

# Academics — doing a PhD

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After your bachelor's degree, should you go on for:

- ① A Masters Degree?
- ② A PhD?

It depends...

- Advantages and disadvantages of a PhD versus a “real” job
- Is a Masters/PhD good for you?
- How to look for a Masters/PhD position

We'll discuss some answers to this question based on personal experience, a seminar on 'Academics' (UC Berkeley, fall 2004) and John Goldsmith, John Komlos and Penny Gold's *Chicago Guide to Your Academic career*



# Advantages and Disadvantages

## Advantages:

- you can always work anywhere: (relative) flexibility
- always the chance to learn and discover new things
- get to share your experience with and pass it on to others
- travel (conferences, exchange)

## Disadvantages:

- you can always work anywhere: there is a risk you do
- you need to find a job somewhere



Very Important:

You must have fascination for the field, and enthusiasm!

Both to do a Masters and to do a PhD, you need to be motivated.



# Ask...

- A professor who knows you and your work, whether (s)he recommends you do a Master/PhD
- People who just finished their Master/PhD: what it was like? What they are doing now? How hard it was to find a job? etc..
- Researchers and faculty members: what is the field like at the moment?  
which direction is it going?
- Yourself:
  - are you disciplined enough (also for exciting research, boring tasks must be completed...)?
  - is the field really your cup of tea?
  - (when considering PhD): when it comes to the field: are you creative and critical?



# How to look for a Masters/PhD position

Things to keep in mind:

- Is the field you are interested in well-represented in the department?
- Are there people you can work with?
- (reputation)
- (change)

