

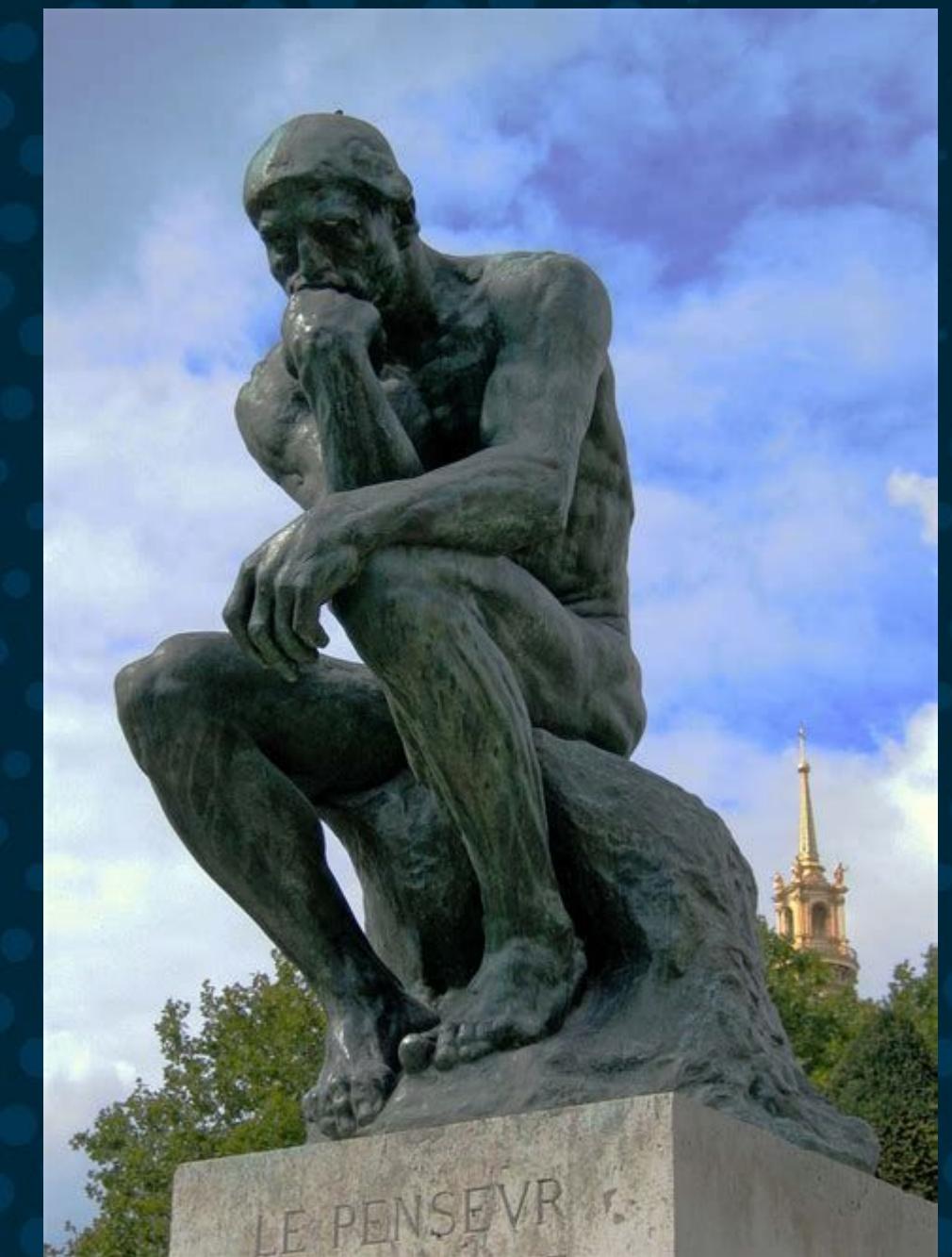
Thinking About Graduate Studies in Philosophy?

Think Again!

Advice for USU Philosophy Majors



UtahStateUniversity



October 17, 2024

Presentation Outline

1. Warning: The Academic Job Market Sucks!
2. Review Grad School Application Components
3. Project the Ideal Application Timeline
4. Identify Factors to Weigh When Choosing Where to Apply
5. Examine What Types of Programs to Consider & How Many
6. Provide Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors
7. Q&A with Recent Grads & Dr. Alex Barrientos, Ph.D. (Utah)

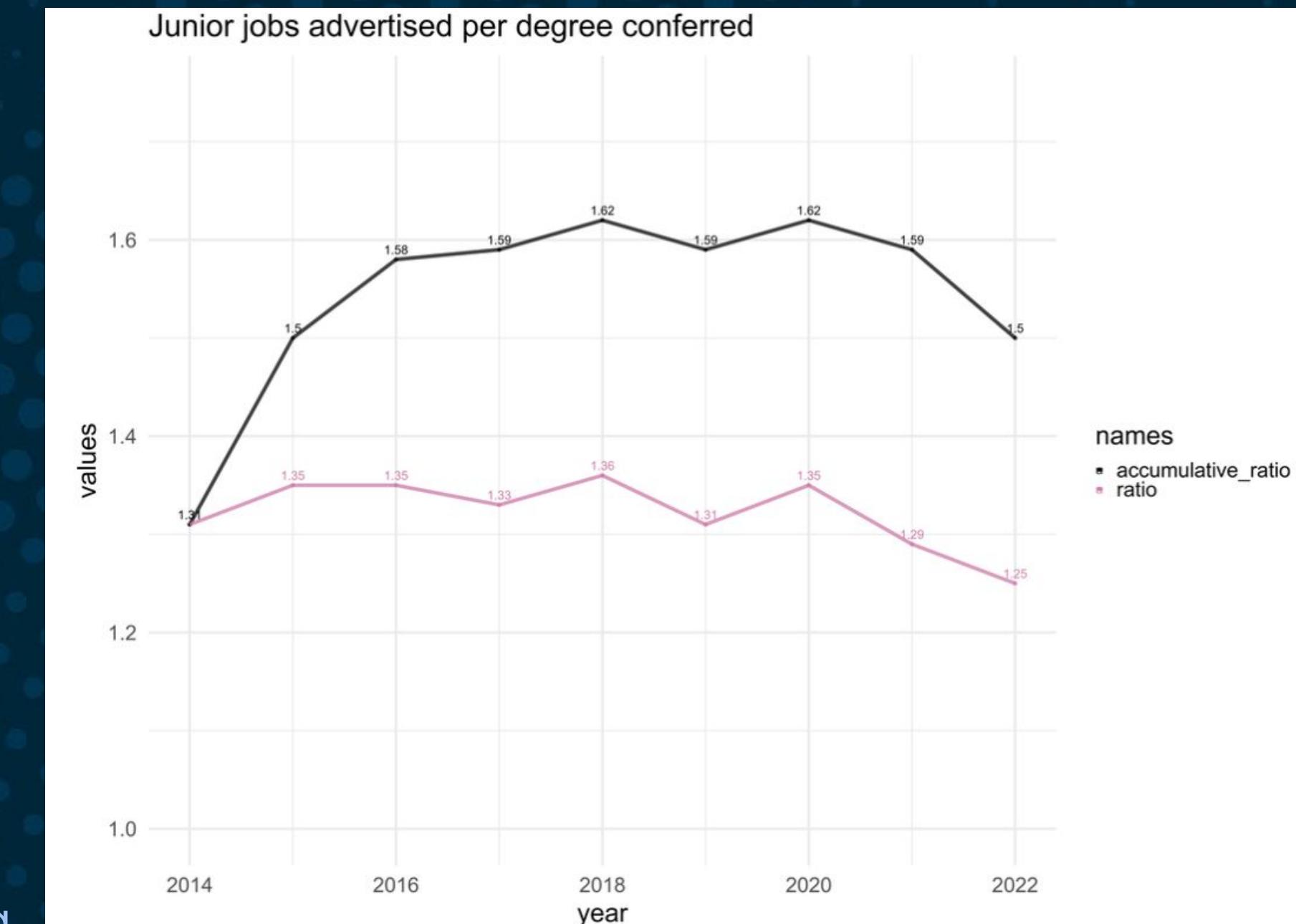
**Warning: The Academic Job Market
Sucks!**

Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

Latest Data from
2024 Job Cycle:

“the market is bad (on
average, 2 jobs for
every 3 philosophers)
but it's not getting
worse over time.”

<https://www.charleslassiter.net/blog>

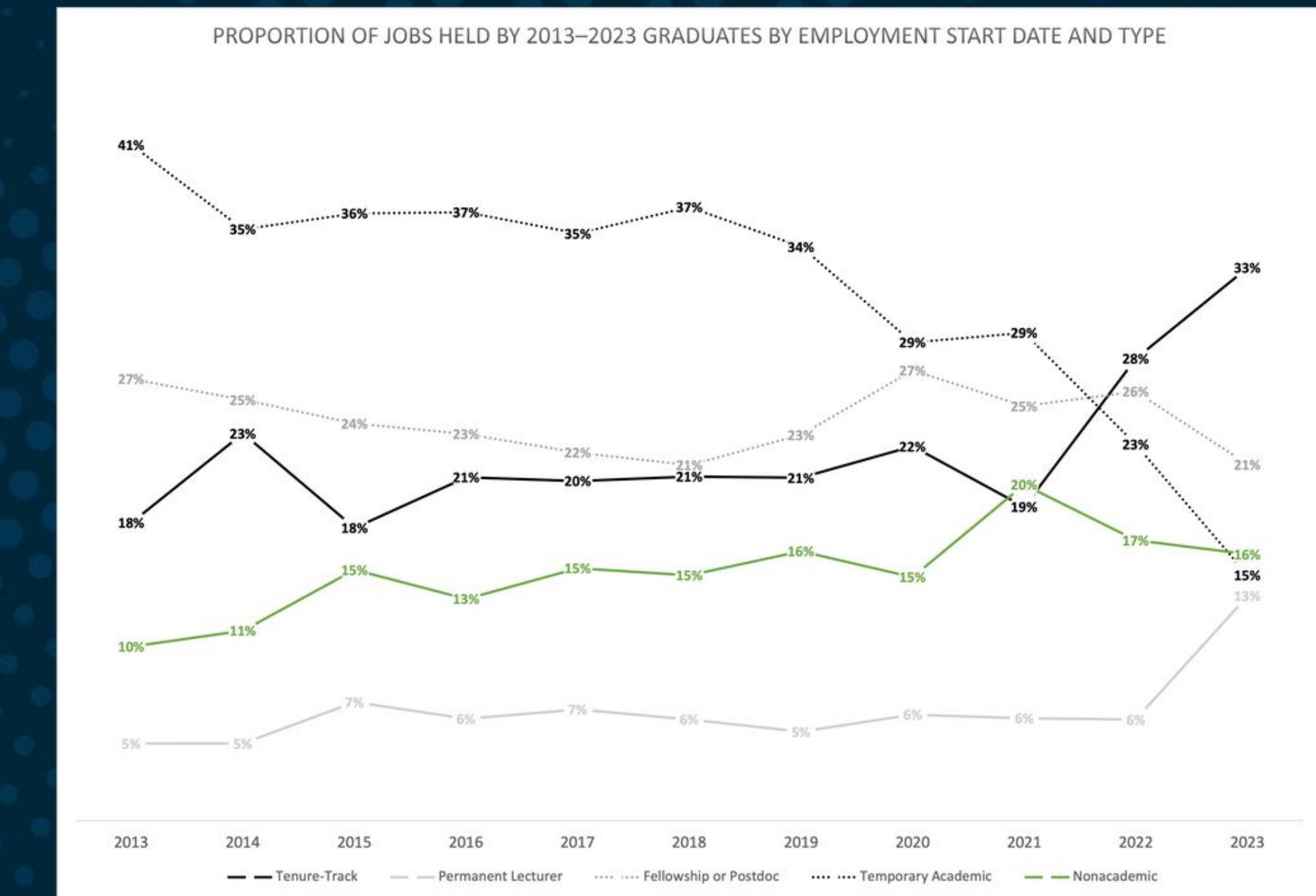


Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

2024 Data Collection

Results: a focus on recent graduates

Between 2013 and 2023, “6,408 graduates earned a PhD in philosophy, 41% of which (2,610) have found permanent academic employment; 33% if we look only at the past 5 years (2019–2023).”



