent time undertaking PhD research and going through the training process. However, it is to be expected that PhD training would play a greater role in the career development of individuals who were awarded a doctorate compared to those who were not awarded a doctorate. This is shown in Figure 6.3.

**Figure 6.3**  
**Value of PhD to Individual Career Development:**  
**Analysis of Respondents With and Without a PhD Qualification**

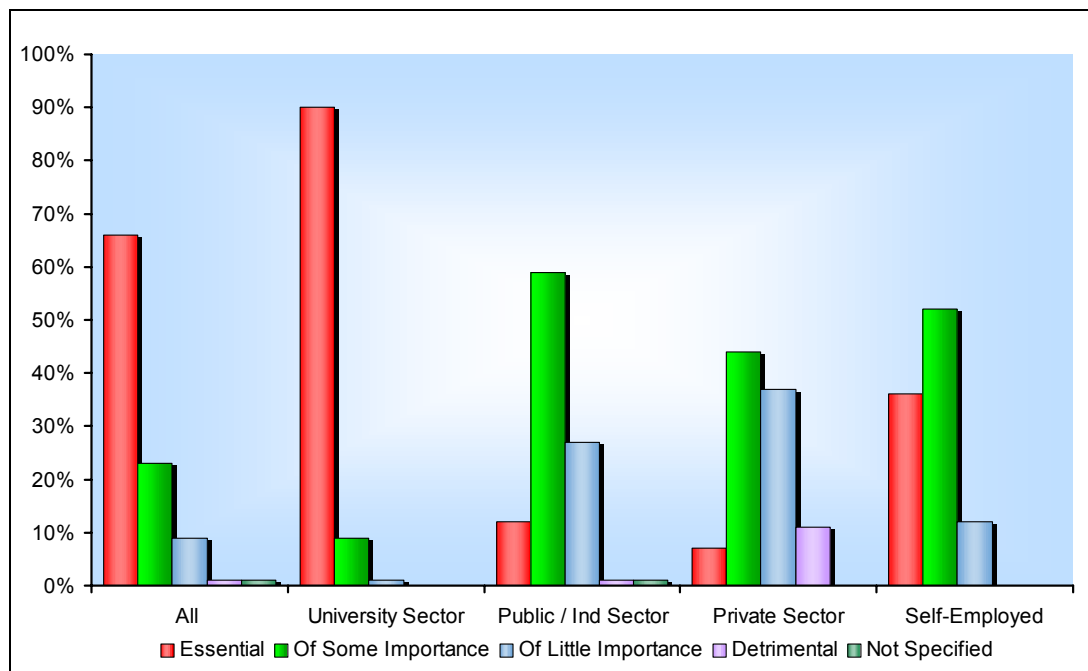


Base: All respondents (413), respondents awarded PhD (387), respondents not awarded PhD (25).

6.08 Figure 6.3 shows there is variation in the value of a PhD to individual career development depending on the sector in which individuals are employed:

- 90% of those employed in the university sector say a PhD is essential for their job. It is of some importance for most of the remaining respondents in this category who are mainly individuals employed in non-academic jobs in universities.
- In the private sector, only two respondents say a PhD is essential for their job / career. Approximately half the remaining respondents consider a PhD has been of some importance to their career but the other half consider it has been of little importance. Respondents employed in the creative industries sector are more likely to attach importance to their PhD than respondents employed in the business services sector.
- In the public / independent sector, 12% of respondents say a PhD is essential for their job / career. 59% say a PhD has been of some importance to career development but 27% consider it has been of little importance. Respondents employed in cultural organisations such as museums and galleries and also in schools are more likely to attach importance to their PhD than respondents employed in other types of organisation in this sector.
- Among the self-employed, a high proportion regard a PhD as being either essential or of some importance for career development. This reflects the type of work being undertaken by self-employed respondents much of which relates closely to the arts and humanities.

