

Comments and suggestions from the NTNU Alumni PhD conference: The added value of a PhD – for all sectors of working life

About PhD expertise

- You are trained in learning new things, absorbing new knowledge, processing, analysing and selecting what is important
- Write precisely and express yourself in several languages, spoken and written
- Can solve complex problems. Know how to approach a problem
- Have a framework for solving complex problems
- Can make quick decisions based on the information you have, even if it is not complete
- Self-motivated, structured and work effectively
- Can deliver on time and complete what you start
- Capable of self-management, coping with setbacks and persevering
- Can lead others and motivate
- Self-confidence: Have encountered major problems before, and solved them effectively
- Multitasking
- Have credibility – are taken seriously and respected
- Adaptable
- Have a natural authority – you are an expert in your field
- Conduct /contribute to research and innovation (to have a competitive edge and be a world leader in your field, it is vital to have this level of expertise)
- Innovation – many graduates are capable of starting something new, developing products or services that are in demand

Key Advice

- Finish!
- Highlight the practical part of the work involved in a PhD. Look at it as work experience, not education
- Do something on the side - gain work experience: Expose yourself to real-life problems and challenges through practical training, internships, part-time jobs, volunteering. This shows that you can relate to a leader and work in a team.
- Follow your interests: This creates commitment and the experience of doing something meaningful. You will do a better job.
- Practice communicating knowledge to the public, making it understandable to the “man in the street”.
 - What am I researching? Why it is important to society? Why it is important to business, industry or the public sector?
 - Become more confident in the role of communicator.
 - People know what you are doing (networking), and can connect you with other people/positions that might be relevant to you
- Talk to people in your field: They are often closer than you think. Important to share knowledge and create a professional network.
- Talk to the business community/working world at an early stage: What do they want? What do they need? What challenges do they face, where you can help them?

- Take a long-term approach when you apply for a job - get your foot in the door and develop your position along the way.
- Interdisciplinary teamwork is important – know that you are an expert, but also respect the skills and experience that others have in other areas
- Remember the public sector – for example, you can help to create the best city to live in.
- Travel on international exchange
- Go to applied conferences that are industry relevant
- Go to conferences for networking, not only journal publications
- Try to make your PhD relevant for the future – search out possible future employer
- Invest time in creating a network and communicating about what you're doing
- Be curious, be extroverted, gain experience
- Be proud, you have the highest academic education
- Respect others and their expertise