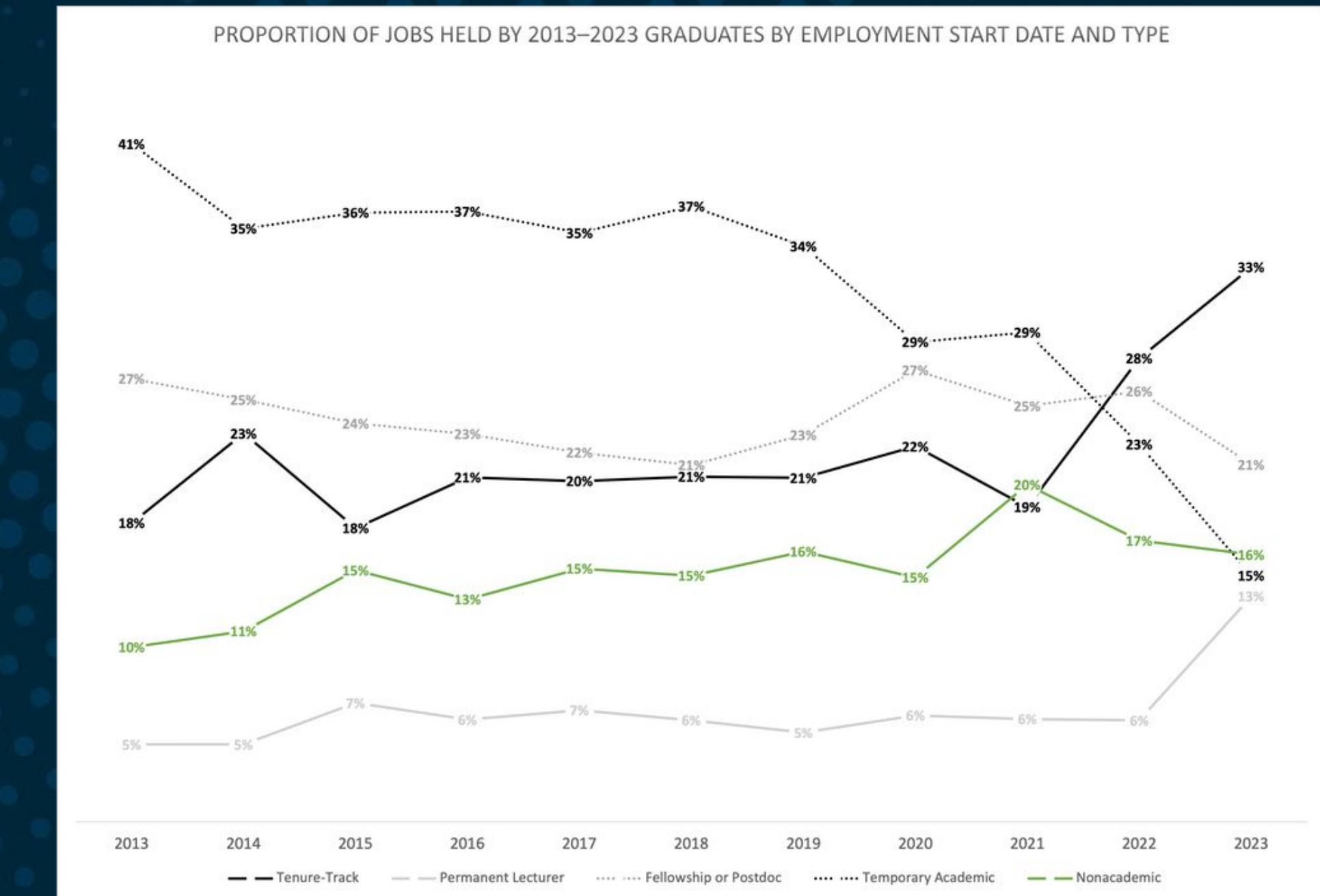
<https://apda.ghost.io/2024-data-collection-results-a-focus-on-recent-graduates/>

Warning: The Academic Job Market **Sucks!**

What about the non-academic job market after a philosophy

PhD? "A much smaller proportion [of philosophy Ph.D. grads between 2013-2023], 12%, has had employment outside of academia, with another 10% of unknown status or unemployed."

But non-academic employment is closer to 20% post-pandemic.



<https://apda.ghost.io/2024-data-collection-results-a-focus-on-recent-graduates/>

Grad School Application Components

Grad School Application Components

1. Strictly Enforced **Deadlines**

a. University Graduate Schools typically set deadlines independently of philosophy departments, leaving no room for negotiating late submissions

2. **School Application Form(s) + Application Fees \$\$**

3. **Curriculum Vitae (CV) / Academic Resume**

a. look at current grad student examples online; emulate strong examples

Grad School Application Components

4. Statement of Interest

<https://www.usu.edu/career-design-center/students/resources-by-college/grad-school>

Personal Statement/Letter of Intent

As you write your personal statement or letter of intent, be sure to follow the prompt in the application if there is one. Think about what to write if a prompt is not provided.

- What are your career goals?
- Why are you interested in this industry?
- Why is this specific program at this specific school the best fit for you?
- What are your best qualifications?
- Tell a story – depending on space and the prompt, try to tell a story or have a common thread through the statement as what influenced your decision to pursue this path or a significant moment/person that influenced your decision.

Some additional tips:

- View this [personal statement example](#).
- Keep the statement to 2 pages or less.
- Show a little bit of your personality – this is a personal essay, not a research paper.
- Have the [USU Writing Center](#) review your statement.

5. Writing Sample

a. Not just your best existing class essay; more on this later!

Grad School Application Components

6. 3 Letters of Recommendation

- a. Cannot be requested or produced last-minute; more on these later too!

7. Graduate Record Exam (GRE)?

- a. Not required everywhere
- b. Adds another layer of time + expense



8. External Scholarship Applications?

- a. Often equivalent work to applying to another school
- b. Especially important to consider if applying internationally

Grad School Application Components

For **some perspective from the admissions committee side of applications**: Dr. Alex Guerrero (Rutgers), “Advice for Applying to PhD Programs in Philosophy”

a. <https://dailynous.com/2021/10/29/advise-for-applying-to-phd-programs-in-philosophy-quest-post/>



The Ideal Application Timeline

The Ideal Application Timeline



1. Applications typically due early in the new year
 - a. Some exceptions (e.g., applying internationally)
2. Decisions often start to be communicated mid-March
 - a. Applicants may obsess over this news through *GradCafe*:
<https://forum.thegradcafe.com/forum/40-philosophy/>



The Ideal Application Timeline



3. Decisions across most programs finalized by April 15; waitlisted candidates often notified later

4. **USU's Career Design Center advises you begin planning applications at least 1 year in advance of applying:**

<https://www.usu.edu/career-design-center/files/students/Grad-School-Timeline.pdf>

Timeline

Utah State University
CAREER SERVICES

Start early when applying to graduate school. Deadlines for programs tend to fall between January and March. Applying earlier will increase your chances of being admitted. Many programs have rolling admissions and applications are evaluated as they arrive rather than all at once. Spots can fill up quickly as the final deadline draws near.

