Introduction

• Biomedical science background, 11 years in research, up to postdoc

• Focus on PhD/postdoc career development since 2009

• Serving >1500 researchers as programme manager/organiser/trainer (PCDI)

• Since January 2016 self-employed: Qia Consultancy & Training

Advice to employers of PhD/postdocs on career development/talent policy
Not every PhD a professor

Rathenau Institute (Science System Assessment)

yearly:

Science career (academia)  top  300 - 400 new professors

incoming  4000  new PhDs
Not every PhD a professor

If it *would* be the case, accumulating in 15 years to:

- 47,000 UDs / Assistant professors
- 27,000 UHDs / Associate professors
- 17,000 full professors

>>> 10-fold of current situation!

Presentation Jos de Jonge (Feb2015) - Rathenau
SoFoKles Conference Onbeperkt houdbaar!
Why doing a PhD?

+ Love for science, research, topic
+ Curiosity
+ Academic freedom, creativity, intellectual challenge
+ Focus, immersed in specialism/niche
Why doing a PhD?

Career kickstart:
PhD and postdoc positions
‘easily accessible’

focus on specialism

some career development
usually focussed on science
Outcome of PhD...

Science!

thesis - publications - PhD title
scientific specialism - identity
Outcome of PhD...

Science!

thesis - publications - PhD title

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scientific specialism - identity

Employability? Career perspectives? Professional value? What’s the PhD worth?

A struggle...
Back to fierce competition in science...
Why doing a PhD?

Honey, maybe it would help your job search if you thought about your life goals.

I mean, what sort of career did you have in mind when you went to grad school?

What did you envision doing with your Ph.D.?
Outcomes of a PhD

1) Science
Outcomes of a PhD

1) Science

2) Human capital: the professional

   PhD = proof for broad spectrum of transferable skills
   ➔ professional attractiveness
Outcomes of a PhD

1) Science

1) Human capital: the professional

PhD = proof for broad spectrum of transferable skills
⇒ professional attractiveness
Responsibility of PhD educators

1. Acknowledge: science not only outcome realistic view on academic careers
2. Educate: PhD associated skill set & PhD value
3. Encourage: career orientation
4. Stimulate: (additional) skill training

Dean - Promoter - Human resources - ?
Valorising PhD potential

➜ PhDs are responsible for their own career development

➜ Today’s science education requires career support to ensure no PhD power is wasted

➜ Focus of PhD education, does it match today’s need? both inside and outside academia
Young researchers thrive in life after academia

Alternative career paths should be celebrated, not seen as a compromise.

27 September 2016

Emily wanted to see other people. Stuart had enjoyed a string of short-term relationships but realized that he needed more commitment. After years of uncertainty and making do, Fiona decided to follow her heart. Most found the decision emotional and stressful and felt guilty. Some worried that they were being superficial — but freely admitted they were leaving for the money.

The stress of ending their relationship with an academic research career was difficult for these young scientists and others. Most of them, after a while, realized that they had made the right decision. Still, a few later regretted what they decided had been a too-hasty exit, and wanted to patch things up. Such is life.

Most importantly, all these people believe that they have learned from the experience and want to help others — people like you — who might be experiencing or considering a break-up. Their advice is the same as that offered by friends, family and advice columnists for centuries: if you’re not happy, then it’s not right.

Significant numbers of Nature’s readers are not happy. They
‘It is time to normalize these sideways steps, and for universities, senior scientists and research funders to accept and embrace the different paths that young researchers choose to follow. More honest and realistic career advice would be a good start. [...] And the outside world was delighted to have them.’
Chiat Cheong, PhD
Qia Consultancy & Training
qiaconsultancy@icloud.com
Lots of career options for PhD graduates

A PhD qualifies for many positions!

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<tr>
<th>Scientist at a company</th>
<th>Journal publisher</th>
<th>Entrepreneur</th>
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<td>Grant coordinator</td>
<td>Programme manager</td>
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<td>Science outreach officer</td>
<td>Data scientist</td>
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<td>Wine specialist</td>
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Academia also demands more than science

A professor is much more than a very senior researcher

- Researcher
- Communicator
- Manager
- Moneymaker
- Politician
- Teacher
- Professor
Science careers (NL)

Positions plotted against age, M/F

Figur 1 Het academisch carrièrehuis naar leeftijd, functie en geslacht

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Legend:
- Hoogleraar
- Universitair docent
- Postdoc
- Overig WP
- Universitair hoofddocent
- Docent
- Onderzoeker
- Promovendus

Rathenau Instituut
New faculty positions vs new PhDs

The missing piece to changing the university culture
Maximiliaan Schillebeeckx, Brett Maricque & Cory Lewis