Executive Summary

In 2006, AHRC commissioned a study to map the career destinations of AHRC funded Professional Preparation Masters (PPM) students 7-9 years after the end of their award. AHRC has commissioned this study to update the 2006 work and provide a detailed evidence base on outcomes from its PPM programme.

The sample was drawn from students who started PPM awards in 2002, 2003 and 2004. On the basis of a typical PPM taking around a year, these students are approximately 7-9 years into their career (which is the same as for the 2006 study).

Current Status of Respondents

28% of respondents had a previous career before starting their PPM. A previous career was defined as a job in which they had worked for at least three years. In the 2006 study, 19% of respondents said they had a previous career before starting their PPM. Thus, many PPM students are not moving straight from undergraduate to graduate studies. Instead, they are taking time out from employment to undertake a PPM to either further career prospects in the sector in which they are currently employed or to help them to move into another sector in the future.

The majority of respondents (59%) are in full-time employment, 12% are in part-time employment and 20% are self-employed/freelance. The major change since 2006 is that full-time employment has declined and self-employment and part-time employment have increased. This could reflect the economic climate with more limited permanent job opportunities available or it could reflect the increased prevalence of art and music students in the 2012 sample who are more likely to be self employed/freelance.

Sectoral Analysis of Employment

Among those who are employed or self employed, 21% work in the university sector, 19% in the private sector, 27% in the public sector (excluding HEIs), 10% in the independent sector and 19% are self employed. There has been a fall in the proportion of PPM students employed in the public sector (outside HEIs) since 2006 and an increase in self-employment and employment in the private and independent sectors (the latter to a lesser degree). However, this could reflect differences in the sample base as, compared to the 2012 cohort, the 2006 cohort had a higher representation of librarianship and museum studies students who tend to work in the public sector and a lower representation of art and music students who often work for themselves.
76% of respondents (in full-time employment and self employment) earn more than the average UK salary. 20% earn the equivalent or more of the average UK salary for professional workers, although it must be remembered that many respondents are still at a relatively early stage in their career compared to the average professional worker. The majority of respondents (55%) earn between £25,000-£39,999 per annum. When the sample is based only on former PPM students who are in full-time employment (excluding the self employed), it is found that the proportion earning the equivalent or more of the average UK salary for professional workers is similar (19%) but the proportion earning more than the average UK salary is much higher at 89%. Thus, the implication is that many of those that work on a self employed/freelance basis are on relatively low levels of pay which probably reflects the variable hours worked in this sector with many respondents perhaps not in full-time employment.

The majority of respondents are either very happy (46%) or quite happy (47%) in their job.

**Value of PPM Training**

Respondents were asked to what extent their PPM had been useful in giving them skills to develop their career subsequently. Generally, respondents are positive about this with 81% saying the award has been ‘very useful’ in developing their career subsequently and a further 15% saying it has been ‘quite useful’. Only 4% of respondents have not found their PPM to be useful in their subsequent career.

In addition, 60% of respondents say that their PPM has been essential to their career and a further 34% say it has been of some importance in either getting into their present job/career or progressing more quickly than would otherwise have been possible. This is similar to the position in 2006 although a greater proportion of respondents said their PPM was essential in 2006 compared to 2012. Possibly this relates to the greater representation of librarianship and museum studies students in the 2006 sample where a professional qualification is a requirement for many jobs in the sector.

Overall, 96% of respondents are either very satisfied or quite satisfied with the quality of PPM training they received. There is evidence of a perceived increase in the quality of PPM training from the students’ perspective from the 2006 study to the 2012 study. In 2006, 52% of respondents were very satisfied with the quality of their PPM training – this has increased to 64% in 2012.

The most frequently mentioned skills (cited by at least 60% of respondents) acquired from PPM training are: subject specific knowledge; critical analysis skills; written communication skills; relevant practical skills; independence/initiative; self motivation;
and research methodology skills. These are similar to the most frequently mentioned skills acquired through PPM training in 2006.

Generally, the skills respondents cite as being most important in their current job are those that a large proportion of respondents developed from their PPM. For example, subject specific knowledge, relevant practical skills and independence & initiative and problem solving & creative thinking.

All respondents were asked to indicate which skills and competencies should have been given greater emphasis during the course of their PPM. More support with respect to career management emerges as one of the main findings from this analysis. Other areas include: project management; networking; digital/media technology skills; leadership skills; and relevant practical skills. These are similar to the areas highlighted in the 2006 study except IT packages and systems also emerged as an important area in the 2006 study. This could reflect the nature of the 2006 cohort which had a higher proportion of librarianship related students than the 2012 cohort.
1.0 Introduction

Background
1.1 AHRC is the UK’s leading research funding agency for the arts and humanities. One of its objectives is to support the development of skilled people for academic, professional and other employment through a range of postgraduate training programmes.

