Pre-doctoral experience is increasingly common. PhD applicants with pre-doc experience grew to around 30% by the end of 2020, and to 45% in economics and finance.

Pre-doctoral experience is also increasingly accepted as a credential for PhD preparedness. In a top-10 school, admitted students with pre-doctoral experience reached 40% overall and over 50% in economics and finance.
PREDOC.org: An Informational Hub

Since its launch in October 2020, PREDOC.org and its social media channels have become the primary source of information on pre-doctoral opportunities. A major pre-doc employer tracked where its applicants heard about positions in fall 2021:

Engagement with the website had a strong start and has only become more widespread.

Visits: 61,216
Unique Visitors: 26,075
Return Visitors: 8,499

73% increase from this point last year
42% increase from this point last year
43% increase from this point last year

On Twitter, PREDOC has over 2,800 followers, and an impressive engagement rate (retweets, follows, replies, favorites, and click-throughs divided by impressions).
Opportunities Advertised on PREDOC

One of the most powerful draws to PREDOC.org for potential pre-docs is our Opportunities page. This page lists current opportunities from any employer—PREDOC member or not—that is recruiting pre-docs. This addresses a major information friction in the pre-doc labor market. The figures below are drawn from the PREDOC Opportunities page since September 1, 2021.

- 139 advertisements
- 424 pre-docs recruited
- 2,122 users on mailing list (982 students)
- 899 average click-throughs per ad
- 31 employers featured
Employers Advertising on PREDOC

1) The Brookings Institution
2) California Institute of Technology
3) Center for Anxiety
4) Carnegie Mellon University
5) Columbia
6) The European Central Bank
7) The Federal Reserve
8) The Federal Trade Commission
9) Harvard
10) J-PAL
11) The University of Michigan
12) MIT
13) NBER
14) Northwestern
15) Notre Dame
16) New York University
17) Oxford
18) Princeton
19) Stanford
20) Tufts
21) UC Berkeley
21) UCLA
22) UCSD
23) The University of Chicago
24) University of North Carolina
25) University of Pennsylvania
26) US Census Bureau
27) University of Southern California
28) The World Bank
29) Yale

Fields Represented

- Accounting
- Behavioral science
- Data science
- Development economics
- Discrimination
- Econometrics
- Economic history
- Economics
- Economics of education
- Energy & Environment
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- Gender
- Genoeconomics
- Health
- Housing
- Inequality
- Innovation & Technology
- Labor
- Law and economics
- Machine learning
- Marketing
- Neuroeconomics
- Poverty
- Public policy
- Regulation
- Spatial economics
- Trade
- Urban economics

Information Session/Recruiting Hosts

- University of Indiana
- Lincoln University
- Virginia State University
- University of Nebraska Lincoln
- CUNY
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- The College of New Rochelle
- The Sadie Collective
- University of Central Florida
- UW Madison
- University of Massachusetts-Boston
- UNC Pembroke
- Chicago State University
- University of Michigan
- New Jersey City University
- Alabama State University
- Wilberforce University
- Purdue University
- University of Houston
- Northern Illinois University
- California State University
- Carleton College
- University of Texas
- University of California
- Haskell Indian Nations University
- UN-Las Vegas
- University of Kansas
- Wayne State University
- UW-Tacoma
- University of New Mexico
In July and August, PREDOC enrolled its inaugural class of 20 students (from 1,300 applications) in a course designed to teach quantitative social science research methods. Pradeep Chintagunta, Joseph T. and Bernice S. Lewis Distinguished Service Professor of Marketing at Chicago Booth, designed and led the course. Students met synchronously over Zoom four evenings a week for eight weeks for lectures with Prof. Chintagunta, skills sessions with the TA, and professional development sessions.

All students received a $2,000 stipend for their participation in the course in addition to a STATA license. This ensured that students could devote the time needed without a loss of other potential income. Even more significant to the students, however, was the opportunity for them to meet and network with their peers in the field. The importance of this community was underlined especially strongly in one student’s testimonial:

"I'm a first generation college student and neither one of my parents speak a word of English, so I've had a pretty rough go at trying to navigate through college alone for the past three years. [...] The summer class, and PREDOC as a program itself, make things easier for people like us. The PREDOC program gives us a more equitable chance to succeed in our goals, and I genuinely feel that because I now have PREDOC as a resource, my gender and race will hold me back less. This restored my passion for economics, as well as my determination for landing a predoc position and eventually going to grad school, from a really rough situation I was going through. So I just wanted to say a very sincere thank you for all that you do. It has changed my life."

PRE Workshop
The 2021 Pre-doctoral research in economics (PRE) Workshop hosted over 250 students during a two-day workshop aimed at supporting underrepresented undergraduates. The workshop included panels with faculty and current pre-docs, and two smaller sessions devoted to completing a STATA task, offering individual instruction and mentoring to over 80 students, including a STATA license to over 40 financially constrained students.
In December, PREDOC launched a call for proposals to award grants to faculty who would hire and mentor undergraduate research assistants (RAs). In the application, each faculty had to describe their mentoring experience and strategy. These descriptions were a major factor in assigning awards. All awardees will receive access to a resume book of 21 students who have participated in PREDOC Education activities (the PREDOC course or the PRE STATA workshop). Awardees will be encouraged to participate in PREDOC sessions on effective mentoring, and PREDOC staff will check in regularly with RAs and PIs to ensure the relationship is mutually beneficial. This pilot program has awarded ten $4,000 grants, intended to fund work through the 2022 spring semester.

Best Hiring Practices
In October, Jane Risen, the H.G.B Alexander Professor of Behavioral Science and John E. Jeuck Faculty Fellow at Chicago Booth, led a virtual session on best hiring practices. Professor Risen discussed concrete strategies to reduce unwanted or unlawful bias in hiring, and led an engaged discussion among participants on applications in their own searches and programs.

Effective Mentoring
This past fall, PREDOC staff worked to design a session on Mentoring Across Difference. This presentation will challenge outmoded, passive forms of mentorship and give participants concrete strategies on how to listen to and advocate for their mentees. The session will in particular give a framework for mentoring across difference, helping mentors to engage with and advocate for mentees with different identities and lived experiences than theirs. RA Matching grant recipients will be strongly encouraged to attend.