**Figure 6.3  
Value of PhD to Individual Career Development: Sectoral Analysis**

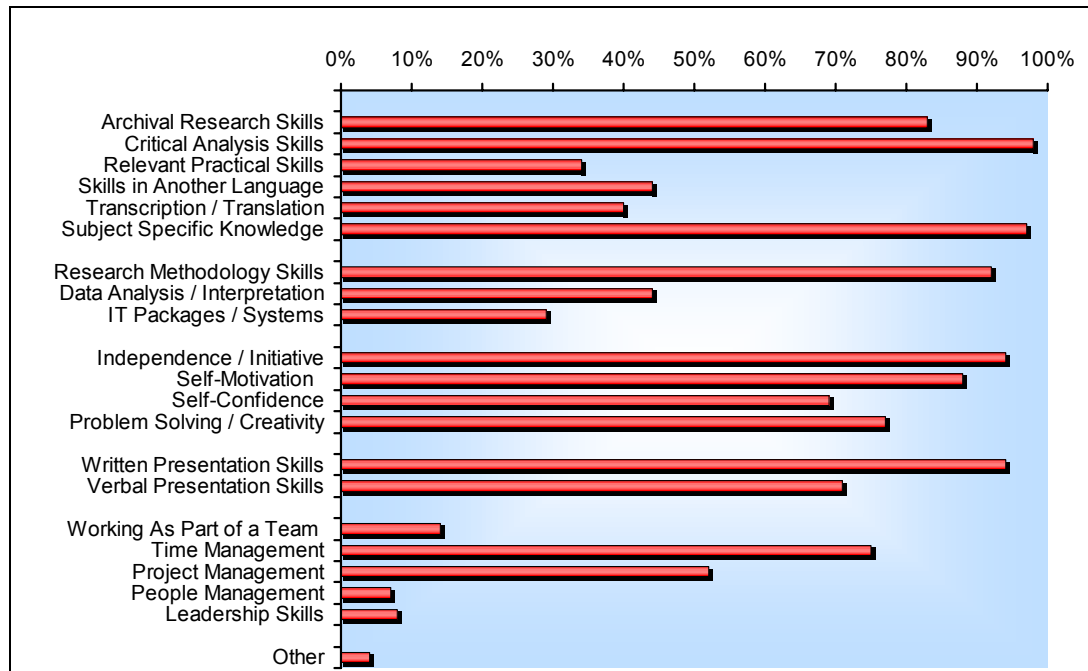


**Base: All respondents (413), university sector (269), public / independent sector (68), private sector (27), self employed (25).**

**SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH PHD**

6.09 Respondents were asked to provide information on skills acquired through their PhD. The findings are shown in Figure 6.4.

**Figure 6.4**  
**Skills Acquired Through PhD**



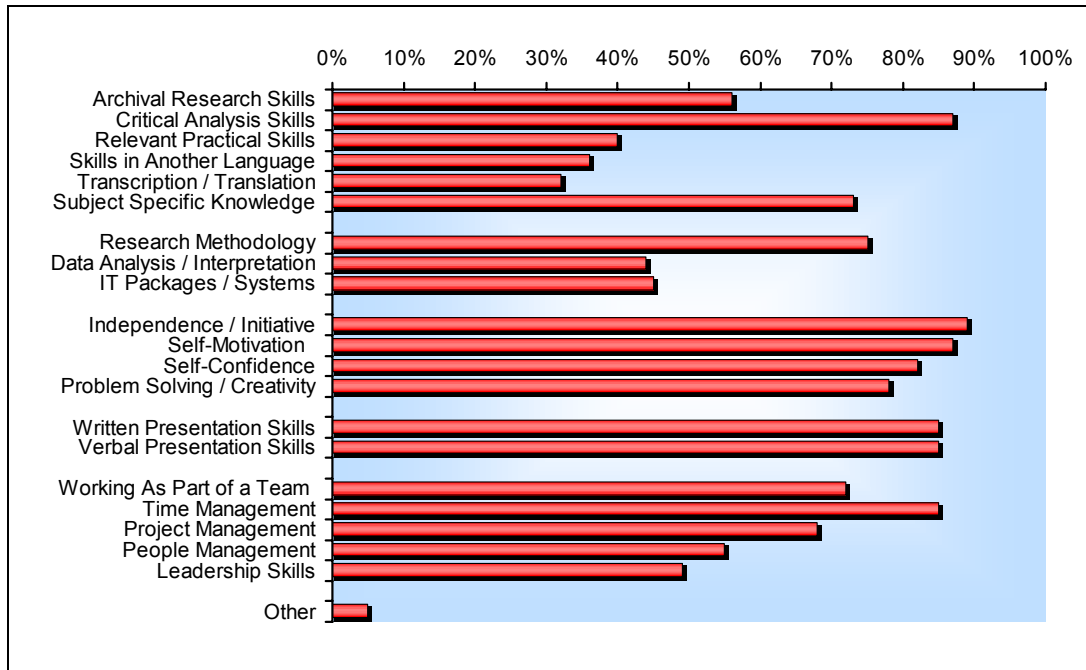
**Base: 413 respondents**

6.10 The main types of skills acquired through a PhD (mentioned by more than 50% of respondents) were:

- Subject specific knowledge
- Archival research skills
- Critical analysis skills
- Research methodology skills
- Personal skills (such as self-motivation, personal initiative, self-confidence, problem-solving)
- Presentation skills (written and verbal)
- Time management, project management.