1.2 In 2006, AHRC commissioned a study to map the career destinations of AHRC funded Professional Preparation Masters (PPM) students 7-9 years after the end of their award. AHRC commissioned this study to update the 2006 work and provide a detailed evidence base on outcomes from its PPM programme.

Study Objectives
1.3 This study was commissioned to update the information on career paths provided by the 2006 study. Its specific objectives are to:

• Update the 2006 information on career progression of AHRC funded PPM students
• Provide an accurate representation of the employment patterns of the 2012 student cohort and compare this to the 2006 student cohort employment pattern analysis
• Find out the extent to which PPM training prepares former students for their current employment
• Establish the subject-specific and generic skills developed through PPM training that are being used by former students in their current careers
• Discern any influences on the wider public realm.

1.4 A further objective of the study is to compile a series of case study profiles of former students who participated in the 2006 survey and who would now be 10+ years into their career. This is the subject of a separate report that has been submitted to AHRC.

Study Approach
1.5 The study was undertaken in the same manner as 2006. DTZ would like to thank the university alumni offices that assisted with the study.

1.6 The sample was drawn from students who started PPM awards in 2002, 2003 and 2004. On the basis of a typical PPM taking around a year, these students are approximately 7-9 years into their career (which is the same as for the 2006 study).
1.7 Overall, 108 responses were received from former PPM students eligible for inclusion in the study.

**Report Structure**

1.8 The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides information on the respondents and the nature of their PPM Degree
- **Section 3** provides an overview of the career paths of former PPM students
- **Section 4** gives further information on the types of jobs being undertaken by former PPM students in different sectors
- **Section 5** presents the views of former PPM students on the value of PPM training
- **Section 6** uses time series data collected from the survey to analyse career paths over time.
2.0 The Respondents

Gender and Age

2.1 Of the 108 respondents, 31% are men and 69% are women which is similar to the 2006 study (25% men and 75% women).

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows the distribution of PPM respondents by age. The majority of the 2012 cohort are in their early thirties. It is noticeable that the 2006 cohort had a larger proportion of respondents aged under 30. However, the majority of these were close to 30 years and possibly the 2012 cohort has a slightly older profile because more respondents had a previous career before starting their PPM (see later).

*Figure 2.1 Age of Respondents*
Nationalities

2.3 The vast majority of respondents are British (88%) although this is lower than the position in 2006 (96%). The nationalities of the 13 respondents that are not British is shown below.

Table 2.1 Nationalities of 2012 Non British Respondents (13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous Career

2.4 28% of respondents had previous careers before starting their PPM. A previous career was defined as a job in which they had worked for at least three years. In the 2006 study, 19% of respondents said they had a previous career before starting their PPM, so the percentage of respondents with a previous career has increased.

2.5 This is interesting since it shows that many AHRC PPM students are not moving straight from undergraduate to graduate studies. Instead, they are taking time out to pursue a qualification to either further career prospects in the sector in which they are currently employed or to help them to move into another sector in the future. From the survey data, both seem to be equally important with roughly equal numbers saying they are still employed in the same sector after their PPM or that they now work in a different sector.
2.6 Figure 2.2 shows a breakdown of the 30 respondents that had a previous career before their PPM. As can be seen, they were employed in a wide range of sectors before starting their PPM. However, a feature of respondents’ previous careers is that almost half (13) relate to the creative industries sector.

Figure 2.2 Employment Sector before PPM

Base: all respondents who had a previous career prior to their PPM (30)
Primary Subject of PPM

2.7 Figure 2.3 shows the subject area in which respondents studied for their PPM. This is dominated by two areas: Librarianship/Archives/Museum Studies and Visual Arts/Design and Media which together account for 83% of respondents.