Almost every graduate school applicant will receive at least one rejection. While disappointing, it's not quite the final act. Contact the program advisor and politely express your regret at not being admitted. Ask them if they can point out where your application was weak or give you some suggestions on how you might strengthen your candidacy in the future. This will help if you choose to re-apply the following year.

Below is a sample schedule for a student hoping to enter graduate school in the fall. *Be sure to modify this schedule to fit the specific school's deadlines.*

October:

- Request official transcripts.
- Send your recommender supplemental materials (i.e., resume, personal statement, etc.) that they can use as a reference. Make contact with students and professors at your prospective schools.
- Arrange a campus visit, if possible, or follow-up to increase your chances of receiving an invitation for a visit from those programs that invite candidates.
- Talk to current students in the programs and meet with key professors
- Explore living areas around the campus.

November:

- Have someone in the field, a professor or advisor, and your Career Services Career Coach review and edit your personal statement. Leave time for rewriting and editing.
- Start your FAFSA form online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

December:

- Complete and submit all applications, keeping a copy of every section for your records.
- Verify that your recommendations have been sent.

January:

- Focus on financial aid—Finish your FAFSA online and look into private loans, grants, and fellowships.

April:

- Celebrate your acceptances.
- Appeal the aid package (or apply for alternative loans) if the amount the school offers you doesn't meet your financial needs.
- Report your success to your career coach.

Career Coaches' Favorite Sites:

- gradschools.com
- graduate-schools.petersons.com

Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

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ideally, you want:

- a. Several faculty working on things you want to study = several candidate dissertation supervisors / committee members
- b. More advanced students working on topics you find interesting, etc.
- c. Search by specialty / sub-discipline:

<https://www.philosopicalgourmet.com/breakdown-of-programs-by-specialties/> or <https://gradguide.apaonline.org/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the APA Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy. At the top, the APA logo is displayed, followed by a navigation bar with links to Home, Programs, Help, and The APA. Below the navigation, a main title reads "The APA Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy". A sub-instruction says "To browse all programs, leave the fields below blank and click the green search button." A "Get Started Now" button is present. To the right, there is a sidebar for "PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers" with the tagline "The most complete listing of philosophy jobs." At the bottom, four red boxes provide summary statistics: "Total Schools 185", "Total Students 4114", "Total Ph.D. Programs 122", and "Total MA Programs 189".

Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

Financial Package evaluated against local Cost of Living

- a. Unless you're independently wealthy, don't go into debt for graduate school in philosophy
- b. Tuition remission is standard; if a program cannot offer this, that's a **red flag!** (minimal student fees are no cause for alarm)



Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

Funding Package evaluated against local Cost of Living

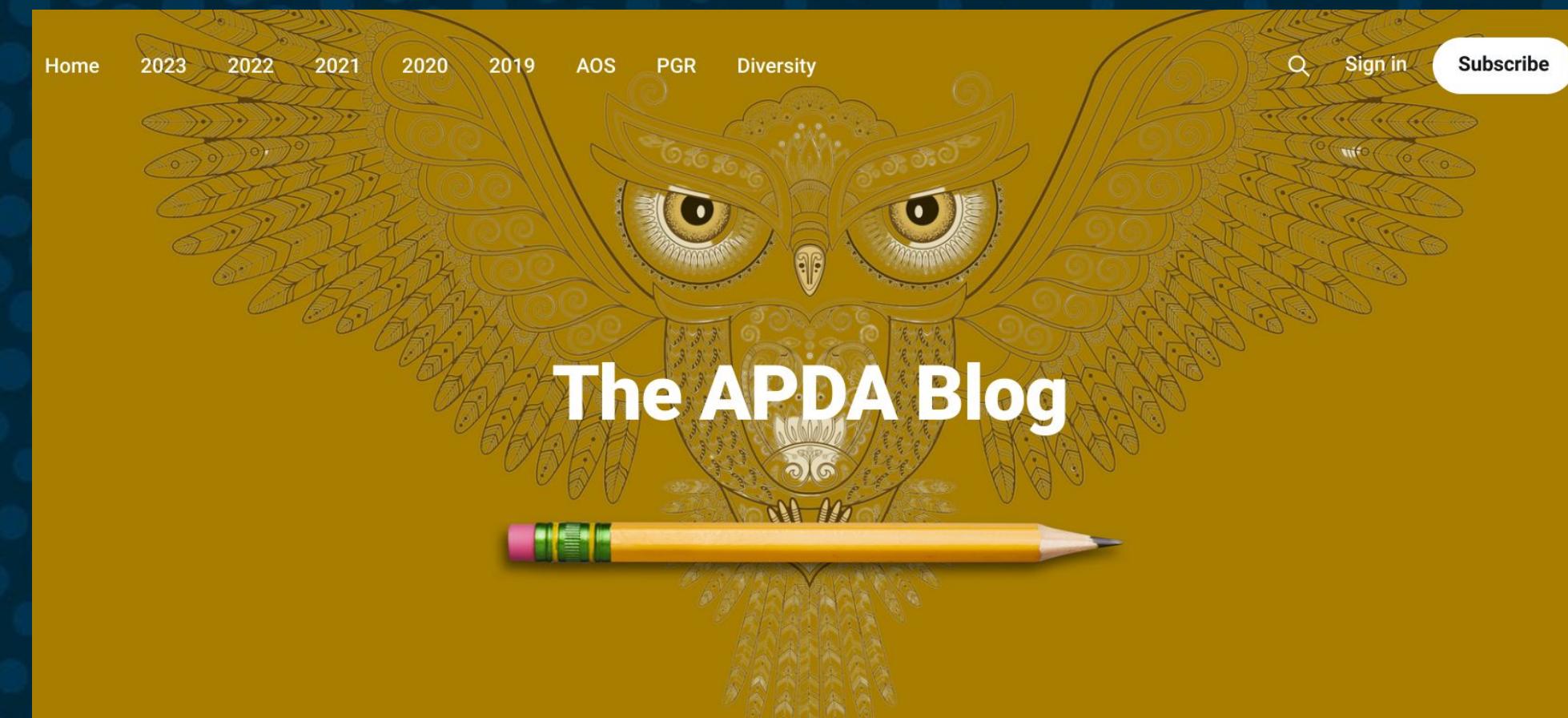
- c. Additional funding to cover living expenses is also standard
 - i. **Fellowships:** usually require no labor from grad student
 - ii. **Graduate/Teaching Assistantships:** compensation for grading/teaching
 - iii. **External Scholarships:** usually require no labor
- d. Some funding is only partial, so research carefully and compare the cost of living there to that of Logan

Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

Placement Record of (Especially Recent) Graduates:

- a. Academic Philosophy & Data Analysis (APDA) Project

<https://www.philosophydata.org/> | APDA Dashboard

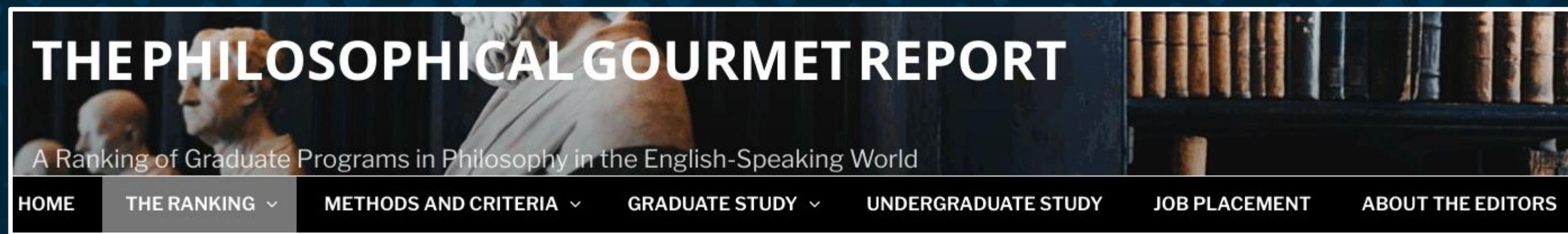


Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to

4. Reputational Ranking of Department:

- a. Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR):

<https://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/overall-rankings/>



- b. QS World Rankings:

<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-ranking/s/philosophy>

Factors to Weigh in Choosing Where to Apply

5. Proximity to your support system



6. Climate for grad students

- a. Do current grad students seem happy in the program?
- b. <https://dailynous.com/2024/10/08/grad-program-data-climate-mental-health-employment-demographics/>

Types of Grad Programs & How Many

Types of Grad Programs

1. **Funded Doctoral Programs (PhD or DPhil)**
2. **Funded Terminal Master's Programs (MA or MPhil) likely to improve your prospects of acceptance into a Doctorate**

a. <https://fundedphilma.weebly.com/>

**FUNDED MA PROGRAMS IN
PHILOSOPHY (US)**

b. <https://www.philosopicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy/>

Types of Grad Programs: The Master's

M.A. PROGRAMS IN PHILOSOPHY

Who should consider an M.A. program in philosophy? Three categories of students who ultimately want to get a Ph.D. and pursue an academic career might benefit from such programs: (i) students whose undergraduate major was not philosophy; (ii) students who majored in philosophy at universities with philosophy departments outside the mainstream of the profession; and (iii) students who majored in philosophy, have a solid grounding in the various areas of philosophy, but who studied philosophy at smaller colleges and universities, or at institutions with weak academic reputations (students should consult their departments to find out whether graduates of their schools have been able to gain admittance to Ph.D. programs of their choice). Students in each category may be both qualified for and able to get into the Ph.D. programs of their choice; but students who fit into one of these categories may be more likely to have trouble getting into Ph.D. programs and may be good candidates to benefit from M.A. programs.

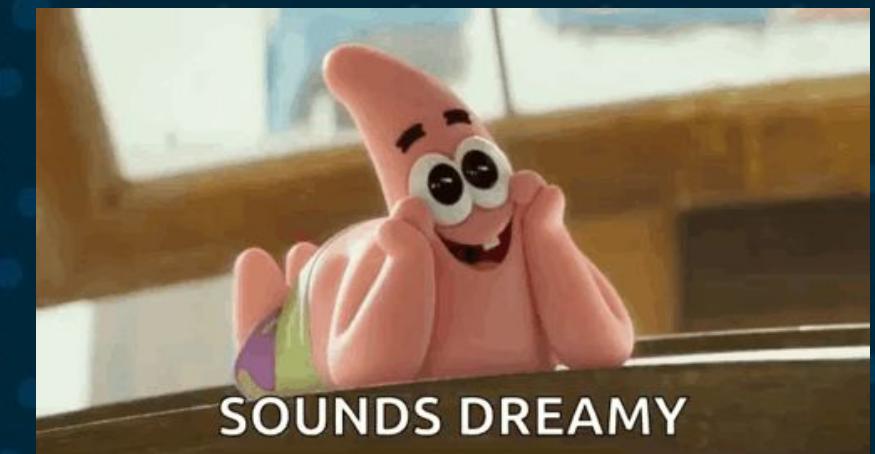
A good M.A. program will provide many benefits: it will allow a student to get a basic grounding in philosophy or expand the breadth of her existing knowledge, develop increased familiarity with current debates in philosophy, prepare and polish written work in philosophy that will be useful in the applications process for Ph.D. programs and get to know some established philosophers who can then provide meaningful letters of recommendation for Ph.D. programs.

—Brian Leiter, <https://www.philosopicalgourmet.com/m-a-programs-in-philosophy>

Types of Grad Programs: How Many?

