Academic vs. Non-academic Careers

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY | University Career Services

Academic	Non-Academic
Publishing in peer-reviewed journals is necessary for success.	Publications are nice to have, but not needed.
You can experience a great sense of autonomy.	There is often a clearly defined set of reporting lines and accountability.
Work schedules can be irregular and driven by the schedule of classes. Breaks are built around the academic calendar (e.g, winter and summer break).	Although evolving, standard business hours are considered Monday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm. Breaks are not set or built into the calendar, and busy times are driven by the cycle of the specific industry.
Your budget is often determined by fundraising and grant-seeking. These efforts are frequently part of the job, particularly for career advancement.	Your budget is often determined by a centralized resource allocation process and set by the fiscal year.
Tenure-line positions are highly coveted for job security, but the number of tenure-track positions is on the decline.	There is no equivalent to the tenure track.