Figure 2.3 Subject of Professional Preparation Masters Degree

Base: all respondents (108)

2.8 Comparison with 2006 shows that a greater proportion of respondents undertook art/music related courses in 2012 and a smaller proportion undertook librarianship/museum related courses which accounted for 70% of the sample in 2006.
Figure 2.4 Subject of Professional Preparation Masters Degree: 2012 and 2006 Cohorts

Base: all respondents
3.0 Overview of Career Paths

Current Status of Respondents

3.1 Figure 3.1 shows the current status of respondents in 2012 and compares it to the position in 2006.

*Figure 3.1 Employment Status of Respondents in 2012 and 2006*

![Employment Status Graph](image)

Base: all respondents (108)

3.2 The majority of respondents (59%) are in full-time employment, 12% are in part-time employment and 20% are self-employed/freelance. The 1% unemployment rate is considerably below the national average of 8% (International Labour Organisation rate August 2012) although this is from a relatively small sample. The major change since 2006 is that full-time employment has declined and self-employment/freelance and part-time employment have increased. This could reflect the economic climate with more limited permanent job opportunities available or it could also reflect the increased prevalence of art and music students in the 2012 sample who are more likely to work on a freelance basis.
Sectoral Analysis of Employment

3.3 Figure 3.2 shows a sectoral breakdown of employment for those who are in employment and self-employment in 2012 and 2006.

Figure 3.2 Sectoral Analysis of Employment

Base: all respondents in employment (98)

3.4 It is clear there has been a substantial fall in public sector employment since 2006 and a substantial increase in self-employment/freelance work. Employment in the private and independent sectors has also increased albeit to a lesser degree. However, this could be attributed to the differences in the sample with the 2006 cohort having a large representation of librarianship and museum studies students who often find employment in the public sector and a lower representation of art and music related students who often work on a self-employed/freelance basis.
Salary Levels

3.5 Respondents were asked to provide information on their salary to assess levels of remuneration across different types of job. Where respondents worked outside the UK, they were asked to provide a sterling equivalent of their salary.

3.6 It is useful to have some benchmarks against which to compare the salary information collected from the survey. The average gross full-time salary for all workers in the UK in 2011 was £26,200.1 The average salary for non manual workers and professional workers was £33,000 and £42,200 respectively.1 The latter is a better benchmark for AHRC PPM students who would be expected to progress to professional occupations.

3.7 Figure 3.3 shows the salary of respondents in full-time employment and self-employment. Information is presented on the proportion of former students with salaries of less than £25,000 so that comparisons can be drawn with the average salary in the UK. Information is also presented on the proportion of former students with salaries of at least £40,000 so approximate comparisons can be made with the average salary of professional workers in the UK.

Figure 3.3 Analysis of Salary Levels

Base: all respondents in full-time employment or self-employment (85)

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1 Office for National Statistics
3.8 The main points of interest are as follows:

- 76% of respondents earn more than the average UK salary
- 20% earn the equivalent or more of the average UK salary for professional workers although it must be remembered that many respondents are still at a relatively early stage in their career
- The majority of respondents (55%) earn between £25,000-39,999.
- When the sample is based only on former PPM students who are in full-time employment (excluding the self employed), it is found that the proportion earning the equivalent or more of the average UK salary for professional workers is similar (19%) but the proportion earning more than the average UK salary is much higher at 89%. Thus, the implication is that many of those that work on a self employed/freelance basis are on relatively low levels of pay which probably reflects the variable hours worked in this sector with many respondents perhaps not in full-time employment.

Geographical Location of Respondents

3.9 95% of respondents work in the UK and 5% outside the UK. Among those that work outside the UK, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Poland were mentioned as current places of work.

3.10 When asked where they expected to live and work in the long term, 96% of respondents said they wished to remain in the UK. The four respondents who did not were those that already lived and worked abroad (all wished to live and work in their home country).
4.0 Sectoral Analysis of Career Paths

The University Sector

4.1 10 of the 21 respondents who are employed in the university sector have non academic roles (48%), 2 are fixed term lecturers, 1 is a permanent lecturer and 1 is a postdoctoral research assistant. 7 of the 21 respondents in this sector did not provide any information on their role. Those employed in non academic positions work mainly in library and information scientist roles reflecting the subject area of their PPM. Of the 21 respondents in this category, 15 undertook PPM courses relating to Librarianship, Archives, Information Science and Museum Studies. In 2006, the majority of respondents employed in the university sector were also employed in non academic roles such as a librarian or information scientist.

Private Sector Employment

4.2 The sectors in which the 19 respondents in this category are employed are listed below. The range of sectors is broad but there are clusters in the creative industries, publishing and in business/professional services.

Table 4.1 Breakdown of Employment in Private Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Advertising/Art</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Public Sector (Outside Universities)

4.3 26 respondents are employed in the public sector. A summary of the types of organisations in which they are employed is provided below.