6.11 Respondents were then asked about the skills required for their current job to identify the extent to which there are significant differences in the skills acquired by respondents through a PhD and the skills used by respondents in their work. The survey findings are shown in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5**  
**Main Skills Used in Current Job**



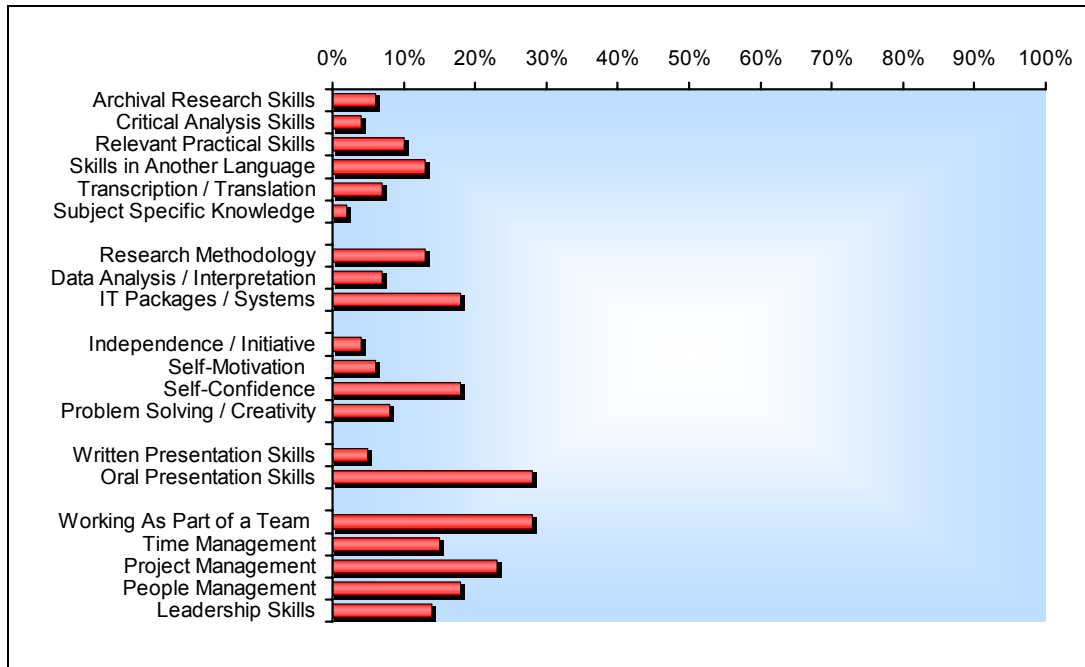
**Base: 413 respondents**

6.12 Key points are:

- The main types of skills that respondents use in their current job (mentioned by more than 50% of respondents) are:
  - Subject specific knowledge
  - Archival research skills
  - Critical analysis skills
  - Research methodology skills
  - Personal skills
  - Presentation skills
  - Management skills (working as a part of a team, time management, project management and people management).
- There is a close match between the skills respondents use in their day-to-day work and the skills acquired through their PhD. The one exception is in relation to people skills (for example working as part of a team). This is not something that can be incorporated easily into PhD research but students could be encouraged to find other ways of gaining this type of experience.

6.13 Finally, respondents were asked what skills / competencies should have been given greater emphasis to prepare them for work. The findings are shown in Figure 6.6.

