

## Options and Opportunities – Tool #1: Common Job Titles

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One way to explore your options is to look through common job titles held by physics bachelor's recipients and see what interests you. This is a good way to narrow down your interests and identify the areas in which you would like to do **informational interviews** (see tool #2). There are four main areas where physics bachelor's degree recipients find employment, and the common job titles presented are divided into these areas. For specific details about the nature of work for each job title, spend some time doing online searches.

Note that you can find physics majors in ALL kinds of professions—science writing, medicine, law, history of science, acting, music, healthcare, and the list continues on and on. This list is composed of common job titles identified by an AIP Statistical Research Center survey on physics bachelor's degree graduates from the classes of 2009 and 2010. This list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

### Common areas where physics bachelor's degree recipients find employment:

**Engineering:** The largest percentage of physics bachelor's recipients that go directly into the STEM workforce get a job in an engineering field.

**Computer Hardware and Software:** The second most common area of work for physics bachelor's recipients is in computer hardware and software, which includes programming, modeling, and simulation. “Analyst” also appears in this section because it involves considerable amounts of mathematics and software skills, albeit in areas like finance.

**Research and Technical:** Physics graduates often take jobs doing scientific research and working in a laboratory environment.

**Education:** Educators with bachelor's degrees in physics tend to teach middle or high school science. About half of all high school physics teachers in the United States teach mostly or exclusively physics. The other half teach mainly related subjects like chemistry and math.

## Common job titles of physics bachelor's degree recipients

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### Engineering

Systems Engineer  
Electrical Engineer  
Design Engineer  
Mechanical Engineer  
Project Engineer  
Optical Engineer  
Manufacturing Engineer  
Manufacturing Technician  
Laser Engineer  
Associate Engineer  
Technical Services Engineer  
Application Engineer  
Development Engineer  
Engineering Technician  
Field Engineer  
Process Engineer  
Process Technician  
Product Engineer  
Product Manager  
Research Engineer  
Test Engineer  
General Engineer

### Computer Hardware / Software

Software Engineer  
Programmer  
Web Developer  
IT Consultant  
Systems Analyst  
Technical Support Staff  
Analyst

### Education

High School Physics Teacher  
High School Science Teacher  
Middle School Science Teacher

### Research and Technical

Research Assistant  
Research Associate  
Research Technician  
Lab Technician  
Lab Assistant  
Accelerator Operator  
Physical Sciences Technician



*Source: These job titles were obtained from surveys conducted by the Statistical Research Center of the American Institute of Physics of physics bachelor's recipients of the classes of 2009 and 2010.*

## Exercise - Tool #1: Common Job Titles

⇒ Read through the list of common job titles and jot down any that sound interesting to you. To learn more and to see other options, visit some sites that feature profiles of physicists working in other areas.

<b>Job titles I am interested in...</b>	
<b>Top four job titles I am interested in...</b>	

### Resource Box: Profiles of people in physics

[www.spsnational.org/cup/profiles/](http://www.spsnational.org/cup/profiles/)  
Careers Using Physics, by the Society of Physics Students

[www.physicscentral.org/explore/people/](http://www.physicscentral.org/explore/people/)  
Physics Central, by the American Physical Society

[www.aps.org/careers/physicists/profiles](http://www.aps.org/careers/physicists/profiles)  
Physicist Profiles, by the American Physical Society

[www.physics.org/careerprofiles.asp](http://www.physics.org/careerprofiles.asp)  
Physics.org, by the Institute of Physics

**EXERCISE #1**

⇒ For each job title you are interested in, spend some time exploring what someone with that title does through online searches and write down key words that describe that job below.

<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Job title:</b>
<b>Key words:</b>	<b>Key words:</b>	<b>Key words:</b>	<b>Key words:</b>

⇒ In the box below, record the job titles that you are interested in learning even more about.

<b>Job titles I need to learn more about</b>

⇒ If desired, repeat this exercise for additional job titles.