





Managing your future career as a PhD researcher

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Program

01

How is this
relevant for
me?

02

What are my
career
opportunities?

03

How to design
a fitting career
path?

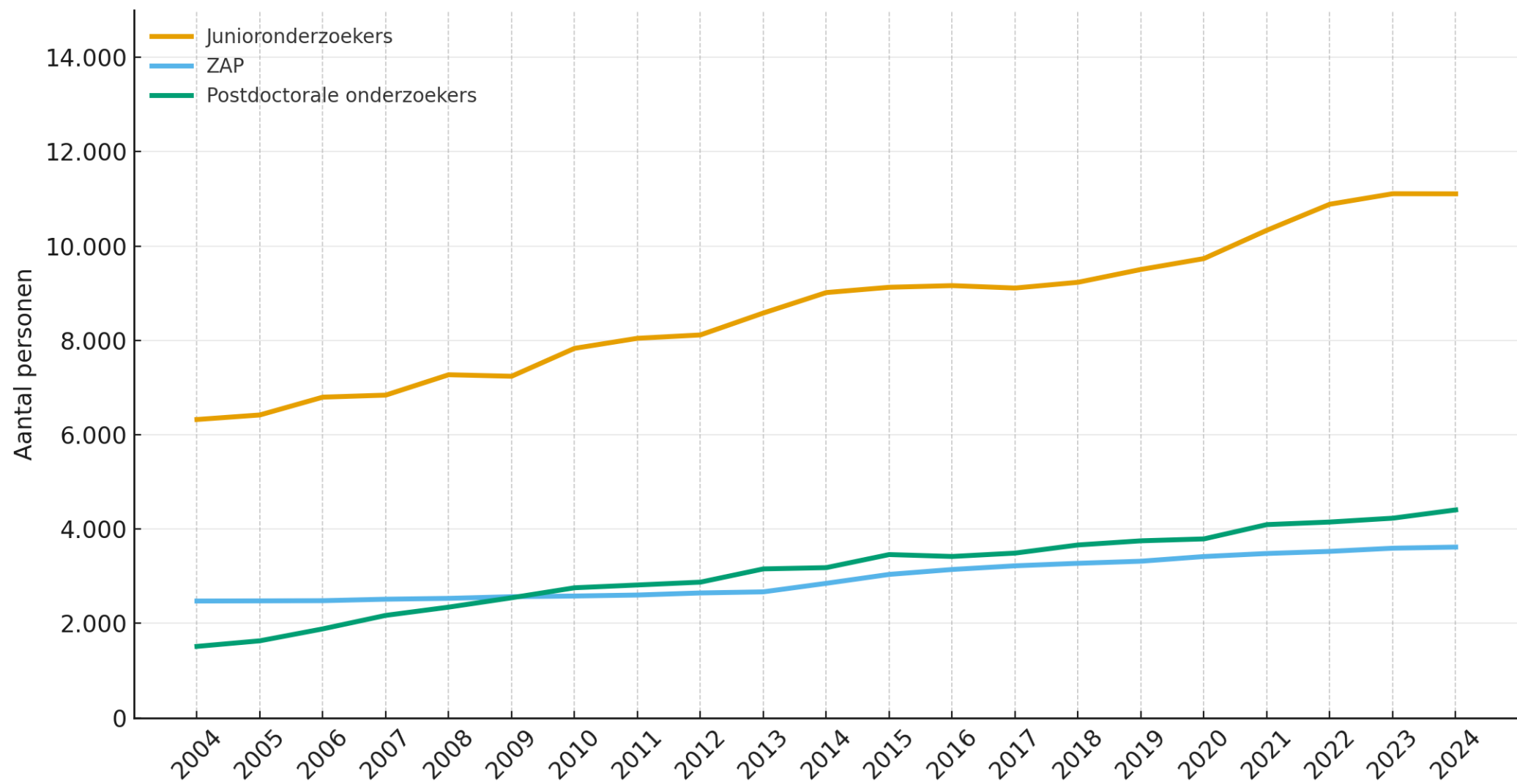
04

What now?

Program

01

**How is this
relevant for
me?**



A conceptual image showing a red origami bird in flight, having just left a nest. The nest is built on a bare tree branch and contains two crumpled pieces of white paper. The background is a blue sky with light clouds.

88%

**The majority of
doctoral holders
leave the academic nest.**

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What jobs do the PhD holders you know do outside of academia?

A myriad of options!