**Figure 6.6**  
**More Emphasis on These Skills / Competencies**  
**During PhD As Preparation for Work**



**Base: 413 respondents**

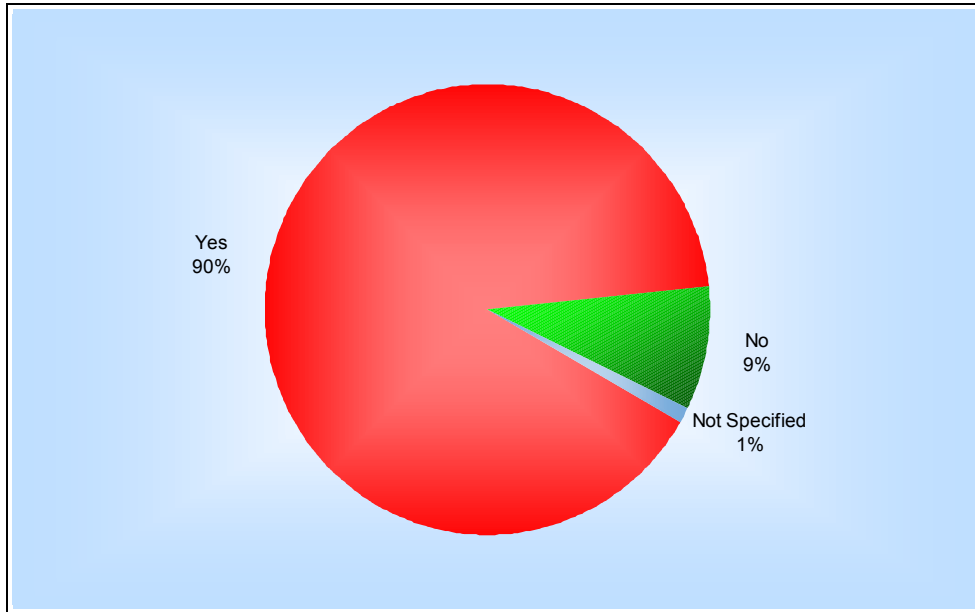
6.14 Overall, respondents seem to be quite happy that their PhD training has prepared them well for work. The proportion of respondents highlighting different skills which could have been given more emphasis during their PhD to prepare them for work is relatively small. The main skill areas that are highlighted are:

- Verbal presentation skills – this is an area where perhaps more opportunities could be provided during a PhD.
- People / management skills – may be difficult to incorporate into a PhD but students could be encouraged to get relevant experience from other activities.
- Self-confidence – suggests many students lack confidence at times during their PhD. Could possibly be addressed through better mentoring / communication channels for PhD students.
- IT packages / systems – very relevant in a work environment.

**WHETHER RESPONDENTS WOULD UNDERTAKE A PHD AGAIN?**

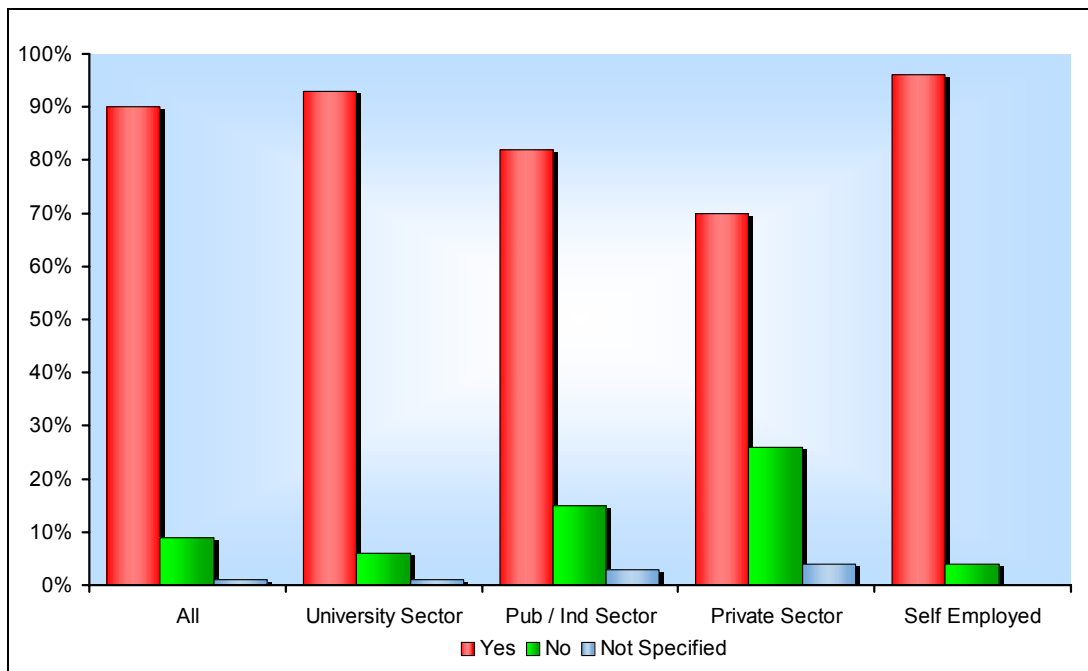
6.15 Finally, respondents were asked whether, in hindsight, they would undertake a PhD again. It is testament to the AHRB PhD programme that the majority of respondents would undertake a PhD again although there is some variation in response across the sectors in which respondents are now employed (see Figures 6.7 and 6.8).

**Figure 6.7**  
**Whether Respondent Would Undertake A PhD Again?**



Base: 413 respondents

**Figure 6.8**  
**Whether Respondent Would Undertake A PhD Again?**  
**Sectoral Analysis**



Base: 413 respondents