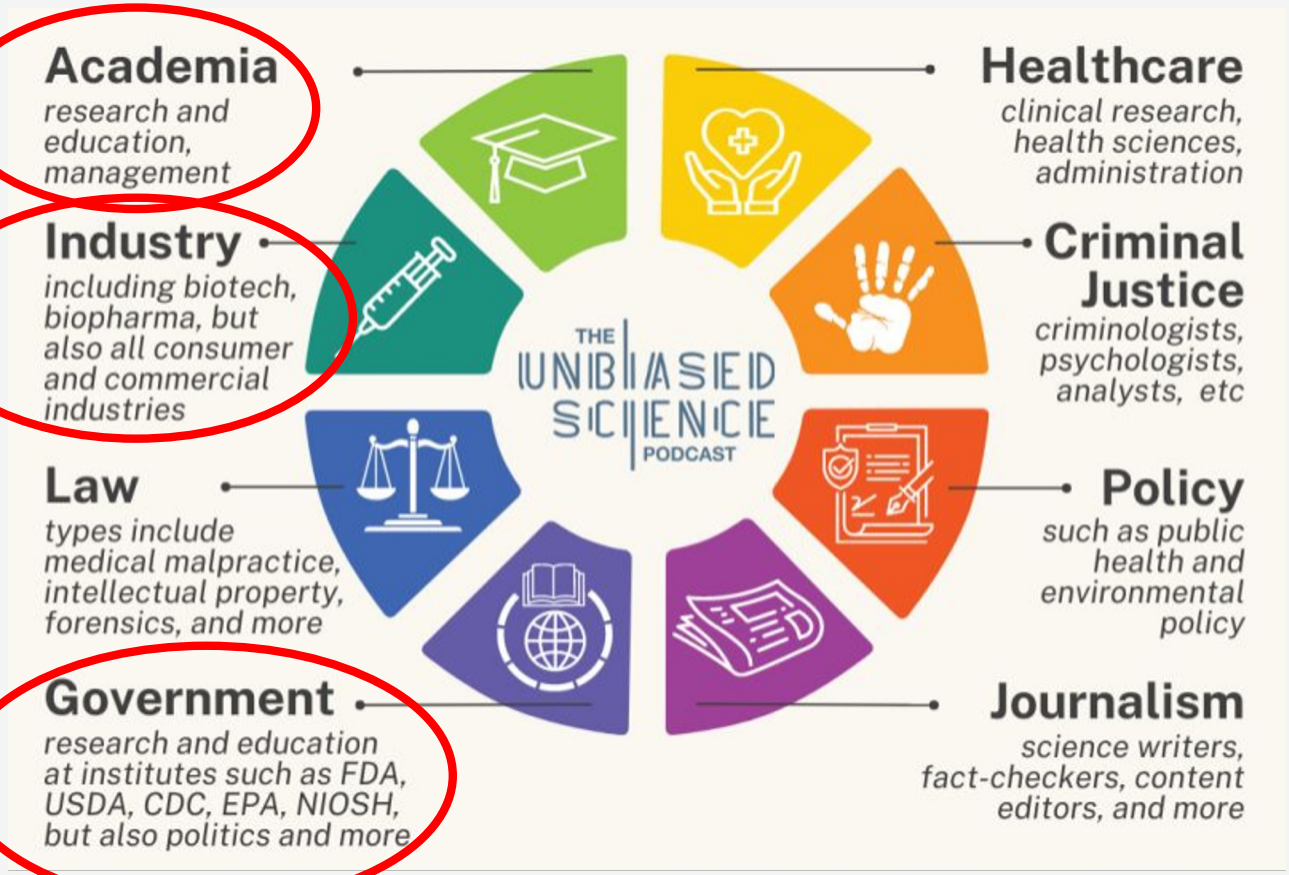

Alternative Careers with a PhD


Academia
research and education, management
Industry
including biotech, biopharma, but also all consumer and commercial industries
Law
types include medical malpractice, intellectual property, forensics, and more
Government
research and education at institutes such as FDA, USDA, CDC, EPA, NIOSH, but also politics and more
Healthcare
clinical research, health sciences, administration
Criminal Justice
criminologists, psychologists, analysts, etc
Policy
such as public health and environmental policy
Journalism
science writers, fact-checkers, content editors, and more
THE UNBIASED SCIENCE PODCAST

Overgeneralizing post-PhD Jobs

Bench Jobs

- Generally more focused on lab work.
- May be research-oriented but not a requirement.
- **Usually** closer to experiments and novel work than non-bench jobs.

Non-bench Jobs

- Generally more focused on applying lab results or decision making.
- May focus on transferable skills from PhD rather than specific skills.
- **Usually** more social than bench jobs

Consulting

Overview: Work with groups of scientists of many different backgrounds to accomplish client goals. Projects vary from a weekly to monthly time-scale.

Pros	Cons
Work closely with experts from many fields (good resume builder / learn a lot)	Most “lab work” is done by others
Some projects may allow for publications	Projects from clients are often emergencies (work hours may fluctuate by demand)
Shorter time-scale projects (quicker validation)	May be pulled from or added to projects as needed (employment can feel hectic)
Work with many unique clients (build connections)	Projects are mostly tied to consumer applications (not much room for theory-based disciplines)
Lots of communication required	

Regulatory Affairs

Overview: Work with a scientific team to ensure that they are in compliance with requirements from a regulatory body (e.g. FDA, EMA, USDA etc.) At the PhD level this is usually focused on drug/medical device development or approval process.

Pros	Cons
Work-life balance and more suitable to remote work	More travel may be required
Gain experience with the drug/device approval process	May make it harder to move back into a research role after some time
Usually comes with better job security	Your failure can have bigger effects
No time spent doing laboratory work or running experiments	

Project Management

Overview: Work with scientists, management, clients, almost everyone. You are the focal point of a project and bare most of the responsibility and decision-making.

Pros	Cons
Work with people from many fields (good resume builder / learn a lot)	No lab experience accumulated
See a project through from beginning to finish	As the point of contact must always be available (work hours may fluctuate by demand)
Driving force for new products/therapies	Timelines are everything
Lots of communication required	
Successes and failures (mainly failures) are both attributed to you (high stakes, high stress)	

Finance/Equity Research

Overview: Act as a subject matter expert in a particular market sector(healthcare, biotechnology etc.) to determine which companies are good or bad investments and why.

Pros	Cons
Good base salary and bonus ($140k - 160k)	50 - 60 hour work weeks during earnings season
Can make it easier to move into management or leadership positions in life science companies	Requires learning about finance post-PhD
Decent job security if you find a good firm	Can be geographically limited
Communication and social skills are highly required	

Sales

Overview: Speak with clients to learn about their scientific needs and describe how your products/services can help them

Pros	Cons
May earn commission on top of a yearly salary	No lab experience accumulated
Hours are often flexible	May require cold-calling
Easy to see your efforts be rewarded (financially and professionally)	Stressful if income is entirely commission-based
Lots of communication required	

Additional Career Paths

- Scientific Illustrator.....Artistic, detail-oriented
- Scientific Writing/Publishing.....Detail-oriented, good writer
- FDA Reviewer.....Detail-oriented, patient
- Medical Science Liaison (MSL).....Presentation and communication
- Teacher/Professor.....Patient, good communication
- Internal Data Scientist.....Statistics, programming
- Patent Agent.....Reading comprehension, detailed
- Quality/Safety.....Detail-oriented, self-confident
- Science Policy.....Strong communication
- Field Applications Scientist.....Problem solving, communication
- Consulting for Media/Film