Self-employment

Consultancy

Policy making/ advising

(higher)
education

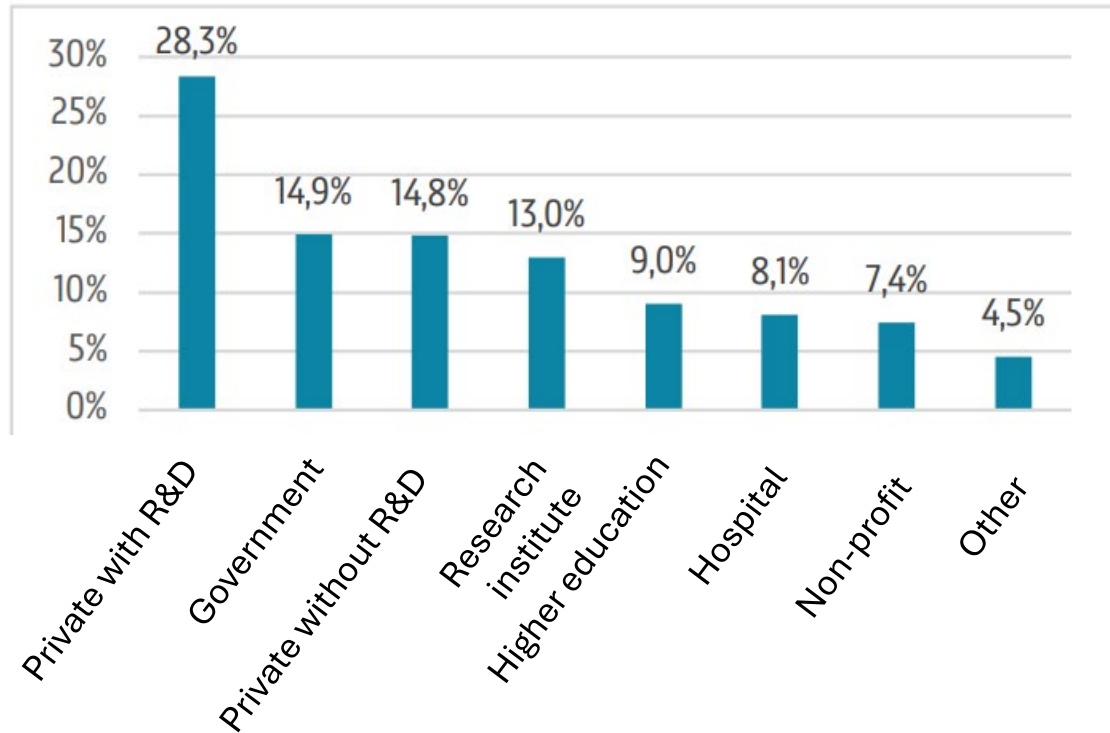
Non-profit

R&D

Government



Figure 1: Share of PhD holders per non-academic sector in their first job after obtaining a PhD, 2017 (N = 1535)



- academic track
- non- profit
- R&D
- Governmental work
- (higher) education
- self-employment
- private sector: working at a big international company or @SME's
- **... anything you want!**



So a lot of options

But how do I find my perfect match?



So a lot of options

~~But how do I find my perfect match?~~

“... reject the myth that there is a single, perfect job out there waiting for us to discover it, and instead **identify our multiple selves** – a range of potential careers that might suit the different sides of our character.”

From ‘How to find fulfilling work’ – Roman Krznaric, School of Life



So a lot of options

~~But how do I find my perfect match?~~

→ How do I identify **a (range of) potential career(s) that might suit (the different sides of) my character**

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Thinking



Doing



We spend most of our waking lives at work in occupations most often chosen by our inexperienced younger selves. And yet we rarely ask ourselves how we got there or what our jobs mean to us.

Alain De Botton, *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work*

**What does doing a PhD
mean to you?**



Thinking

- What drives me in life?
- What are my ambitions & (career) values?
- What are my strengths?
- What are my learning opportunities?
- What drains my energy?
- What makes me lose track of time?
- What do I enjoy in my work environment?
- If I could solve 1 problem in the world, it would be...
- ...

What are the best parts of your day?

Reflect on one moment this (or past) week where you felt most energized. What were you doing? Who was with you?

Make it specific

What skills are you obtaining by doing your PhD?

(that you also **enjoy** putting into use)

FIGURE 3.3

Core skills in 2025

Share of employers who consider the stated skills to be core skills for their workforce.



Make your skills explicit

Think of concrete tasks you do during your PhD and identify the transferable skills they demonstrate.

Activity or experience	Transferable skill
Developing hypotheses and searching for innovative solutions	Creative thinking
Supervising PhD researchers or master students	Leadership/coaching
Synthesizing large amounts of information	Analytical thinking
...	...