Table 4.2 Employment in the Public Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organisation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government department/agency</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form college</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Independent Sector

4.4 10 respondents are employed in the independent/voluntary sector. 5 respondents work for charities. The other respondents work for the Church of England, an independent school, a theatre and a museum. One respondent did not provide any information on their job.

Self-employment/freelance

4.5 Of the 19 respondents that stated that they were self-employed 5 run their own business and 12 work on a freelance basis. The remaining 2 respondents stated that their self-employment was ‘something else’.

4.6 Those who work on a freelance basis operate mainly in the creative industries sector. For example, freelance writing/journalism, publishing, graphic design, art, film and drama production.

4.7 Those who run their own business work in a range of areas that include the creative industries (2), law (1) and hospitality (2).
4.8 Two respondents described their self-employment as 'something else'. Of these, one described the role as a 'writer/journalist/artist', whilst the remaining respondent described the role as an artist. Overall, it can be seen that the creative industries have an important dimension in the nature of self-employment/freelance work among former PPM students.

**Job Satisfaction and Future Intentions**

4.9 The general picture is that respondents are content in their jobs and intend to stay in their present field going forward. Over nine in every ten respondents stated that they were happy in their current employment.

*Figure 4.1 Job Satisfaction*

Base: All respondents in employment and self-employment (98)
Figure 4.2 Future Intentions

Base: All respondents in employment and self-employment (98)
5.0 Respondent Perspectives on the Value of PPM Training

5.1 Respondents were asked to what extent their PPM had been useful in giving them skills to develop their career subsequently. Generally respondents are positive about their training as shown in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Usefulness of PPM Training

Base: all respondents (108)
Importance of Having a PPM Qualification

5.2 As can be seen from Figure 5.2, 60% of respondents say their PPM has been essential to their career and a further 34% say it has been of some importance in either getting into their job/career or progressing more quickly than would otherwise have been possible. Only 6% say it has been of little or no importance.

5.3 Compared to 2006, fewer PPM students regard their PPM qualification as essential. Possibly this relates to the greater representation of librarianship and museum–related students in the 2006 sample where a professional qualification is a strict requirement for many jobs in that sector.

Figure 5.2 Importance Of PPM to Job/Career – 2012 and 2006 Cohorts

Base: all respondents
Skills Gained from PPM Training

5.4 Respondents were asked to indicate which of the skills listed below in Figure 5.3 they had gained from their PPM.

Figure 5.3 Main Types of Skills Acquired during PPM Study
5.5 The skills that were mentioned by at least 60% of respondents were:

- Subject specific knowledge
- Critical analysis skills
- Written communication skills
- Relevant practical skills
- Independence/initiative
- Self motivation
- Research methodology skills.

5.6 These are very similar to the most frequently mentioned skills acquired through PPM training in 2006.

5.7 Those respondents currently in employment were asked to indicate the skills and competencies that are most important in their current job. The results are shown in Figure 5.4.
The most important skill areas mentioned by at least 30% of respondents as being important in their current job are:

- Subject specific knowledge
- Relevant practical skills
- Problem solving/creative thinking
- Independence and initiative.

Again, these are similar to the most important skill areas highlighted in 2006. It is also interesting to note that 3 of the 4 skill areas above are amongst the most frequently mentioned skills acquired from PPM study (see para 5.5 above). The exception is problem solving/creative thinking.
solving/creative thinking but this falls just under the 60% frequency threshold used in para 5.5. Overall, 59% of respondents say they acquired skills in problem solving and creative thinking from their PPM. The implication is that the main types of skills that respondents need in their job are being provided through PPM training.

5.10 Finally, all respondents were asked to indicate which skills and competencies should have been given greater emphasis during the course of their Masters.

Figure 5.5 Skills and Competencies that could have been given Greater Emphasis During PPM Study

Base: all respondents (108)
5.11 The main skill areas that are highlighted are:

- Career management
- Project management
- Networking
- Digital/media technology skills
- Leadership skills
- Relevant practical skills.

5.12 These are similar to the areas highlighted in the 2006 study. The exception is that IT packages and systems also emerged as an important area in the 2006 study. This perhaps reflects the nature of the 2006 cohort which had a higher proportion of librarianship-related students.

Satisfaction with Quality of PPM Training

5.13 As can be seen from Figure 5.6, there is a high level of satisfaction with the quality of PPM training. Overall, 96% of respondents are either very satisfied or quite satisfied with the quality of PPM training. There is also evidence of an increase in the quality of PPM training from the student's perspective from the 2006 study to this 2012 study. In 2006, 52% of respondents were very satisfied with the quality of their PPM training – this has increased to 64% in 2012.
5.14 Respondents provided a range of comments on the quality of their PPM training. These are summarised overleaf distinguishing between positive feedback and areas where respondents would like to see improvement.
Positive Feedback

“It was hard work but worth it. Because it was 9-5 seven days a week with a lot of extra coursework it would have been impossible to complete without this funding.”

