How to use The Versatile PhD

The Versatile PhD is a website that can help you start the process of finding an alternative-academic (alt-ac) or non-academic career. The site is filled with useful advice and a community of supportive people who are transitioning or have already successfully transitioned into a new career. Nothing you post on the site will show up on the internet, so you can confidently ask questions about your future career. This site is useful for ALL students in graduate school. The resources are valuable for master's and doctoral students, as well as post-docs, thinking about their future.

This guide is designed to help you navigate the site and access all the valuable resources that are available on The Versatile PhD. Below are some common terms that you will see throughout the document.

**PhD Career Finder** - The PhD Career Finder will introduce you to many careers where PhD's and ABD's have found employment. This is the best place to start if you are unsure of how to begin your job search. Here you can learn if a specific career fits with your interests and how to prepare yourself to excel in this career.

**Panel Discussion** - A panel discussion is a specially advertised event that features PhD's and ABD's employed in a specific field. Panels are text-based, asynchronous discussions rather than live-streaming or video based, therefore easier to take advantage of at your own convenience. Panelists will introduce themselves on the forum at the beginning of the week and The Versatile PhD community will ask questions throughout the week. This is a great way to get expert advice on how to find a career in that field, in addition to just learning more about various occupations. The panel will be advertised through The Versatile PhD blog as well as in an email from the Office of Graduate Studies. Directions on how to participate are located on pages 4 and 5.
Logging on to The Versatile PhD for the first time:
Graduate students and faculty at UT Arlington have free access to the premium resources on The Versatile PhD. In order to access the premium content, you must first authenticate yourself through the Office of Graduate Studies website. This will give you the privileges associated with UT Arlington membership.

You will need your NetID and password to authenticate yourself. Visit vphd.info/UTA_go in order to be taken to the page seen here.

After authentication, you will be taken to The Versatile PhD page where you can create a member account.

On the “Get Started” page it will give you a success message, letting you know you now have all the privileges associated with UT Arlington.
The best place to get started is the PhD Career Finder. Here you can explore various occupations in-depth to see if you are interested in pursuing them further.

1. Click on the PhD Career Finder to access the page that is displayed here.

2. Select an area that interests you to learn more about that field.
Once you have selected a career that interests you, it will take you to a page that looks like the example shown here. This page will offer more in-depth information about the career. Read each of the instructional boxes in numerical order for the best way to access this page.

1. This is a great place to begin your career search. This area includes a brief description of the occupation, in addition to how to start in the field, areas of advancement, what disciplines fit best, and the personality and outlook that best suits this field. If the career area still interests you, then start to dig deeper into the website.

2. Once you’ve decided that this career might be interesting, take a look at the “hired” section. Here you will find personal stories from people who switched to alt-ac careers in addition to the resumes from their first alt-ac jobs. Use this section to see which of the skills you already have and how to develop additional skills necessary to excel in this field.

3. The biography section provides more information about people who work in this field. In this section, individuals describe the evolution of their career. This area will help you locate possibilities for advancement in the career.

4. The panel discussion section allows you to really explore the field. These are archived panels where you can search through previously asked questions and answers. This section provides inside information on the field including how to break in, advance, and excel. See the next page for more information.
Clicking on the Forums tab will take you to the Discussion Forum page. Here you can find, or search for, current discussion threads, current panel discussions, and archived panel discussions.

Click on the Humanities Forum or STEM Forum to access the most current discussions threads. In this section, you can ask a question at any time that will be answered by the Versatile PhD community. This is also where you will find active panel discussions. In order to participate in panel discussions, look for discussion threads that begin with the word “Panel.”

Through the UT Arlington membership you have access to ALL past discussion threads. Browse through topics that were discussed in previous panel discussions to learn more about a career field that you are interested in exploring.
Find a thread that interests you and click on the Topic Title to read people's comments and post your own questions or advice to an existing thread.

To start your own thread click on the “Add Topic” button to begin a new thread.

When participating in a panel discussion, start all new posts with the word “Panel,” so the experts can find and respond to your questions.

Find a thread that interests you and click on the Topic Title to read people’s comments and post your own questions or advice to an existing thread.

Easily see the number of posts to a topic, in order to see if someone has posted new information to a thread.

After selecting a Discussion thread or Panel Discussion it will take you to a page like the example shown here. Read the instructional boxes for helpful advice on navigating the Forums tab.
Click on the Blog tab to see the latest news related to Versatile PhD.

The dates of upcoming panel discussions will be posted on the blog. Panel discussions include PhD's and ABD's who are now employed in an alternative-academic career. They will introduce themselves at the beginning of the week and answer your questions for the entirety of the panel. This is a great way to get your questions answered by someone who is already in the career you are interested in pursuing.

The blog also contains helpful advice on how to negotiate your way into a non-academic career.
By clicking on the “Members” tab you can see all the members currently online. You can also search for individuals based upon different characteristics.

If you want to use more detailed search criteria in order to find individuals select “Power Search.”

To search with an exact word/phrase select “Basic Search.” Only profiles that contain the precise word or phrase will be displayed. For example, type in the name of a company and anyone who has that listed on their profile will be displayed.

Once you have located someone who you would like to contact, send them a private message, which is an option available on any VPhD member profile.
Click on the “Jobs” tab to see job postings from members of the Versatile PhD Community. You can also post jobs that you find that would be appropriate for someone with a PhD.

Job postings contain a brief description of the position in addition to the website where you can submit your application.
Additional Information

The Versatile PhD helps make the process of transitioning to an alt-ac career less confusing. Make sure to use all the pieces of the website to help you find, prepare, apply, and obtain a challenging and meaningful career. If you need help navigating the website please contact graduate.studies@uta.edu with your questions.

Don’t forget to check out all the additional workshops that are designed to help you in this process as well.

Visit www.uta.edu/gradstudies and click on EDGE for more information about the Career Advancement Series.