A scenic landscape featuring a winding asphalt road that curves through a hilly area. On the left, a grassy hill rises, with a few small figures of people standing on its crest. A person in a blue shirt and dark shorts is running along the road, heading away from the viewer. To the right of the road, a white metal guardrail follows the curve. In the background, a town is visible, nestled in a valley and partially obscured by a soft, golden glow from a low sun. The sky is a deep blue with wispy white clouds, and a few birds are seen flying in the distance. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and inspiring, suggesting a journey or a path forward.

The secret to getting
ahead is getting started.

Mark Twain



By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change careers is to delay taking the first step until they have settled on the destination...

Herminia Ibarra, Working Identity



Doing

- Radical sabbaticals
- Branching projects
- Conversational research
- Pixel career

But also

- Following workshops
- Investing in your interests/hobbies
- Getting out there

What is one skill that you want to further develop throughout your PhD? How are you going to do this?

Make it specific!

Think of three people that you might want to reach out to, people who are doing something that inspires you or who are working at a company that you like: what questions would you like to ask them?

Contact one of them right now (or right after the session 😊)!

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Try to enjoy the ride



But also:
Luck is no accident; it is a case of planned ‘happenstance’



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To build your professional network



Training

To make your career future proof



Individual career coaching

To guide you in making informed career decisions

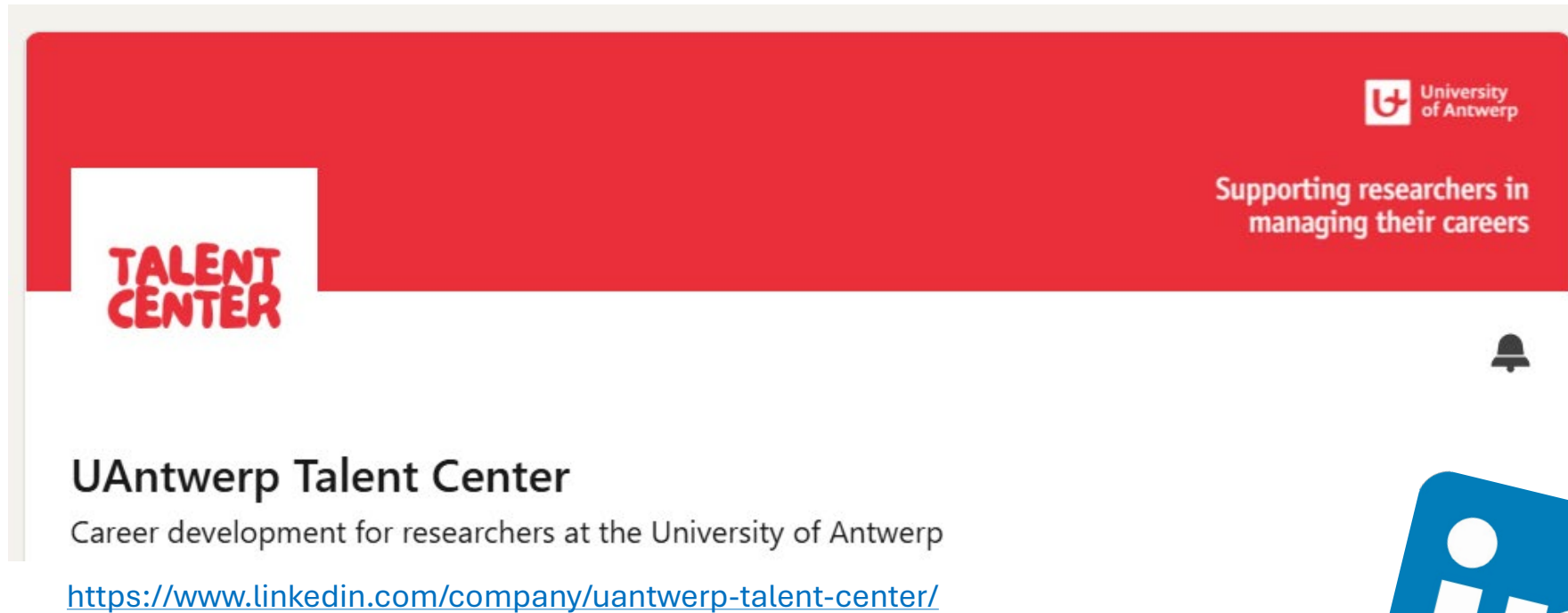
**What are you going to do today that
your future work self is going to thank
you for?**

How to find us?



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Stay up to date!



Thank you & good luck!