3. Depending on how much \$ you can devote to applications,
consider applying to a range of programs:

- a. **Dream School(s)**
- b. **Realistic Options**
- c. **“Safety” School(s)** you would still happily attend if accepted
 - i. Not wanting to be shut out, some people apply to places they really don't want to go, leading to torturous deliberations; avoid this if possible

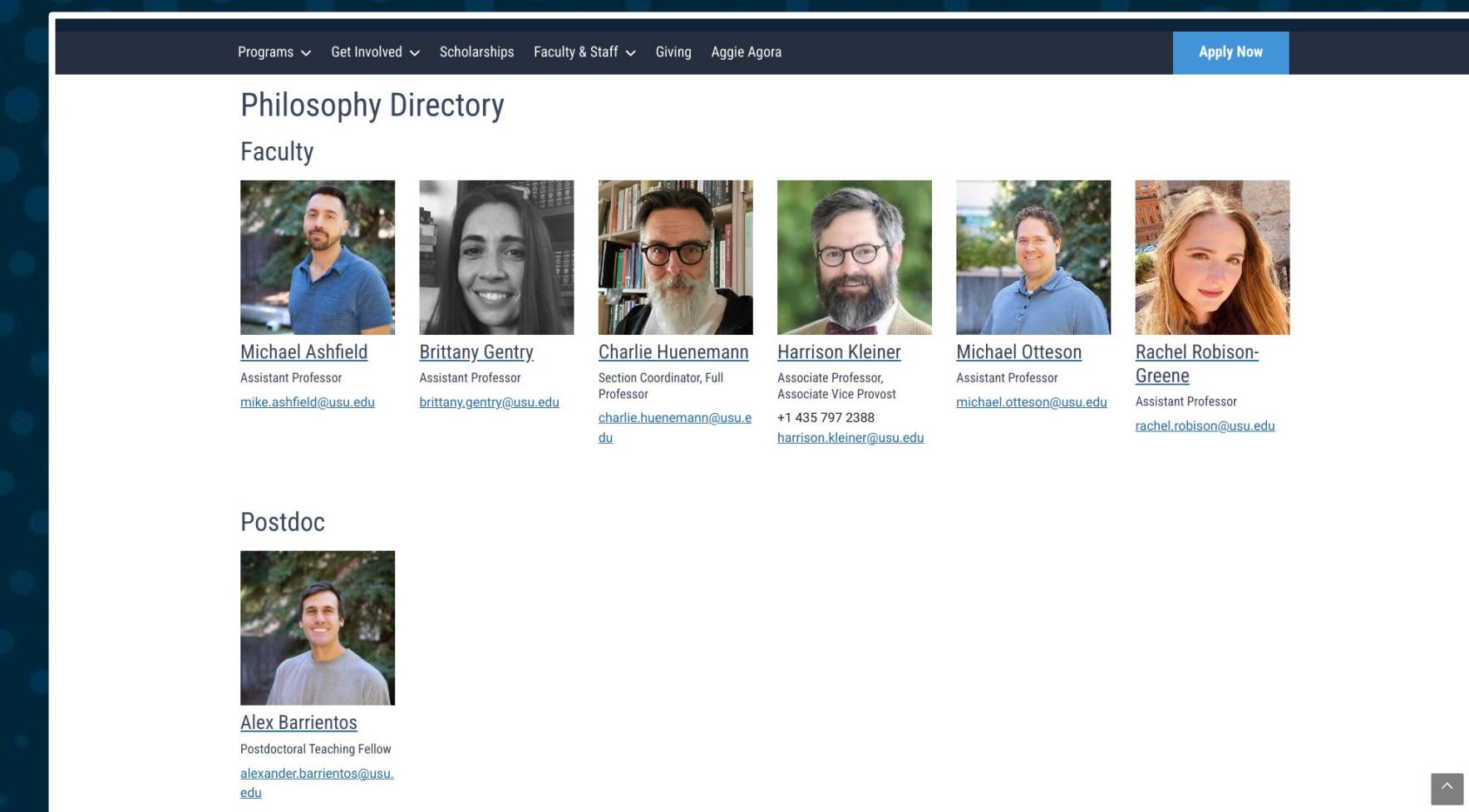


Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

1. **Take classes with a wide range of faculty members**, so that you get to know several well enough to ask them to write you a letter or recommendation.

a. Ideally, you want to request letters no later than early Fall of Senior Year (or the year you're applying)

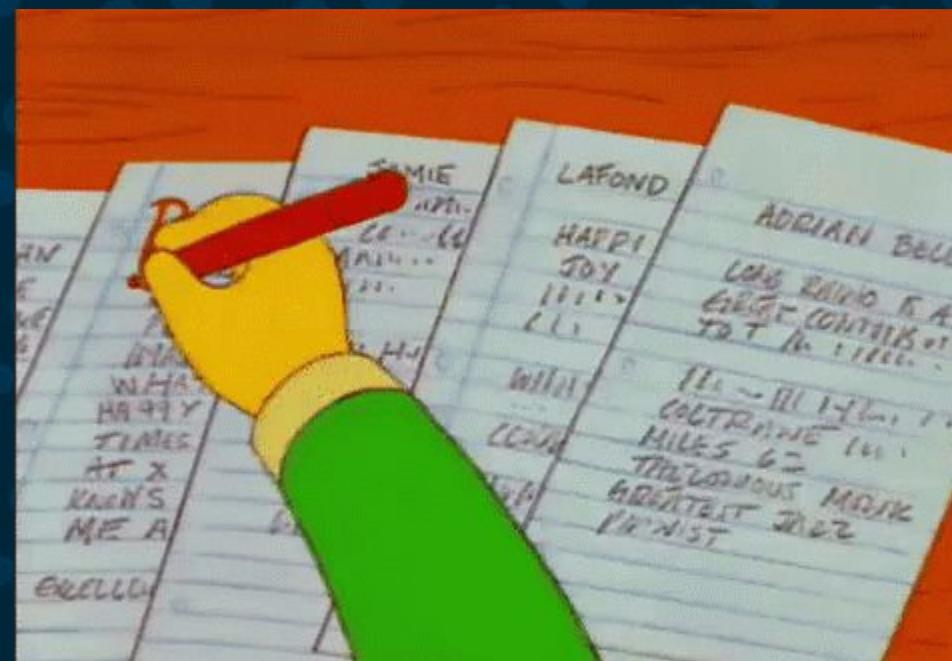


The screenshot shows a grid of profiles for Philosophy faculty and a postdoctoral staff member. Each profile includes a photo, name, title, and email address.