“My Masters was an invaluable step towards becoming a conservator – very well run and provided all the information/skills needed.”

“I had a positive experience – enjoyable and informative. However, there will always be some elements of skill/knowledge that are gained through actual experience in employment.”

“I was self-motivated and focused so I got a lot out of it. I loved the year because of peer support and time to work.”

“Excellent course with lots of practical skills development and lots of lectures from experts rather than just university staff.”

“It had a good balance of theory and practice.”

“My Masters was extremely valuable for my career development.”

“My MA was instrumental in defining my approach and equipping me with the skills to pursue and develop my career.”

“My course was excellent and I would say that although a Masters is not generally required for my current job, I would not be where I am had I not taken the course. The most important factor was the link with a law firm – as the result of a day trip I ended up applying for my current role.”

“The work placement module of my course was critical to the work and contacts available to me immediately after my course. The technical film making module was incredibly helpful.”

“My MA was a professional qualification in Librarianship. It provided an excellent introduction to working in my chosen career. Clearly, a one year Masters course could not cover all aspects of a professional role, but I have found it an excellent foundation on which to build.”

“An excellent module of the programme was the concept of tutorials; external tutors that students could choose based on the student’s current projects and studies. This provided an exceptional opportunity to get in touch with experts and to get in-depth dialogue on certain topics.”
“Generally excellent experience, it really helped me develop my critical thinking skills and confidence in a rather daunting marketplace. The tutors did their best to future-proof these skills in a rapidly-changing environment, so that the things I learned in 2002/03 are still of use now and in the future.”

“Excellent! Without it, I simply wouldn’t have had the opportunities I have had in my career so far.”

Very high quality of training support with enough space to develop individually

“Excellent experience, well taught and managed – good for new graduates, as well as those in mid-career.”

“I had a good balance of theory and practice – however, placement students need to be vetted better.”

“My Masters training was a very intensive experience but it gave me a strong grounding of core skills that enabled me to start on my career path.”
Areas for Improvement

“A lot of the study was self-directed with little input from course leaders. It would have been beneficial to present and discuss work more often.”

“I remember studio space being limited and also, the general standard wasn’t as high as I expected.”

“The university operated as if it was a distance-learning institution – staff there were keen to avoid face-to-face contact with students as much as possible.”

“Coverage of emerging areas of experience (e.g. digital archiving) was poor. Course was good on the more well-established knowledge and competencies.”

“Nothing on managing people.”

“Needed more focus on the commercial application of the skills we needed.”

“The course was disorganised and not well run. A lot of the promised work experience/networking opportunities did not materialise.”

“I believe there should have been more emphasis on digital archives and electronic records management.”

“My training in publishing provided only marginal benefit in the job market which was severely depleted in the sector at the time of graduation.”

“Greater emphasis on practical management skills and job shadowing of a leader in the profession.”

“All contract hours were in the evening, so didn’t really feel like a full-time programme – a bit isolating.”

“Would have been useful to have more careers events and/or links into industry”

“The course was heavily theoretical and abstract – needed to be more practical and vocational.”

“The skills and knowledge developed on my course do not bear much relation to those required for most jobs in libraries, even though the qualification is an essential requirement for my grade.”

“I believe the course should allow for greater specialisation.”
6.0 Job History

Introduction

6.1 All respondents were asked to complete a ‘diary’ providing details of the jobs they had undertaken since the end of their PPM award. Data is only presented for up to six years after the end of a PPM award because after this point the sample base becomes smaller and less reliable.

6.2 Figure 6.1 shows the proportion of respondents employed in different sectors over time. The following sector categories have been used:

- A permanent or open ended contract teaching/research position in a HEI
- A fixed term teaching/research position in a HEI
- A non-academic position in a HEI
- Private sector
- Public sector
- Independent sector
- Other employment (which includes self-employment).

6.3 Figure 6.1 shows that the proportion of respondents employed in different sectors is relatively stable over time. There is some variation in the first couple of years after the PPM but then respondents tend to remain within their broad sector of work.
Figure 6.1 Time Series Analysis of Employment Patterns for PPM Students

Base: all respondents providing ‘diary’ information on their career path