

Professional Pathways after Graduate School

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TOP FIVE TIPS for applying for Agencies & Nonprofits

Dr. Clare Stroud, Program Officer
Institute of Medicine
cstroud@nas.edu
(*PhD in Linguistics, University of Maryland*)

Clare Stroud, Ph.D. is a program officer with the Institute of Medicine, which is the health and medicine branch of the National Academy of Sciences. She currently serves as the director of a project on the health, safety, and well-being of young adults and a project on preparing the health system for disasters. Dr. Stroud first joined the IOM as a Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellow. She received her Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Maryland, with research focused on the cognitive neuroscience of language. During her doctoral program, she spent a year as an intern in the Congressional office of Rahm Emanuel. Dr. Stroud is a member of the Associate Network at AmericaSpeaks, a non-profit organization that seeks to engage citizens in decision making on important public policy issues. She received her bachelor's degree from Queen's University in Canada and spent a year at the University of Salamanca in Spain.

1. Gain experience outside of your academic research, for example, through internships, volunteer positions in the community, and service in your university and/or professional associations.
2. Do informational interviews with a wide range of people whose professional paths seem interesting to you. Use these conversations to learn more about what avenues you might like to pursue further; don't feel you have to figure this out before you go talk to anyone.
3. Start from the end result and work backwards: think first about what your passions are, what outcomes you want to work towards, what skills you most enjoy using, and what kind of environment would be a good fit for you. Don't start by focusing on what you think you are qualified for or what jobs are currently being advertised.
4. Be prepared to discuss how you could contribute to an organization's mission; focus less on your vision for the field and specific research expertise.
5. Think broadly about the subject areas you know about and the skills you have – you know more than you think you do. This not only helps an interviewer identify a good fit between you and the position, but also shows that you are flexible and feel comfortable stretching beyond the specific focus of your dissertation work.

Marc Ruppel, Senior Program Officer
National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Public Programs
mruppel@neh.gov
(*PhD in English, Textual and Digital Studies, University of Maryland*)

Marc Ruppel is a Senior Program Officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Public Programs, where he specializes in digital media. Before joining the Endowment, Marc was a producer on several digital-experiential learning projects, a Communications manager for NASA,

a web developer for MITH, the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, and taught courses in English and Comparative Literature here in College Park.

1. Maintain a digital presence (you should have *at least* a personal website with an updated CV/ dissertation abstract/courses taught) and engage in *multiple* conversations online w/ several different communities (Twitter/blogs/MLA Commons/Google +/LinkedIn). This is the best way to not only get your name out there with those outside of your direct niche, but it's also an opportunity to gain a sense of what's valued skill/research-wise in areas outside of your specialty.
2. Recognize that sometimes what's best for your non-academic/alt-ac career might not feed directly into your dissertation and publication goals. This includes gaining skills that might not transfer (immediately, at least) to your work in academic contexts. Learn about a digital tool, or attend a (free) conference about museum curatorial practices or documentary filmmaking.
3. Make peace with the realities of a non-tenure track future. The bad: this means regular hours, no winter/spring/summer breaks, and different emphasis on publication/research. The good: regular hours, no winter/spring/summer breaks (but rather vacation time/sick leave to be used at your discretion), different emphasis on publication/research (research might be more work-related; promotion might not depend on it, but there are sometimes direct incentives for carrying on a research agenda).
4. Learn how to frame your research in a way that speaks directly to the job you're looking for. This means that the short-form CV won't work-- you'll need descriptions of skills and their applicability rather than lists. And intern-- early and, when possible, often. Most government organizations will jump at the opportunity to work with a budding PhD, without any real restrictions on hours/workloads, etc. What works for you will likely work for them. A word of advice on this, though: don't view your internship as a foot in the door; view it instead as a raincheck, a way to get a perspective on the skills you'll need to find a permanent position down the road.
5. Maintain a digital presence!!! If I was allowed, I'd list this as tips 6-10 as well. It doesn't matter what field you're in or where you're applying: if you're a medievalist who doesn't know of a single colleague with a personal website, then you can be the first. If you assume that the KSAs are substantial enough, think again: most, if not all, hiring committees will conduct a web search immediately after looking at your resume. Make sure that they find more than a Facebook profile or the recipe page of someone with the same name as you.

TOP FIVE TIPS for applying for Community College Jobs

Dr. Cathleen Jeffcoat, Adjunct Music Faculty
Howard Community College and Loyola University
Cjeffcoat@howardcc.edu
(MM and DMA, University of Maryland)

Cathleen Jeffcoat, Ph.D. holds a Bachelor of Music (Western Australian Conservatorium of Music), an Artists' Certificate (Franz Liszt Music Academy), and a Masters of Music and Doctorate of Musical Arts degrees (University of Maryland, College Park).

Dr. Jeffcoat has played with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, the Hungarian Radio and Television Orchestra, Vox Ama Deus Ensemble, Camerata Ama Deus, Bach Consort, Bach Sinfonia and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. In 2003, she gave masterclasses in Melbourne, Australia; in 2004 masterclasses were given at the University of Melbourne, Monash University, as a guest international clinician at the Autumn Suzuki Festival Conference in Melbourne and at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore.