Category	Profile	Name	Title	Email
Faculty		Michael Ashfield	Assistant Professor	mike.ashfield@usu.edu
		Brittany Gentry	Assistant Professor	brittany.gentry@usu.edu
		Charlie Huenemann	Section Coordinator, Full Professor	charlie.huenemann@usu.edu
		Harrison Kleiner	Associate Professor, Associate Vice Provost	+1 435 797 2388 harrison.kleiner@usu.edu
		Michael Otteson	Assistant Professor	michael.otteson@usu.edu
		Rachel Robison-Greene	Assistant Professor	rachel.robison@usu.edu
		Alex Barrientos	Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow	alexander.barrientos@usu.edu

Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

2. **Apply to be a UTF** to get some experience with what being a TA might be like. It also might give you a sense of whether teaching/grading work is something you actually like doing.

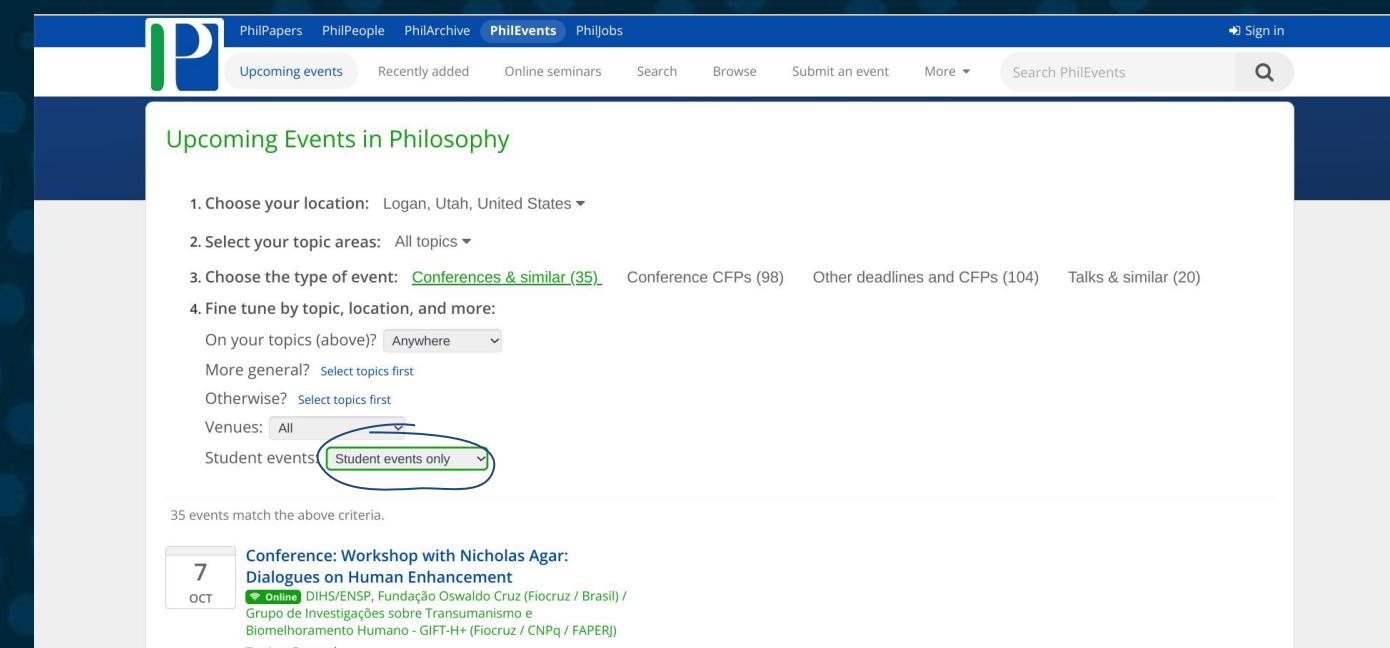


Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

3. If possible, **send your work off** to undergraduate conferences

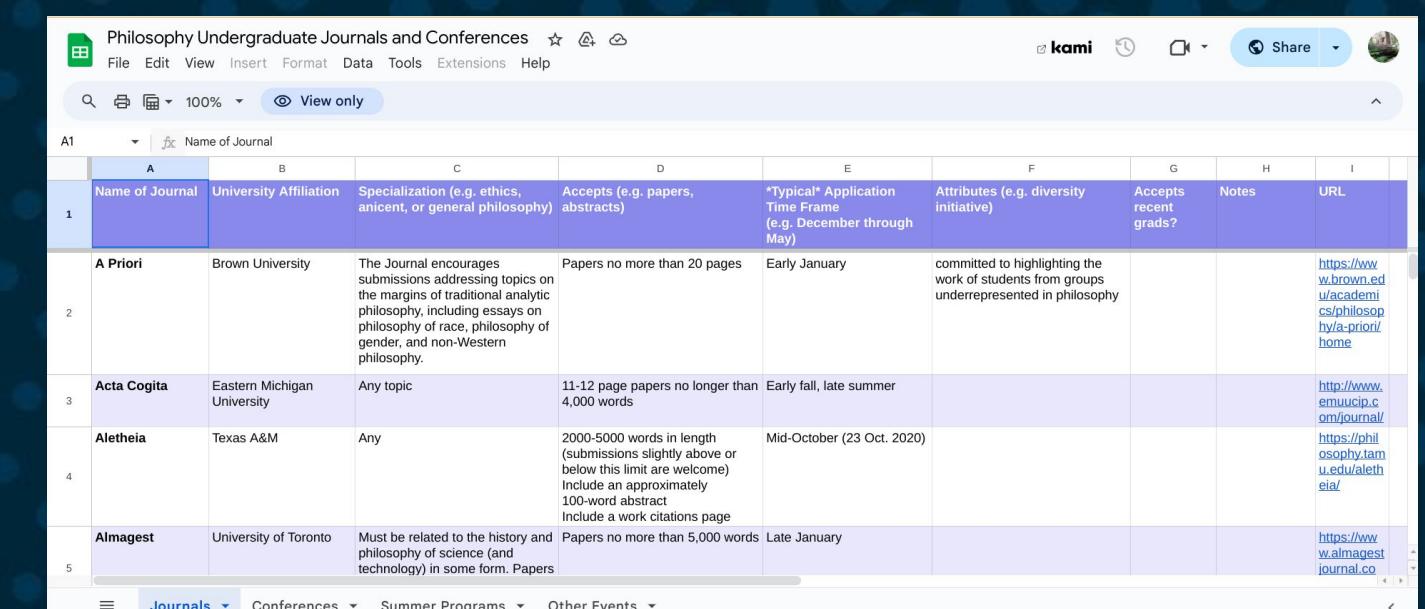
and/or journals:

a. Philevents.org can filter for “student events only”



