



UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUÑA

Alternative professional careers

May 2019

ALTERNATIVE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS AND MOBILITY GRANTS FOR UDC RESEARCHERS

According to the [2017 Career Tracking Survey of Doctorate Holders](#) of the European Science Foundation, 47% of doctorate holders who obtained their degree in the preceding seven years (2010–2016), awarded by any of the nine partner organisations –none from Spain–, work at universities. The employment sector differs widely, however, depending on the field of study, with the highest scores in this respect for respondents studying social sciences (58%) and humanities (56%), and the lowest ones for those studying medical and health sciences (30%). Although the unemployment rate of the studied cohort is very low (2% overall), the survey points out a persisting structural problem in universities, where the number of permanently employed doctorate holders is much lower than in other sectors. The OECD has already repeatedly warned of the disproportionate increase in the cumulative number of PhDs awarded, traditionally leading to academic positions, as compared with the cumulative number of faculty positions, producing a saturation within academia and a paucity of permanent contracts at universities in later career stages. This structural problem fuels the extraordinary importance of efforts to offer greater preparation, either during the formation phase or through continuing professional development, for those seeking non-academic careers. There is an urgent need for better training doctoral students in professional or transferable skills, such as written communication, public speaking, teamwork, or project and career management, which are grouped within the sixth of the European Commissions's [Seven Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training](#), presented in June 2011. The University of A Coruña wishes to improve training in these areas, mainly through its [International Doctorate School](#) (EIDUDC) and its [Research Centers](#), in collaboration with the UDC Center for Educational Training and Innovation (CUFIE), the UDC Library, the UDC International Relationships Office (ORI), and the [UDC Technology Transfer Office](#) (OTRI).

The EIDUDC organizes different [courses and activities specifically aimed at PhD students](#), both to help them manage their research projects, and to strengthen their general skills and abilities. The UDC has a special interest in getting more engaged in science to business cooperation, to increase the labour market relevance of its doctorate programmes, the employability of PhD holders and the impact of their research. Therefore, it is making an effort to develop different actions along the lines depicted in [The State of University-Business Cooperation in Europe final report](#) for the European Commission, 2018. The most developed activity in this respect is student international mobility, through agreements with [Inditex](#) (public annual call, since 2013, to

grant 25–35 students to stay 3 months abroad –the minimum required to get the International PhD award) and [Banco Santander](#) (public annual call to grant up to 2 students for stays at Ibero-American countries). In addition, the [GRADSchools](#), promoted by the *Barrié Foundation*, with the professional assistance of [Vitae](#), constituted an extraordinary educative and inspiring initiative, both for PhD students and mentors, which is expected to be continued from now on by the UDC, joining Vitae as an organizational member. The EIDUDC is also actively participating, together with the other two universities of the public system of universities of Galicia (SUG) and the *Agencia Gallega de Innovación* (GAIN), in the implementation of an ambitious Industrial PhD Programme, which is expected to become in the near future the most important activity in terms of science to business cooperation in the educational field.

As regards the contribution of the UDC Technological Park to research career development, The Centre for Information and Communications Technology Research (CITIC) has recently devised a pilot [program to develop transferable skills](#). Due to the transversal nature of its contents, this program is not only offered to researchers in the field of informatics, but it is open to PhD students and postdocs from different scientific areas. Its [first edition](#) took place in November 2018, and enrolled nearly 50 young researchers. The Advance Scientific Research Centre offers so far mostly [highly specialized technical courses](#), but several initiatives oriented to develop transferable skills of PhD students are already in progress.

Useful websites:

[Euraxess Career Orientation Tool](#)

[What can I do with my degree?](#) (prospects.ac.uk)

[Researcher career path in Spain at a glance](#)

[Vitae/Careers](#) (Vitae is an international programme dedicated to realising the potential of researchers through transforming their professional and career development)