Dr. Jeffcoat has given lecture presentations at the national conferences for American String Teachers Association (ASTA), Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), Australian String Teachers Association (AUSTA) and the Maryland State Music Educators Association conference (MMEA). For 2004-05, Dr. Jeffcoat has been named in Marquis' "Who's Who of America" in recognition of her work in the field of music; for 2007 she was named in Marquis' "Who's Who of Emerging Leaders of the US".

1. Remember your colleagues that you study with will be your colleagues in your profession. Treat them with the same respect as you will when you graduate.
2. Network! Attend conferences, workshops and any events that you can while you are a student. You never know when you will next meet a new acquaintance down the road of your career.
3. Subscribe to College Music Society and any other job posting organizations. Be familiar with when the "job season" most occurs and apply for all positions.
4. Research the organization/University/College that you are applying for and have questions to ask when you are interviewed. This is your chance to learn more about where you have applied, and also shows you are interested in their location by showing your knowledge through questions.
5. When first starting out, accept every offer to teach and/or perform. Through these opportunities, you will make contacts which can lead you to places that you may never have thought possible. It is important to have a specialty, yet also a wide interest in other aspects of music and the arts. Stay current with the latest musical/artistic trends, keep up with technological advancements and be flexible!

TOP FIVE TIPS for applying for Academic and Arts Administration

Stewart Watson, Artist, Curator, Founder and Exhibitions Director for Area 405
stew@jlswatson.com
(MFA in Art, University of Maryland)

Stewart Watson received her BFA from The Pennsylvania State University in 1991, and her MFA from The University of Maryland in May 2010. Watson's work has been featured recently in solo exhibitions at The Contemporary Museum, McDaniel College, Delicious Spectacle, JF Contemporary and in over 80 curated and juried exhibitions throughout the U.S. including WPA Options Biennial 2011, ArtMD 2010, and Radius 250. Reviews of her work have been published in The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, HaHa Magazine, Artful Life Blog, Washington CityPaper, New Art Examiner, and as a featured artist on MPT's *Artworks This Week*.

Watson has received Individual Artist Grants from Maryland State Arts Council in 2011 and 2007, and 2001 and was the winner of the 2010 Sadat Art for Peace Prize. She has been a Finalist and Semifinalist for the Trawick Prize and is currently a Sondheim 2013 Semifinalist. In 2012, she received 2 SNO SCARS for her work in Station North Arts & Entertainment District. Along with creating her own work, she is a curator, a founder of and Director for Area 405 an all-volunteer exhibition space since 2003. Watson lives and works in the Station North with her artist husband, James Vose, their Great Dane, black cat, and 4 year old son, Pulman.

1. Be flexible with scheduling and the hours you are willing to work. An art career is not a 9-5 job and often requires nights, weekends and weekend nights.
2. Be on time to meetings, with phone calls, and with communications (not my best suit, but I try). Being prompt shows respect which is a tip everyone can benefit from.
3. Make an effort to learn about the artists and organizations in your community. Knowing who they are and what they do is important. It also widens your field of reference and can help you find the niche where you fit, or discover a new direction for your career in the arts you hadn't even known about.

4. Volunteer & intern! If you get your foot in the door, you may be just the person that organization or individual they are looking for when they are ready to hire someone. It is beneficial to see volunteering and internships on one's resume/CV for future endeavors. You will also learn a great deal hands-on by working with artists, curators, designers, and such.
5. Be creative!

Paula Nadler, Assistant Director for Students Affairs

College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland

pnadler@umd.edu

(MA in History and PhD in Educational Policy, Planning & Administration, UMD)

Paula Nadler completed her undergraduate degree in history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a MA in communication at Miami University of Ohio, a MA in history and a PhD in Educational Policy, Planning and Administration (focus area: Curriculum Theory and Development) at the University of Maryland. She started her career in student affairs with Academic Achievement Programs as a tutorial coordinator, gained additional experience in Judicial Programs and the Honors Program, completed a doctoral internship with the Study Abroad office and was appointed to the President's Diversity Panel before starting with the College of Arts and Humanities as a senior academic advisor in 2000. In 2011 she was promoted to her current position, with responsibilities for the College's experiential learning initiatives, which include working with students wishing to study abroad, students completing internships for academic credit, and coordinating the Curriculum Integration Project, which offers resident courses in study abroad programs.

1. Be open to new experiences--working with a variety of student populations makes a huge difference in the ability to interview for these positions;
2. Make sure you have a job that grows with you, and with which you can grow;
3. Don't be afraid to try something new or different to gain attention (and attendance) for your programs;
4. Don't be afraid to fail...not every initiative can be successful, but if you never try, none of them will be;
5. Faculty generally appreciate and respect the support and guidance which student affairs professionals can provide--it is not always an "us vs. them" dynamic.

