

Male doctoral graduates earn more, more likely to have permanent jobs than female counterparts

February 20 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Male doctoral graduates are more likely to get a permanent job compared to their female counterparts, a new study shows.

Women make up about half of Ph.D. students in the UK and other Western countries, but female doctoral graduates are underrepresented in senior positions and have lower earnings compared to their [male counterparts](#) within and outside academia.

New University of Exeter research shows almost all employed men with Ph.D.'s had a full-time job (97 percent) compared to only 80 percent of employed women with the same qualification.

The study, published in the journal Social Sciences, says there should be greater incentives through tax benefits or other forms of state support to organizations in order to promote equal gender representation. It also recommends higher education institutions should be encouraged to expand the supply of permanent positions available.

Six months after graduation, just over half of male graduates surveyed were employed in a permanent position compared to 41 percent of female graduates. This gap increases further to 74 percent and 61 percent, respectively, three years after graduation. At seven to nine years following graduation, the gender gap had slightly decreased, so that 82 percent of males and 75 percent of females were in permanent employment during that time.

One in five doctoral graduates surveyed were employed in either a fixed-term or a temporary contract seven to nine years after earning their degree, although the proportion of female graduates with a permanent position was significantly lower than that of male graduates (75 percent compared to 82 percent, respectively).

Half of the male respondents obtained their doctorate in physical sciences and engineering, compared to only a quarter of the female respondents. Women were more likely to obtain their degree in the arts and humanities, social sciences and also in biomedical studies. Experts

believe this partly explains the differences in [career](#) prospects, as there are more [work opportunities](#) in subjects studied by men.

Dr. Nitzan Peri-Rotem, who led the study, said: "The higher propensity of female doctoral graduates to work in part-time employment may be due to additional challenges they encounter when pursuing stable employment in the highly competitive [graduate](#) job market, including the requirement for geographical mobility.

"Female doctoral graduates are also concentrated in fields that offer relatively fewer employment opportunities outside academia, especially humanities, social sciences and life sciences, which means they have more limited career options compared to their male peers, and these options may be further restricted when seeking part-time or flexible work."

Dr. Peri-Rotem used data from the UK Doctoral Impact and Career Tracking Survey from 2013 to explore the career trajectories of doctoral graduates—466 women and 684 men—seven to nine years after earning their degree. The Doctoral Impact and Career Tracking Survey was commissioned by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the higher education funding bodies for England and Wales (HEFCE and HEFCW), with the aim of exploring the career pathways, destinations, and impact of doctoral graduates over the medium to longer term.

More than half of the graduates were working in the higher education sector, either in teaching (33 percent), research (13 percent), or other roles (6 percent). A fifth were working in other common doctoral occupations (e.g. engineering, business or health professionals), less than a fifth engaged in research or teaching outside academia, and about a tenth of graduates were working in other occupations. Women were more likely to work in academia compared to men, while a higher proportion of men were working in doctoral occupations outside

academia or in the private sector.

More information: undefined Peri-Rotem. Gendered Career Pathways among Doctoral Graduates in the United Kingdom, *Social Sciences* (2019). [DOI: 10.3390/socsci8110317](https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8110317)

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: Male doctoral graduates earn more, more likely to have permanent jobs than female counterparts (2020, February 20) retrieved 15 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-02-male-doctoral-permanent-jobs-female.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--