The screenshot shows the Philevents.org homepage with the navigation bar: PhilPapers, PhilPeople, PhilArchive, PhilEvents (highlighted in blue), PhilJobs. Below the navigation is a search bar and a 'Sign in' link. The main content area is titled 'Upcoming Events in Philosophy'. It includes a list of filters: 1. Choose your location: Logan, Utah, United States; 2. Select your topic areas: All topics; 3. Choose the type of event: Conferences & similar (35), Conference CFPs (98), Other deadlines and CFPs (104), Talks & similar (20); 4. Fine tune by topic, location, and more: On your topics (above)? Anywhere, More general? Select topics first, Otherwise? Select topics first, Venues: All, Student events: Student events only (highlighted with a green oval). Below the filters, it says '35 events match the above criteria.' and lists a single event: 'Conference: Workshop with Nicholas Agar: Dialogues on Human Enhancement' on October 7, 2020, at DIHS/ENSP, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz / Brasil) / Grupo de investigações sobre Transumanismo e Biomelhoramento Humano - GIFT-H+ (Fiocruz / CNPq / FAPERJ). Topics: General.'

b. Check the Undergraduate Philosophy Journal Database



A1	Philosophy Undergraduate Journals and Conferences								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Name of Journal	University Affiliation	Specialization (e.g. ethics, ancient, or general philosophy)	Accepts (e.g. papers, abstracts)	*Typical* Application Time Frame (e.g. December through May)	Attributes (e.g. diversity initiative)	Accepts recent grads?	Notes	URL
1	A Priori	Brown University	The Journal encourages submissions addressing topics on the margins of traditional analytic philosophy, including essays on philosophy of race, philosophy of gender, and non-Western philosophy.	Papers no more than 20 pages	Early January	committed to highlighting the work of students from groups underrepresented in philosophy			https://www.brown.edu/academics/philosophy/a-priori/home
2	Acta Cogita	Eastern Michigan University	Any topic	11-12 page papers no longer than 4,000 words	Early fall, late summer				http://www.emucip.com/journal/
3	Aletheia	Texas A&M	Any	2000-5000 words in length (submissions slightly above or below this limit are welcome) Include an approximately 100-word abstract Include a work citations page	Mid-October (23 Oct. 2020)				https://philosophy.tam.edu/aletheia/
4	Almagest	University of Toronto	Must be related to the history and philosophy of science (and technology) in some form. Papers	Papers no more than 5,000 words	Late January				https://www.almagestjournal.com/

Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

4. Your **Writing Sample** almost certainly cannot be your best existing philosophy essay written for a class

a. General Advice For Good Philosophical Writing:

<https://dailynous.com/2024/01/23/write-philosophy-paper-online-guides/>

b. Approach a professor early (e.g., Fall of Junior Year) about doing a PHIL 4910 *Directed Reading* (e.g., Spring of Junior Year) to polish a potential writing sample

Guidelines for Students on Writing Philosophy Papers

- ["Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper"](#) by Jim Pryor
- ["Writing a Good Philosophy Paper"](#) by Justin Weinberg
- ["Writing a Philosophy Paper"](#) by Peter Horban
- ["Tips on Writing Philosophy Papers"](#) by William Blattner
- ["How to Write \(not Terrible\) Philosophy Papers"](#) by Manuel Vargas
- ["Philosophy Paper Writing Guidelines"](#) by Tim O'Keefe and Anne Farrell
- ["A Guide to Writing"](#) by Michael Huemer
- ["Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper"](#) by Stephen Yablo
- ["7 Steps to a Better Philosophy Paper"](#) by Bryan W. Roberts
- ["Some Writing Tips for Philosophy"](#) by Brian Earp
- ["How to Write a Crap Philosophy Essay"](#) by James Lenman
- ["A Sample Philosophy Paper"](#) by Angela Mendelovici
- ["Writing Philosophy Essays"](#) by Michael Tooley
- ["Writing Your Philosophy Paper: Common Problems to Avoid"](#) by Elijah Millgram
- ["A Guide to Philosophical Writing"](#) by Elijah Chudnoff
- ["The Pink Guide to Philosophy"](#) by Helena de Bres

Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:

a. [The Hamilton College Summer Program in Philosophy](#)



Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:
 - b. [The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy](#)



Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

5. Consider attending a philosophy summer institute for prospective grad students:

c. The many Undergraduate Diversity Institutes in Philosophy, including the **Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institutes (PIKSI)** and several more detailed here:

<https://www.apaonline.org/page/diversityinstitutes>



Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

6. It's wise to **go in with a non-academic back-up plan** tailored to *your* interests, skills, connections, etc.
 - a. Consider developing in-demand skills along the way that will help almost anywhere you end up (e.g., data analysis)
 - b. Consider concurrent programs with other disciplines or professions (e.g., J.D./Ph.D. programs)
 - c. There have probably never been more supports in place for helping doctoral students succeed outside academia

Specific Advice for USU Philosophy Majors

6. It's wise to **go in with a non-academic back-up plan** tailored to *your* interests, skills, connections, etc.
 - c. ...helping doctoral students succeed outside academia

E.g., The American Philosophical Association's Committee for Non-Academic Careers:

PhDs in philosophy who work outside of academia are holding office hours for philosophers considering careers outside of academia

<https://dailynous.com/?s=non-academic>

<https://dailynous.com/2024/08/23/philosophers-in-industry-office-hours/>

Name	Subject areas	Link to office hours
Nathan Bice	Tech/Data Science jobs, Resume building, Marketing yourself, Industry vs Academia cultural differences	LINK
Aaron Kagan	Tech Jobs, User Research, Human Factors, Design jobs	LINK
Johann Klaassen	Finance, Financial services, Investment and any related fields	LINK
Daniel Immerman	Tech jobs, in particular conversational AI.	LINK
William Smith	Medicine, Healthcare, Health Policy, Bioethics	LINK

Presentation Recap

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Recent USU Philosophy Alum

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Recent USU Philosophy Alum

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B.A. Philosophy, USU

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Recent USU Philosophy Acquisition

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Postdoctoral Teaching

Fellow, Philosophy, USU

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Thank You
&
Good Luck!



UtahStateUniversity