Claudia Rector, Assistant Provost, Academic Affairs, Provost's Office

George Mason University

(PhD in American Studies, University of Maryland)

Claudia Rector began her administrative career at UMCP in the Department of American Studies, and later served as Director of Academic Program Development in the Office of Academic Planning & Programs (Provost's Office). She earned an A.B. from Wellesley College and a Ph.D. from UMCP, both in American Studies.

1. Remember that the humanities are only one part of a university, and that the values, beliefs, prejudices, habits, and cultures of other units may be quite different. In some parts of the university, being part of a corporate culture or making your work useful to the Department of Defense is considered to be a good thing. Most people who go into academia do so because they truly care both about thinking for its own sake and about students, but many units also are under great stress to respond to the business world, and sometimes those things align more easily in other fields than they do in the humanities. Be careful about your assumptions.
2. Likewise, forget how you have learned to write in your graduate program. Spend as much time as necessary to make whatever you write—especially to anybody outside of the humanities—as short as possible. Bullet points are not “cheating.”

3. Learn the tools (Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint) and skills of the business world, and apply them intelligently. There are two good reasons for doing this: first, the business world spends a lot of time thinking about efficient ways to manage and present information, and it's silly to deprive yourself of that; and second, although learned helplessness with regard to technology is sometimes worn as though it were a marker of being engaged with more lofty matters, it's not usually perceived that way by others.
4. Approach your potential workplace as requiring serious anthropological research. Learn to read budgets. Read the major public documents (and learn how to read between the lines) for any institution in which you are employed or interested in becoming employed. Documents such as strategic plans or annual reports have usually been reviewed and edited to be as slick as the shiny paper that they're printed on, but they can still reveal a good deal of important information, especially in the budget figures or organization charts. Look past the superficial message; think hard about what is *not* being said, and if possible compare these documents with those from other institutions.
5. Working in administration without tenure has trade-offs; you will need to make peace with them if you want to be happy. On the up side: you may be able to start with (and continue to enjoy) a salary considerably higher than your peers with teaching jobs; you won't have to go through the miseries and anxieties of the tenure process; and with care you can make yourself almost as layoff-proof as those with tenure (and in some cases, even more so). On the down side: it's much harder to keep a research agenda going than you think it will be; you will probably spend the majority of your time doing work that is not quite as much fun as research in your chosen field; and you will forever exist on the wrong side of a rigid and thriving faculty/staff caste system. There are a lot of ways in which working in administration can bruise your ego, and it's really worth some time thinking about how you're going to deal with these things when they come up.

General Application Tips

- Make it very clear you would work in the position. Be transparent! (not only about what you know, your special expertise in your field, but specifically how you can USE your knowledge in that particular job.
- Write simply, be direct, even dull. Do not be concerned with "impressive" writing
- With KSAs, there is no need to show how well you write – simply address specifically what they are looking for.
- Literally look at the application listing and directly answer each qualification. Do not be afraid to use the exact verbiage from the listing.
- Look for non-academic jobs in the same place as academic job listings.
- Be prepared for anything. Be open to the possibility of getting a non-academic position, even if it is not something you were considering originally.
- Do not say no! Take every opportunity that comes your way within your field.
- Do internships. These create experience, and most importantly, networks that will be very valuable to you when job hunting.
- Expand your computer/technical skills.
- TRY, TRY AGAIN! - Many of the non-academic positions are extremely coveted, just like academic jobs. So, do not give up. KEEP TRYING!
- BE PATIENT! The application process for government jobs takes a very long time and goes through many people.
- There is no seasonality to when govt. positions are open. Often, positions only become open when someone retires.
- Watch news to see what is happening in govt. climate to prepare for possible increases in activity or budget of a particular dept. This will often result in a hiring phase.

What are KSAs?

KSA stands for Knowledge, Skills and Abilities. These are narrative or **Essay Statements**, which are frequently required along with a resume when applying for **government jobs**. The **KSA** statements must describe your experience in support of specific job-related questions. Your answers are designed to help **federal** hiring agencies select the best-qualified candidates for interviews. Your goal is to receive a high proficiency ranking from the information provided on your **KSA** statements. (see ksawriters.com)

Helpful Websites for Writing KSAs

www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/programs/calltoserve/toolkit/KSAs.pdf

www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm

<http://www.ksadoctor.com/>

<http://www.usajobs.gov/infocenter/resumetips.asp>

<http://www.ksawriters.com/>

Book recommendations

- ***So What Are You Going to Do with That?***

Authors- Susan Basalla, Maggie Debelius

- ***Great Jobs for Liberal Arts Majors*** (Great Jobs Series)

Author - Blythe Camenson

- ***Federal Resume Guidebook: Strategies for Writing a Winning Federal Electronic Resume, KSAs, and Essays***, 4th Edition

Author - Kathryn K. Troutman

- ***How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job: Your Complete Guide to Opportunities, Internships, Resumes and Cover Letters, Application Essays (KSAs), Interviews, Salaries, Promotions and More!***

Author - Lily Whiteman