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What are the possible job opportunities/options for a college graduate with a degree in physical education?

Graduating with a physical education degree can lead to exciting job opportunities. Teaching in elementary and secondary are the two main career paths when choosing to study for a physical education degree, but both jobs are very different. Elementary students are beginning to learn the basics of every sport as well as the importance of staying active. For secondary teaching, junior high and high school level, the students will learn more about the actual game and how to play it, building endurance and being more physical. Physical educators are important because they will help guide the younger generation to stay active and pass on the importance of physical activity.

— *Alexandra Virula, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

Becoming physically educated does not only happen in schools during the allotted physical education time. Jobs that have to do with physically educating others include anything from coaching to personal training, to serving as an instructional specialist, a fitness specialist/instructor, an outsourced provider, and so many more. With a valuable background in movement, skills, tactics and strategies, mixed with implementing routines and assessments, physical educators should definitely have opportunities outside of the typical physical education setting in schools.

— *Allison Lee, graduate student, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

Job opportunities for a college graduate with only a degree in physical education are very limited. Without teaching credentials or further education within the subject, the graduate's education level can be viewed as too

broad or incomplete. Nevertheless, a college degree in physical education still holds some value and can be used for entry-level positions. For example, cities with a recreational and park department could use graduates with an emphasis in physical education for summer camps or weekly activities. Year-round community organizations could use those graduates to help manage the fitness center or fitness programs for youth and senior citizens. Finally, with the increase in schools in urban cities and parents working more, after-school programs are gaining popularity. Most after-school programs include both homework assistance and outdoor activities, an ideal job opportunity for a graduate with a degree in physical education.

— *Darrell Brown, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

In the modified American dream, one of the main focuses is to achieve a college education. With higher edu-

cation being a high priority, students are looking for a degree that will take them far in life. A degree in physical education is the perfect option, presenting many carrier options, along with advancement opportunities. One of the most well-known options for physical education is to become a physical educator for kids. Here, graduates would create exercise programs catered to children. Another option this degree presents is the opportunity to work in corporate wellness, providing exercise programs for the employees of big corporations. A physical education degree not only promises many carrier options, but also opens the doors for graduate school. A physical education degree is a hands-on degree that prepares you for any graduate school in the medical field. Much of what you learn in this degree is applied in medical graduate schools.

— *Sandra Rios, undergraduate student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

November Question

Should physical education teacher education (PETE) programs include minimal criteria for entry-level skill development of their majors?

Respond briefly* and submit your response by August 5, at www.shapeamerica.org/publications/journals/joperd/voice.cfm or via email: joperd@shapeamerica.org

*Preferred length is 200 words or less; occasionally, longer responses may be considered. Please include your institution's name and your position — whether faculty or staff member, administrator, or student. We also welcome suggestions for future Issues questions.

The options that this degree offers are very limited, but jobs can be found. The salary offered in this area is something to consider, as the pay will not be much. But it sure can be enough to provide a stable living. The three top jobs with this degree are teaching, coaching and training. All three of these jobs can be found if applying at schools starting from kindergarten all the way to college. Getting a job in training can be a bit more open because it may be possible to find a job in private gyms, aerobic centers and recreation centers. Even though a degree in physical education might sound unpopular, there are many ways to give back to communities with this degree if an individual's goal is to help others achieve a healthy life. A degree in physical education may lead to a successful living with years of experience, and it can bring pride to those pursuing it.

— *Andrea Munoz, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

When I first decided I wanted to be a physical educator, I was talking with my insurance agent, who informed me that he had graduated from a physical education department 20 years earlier. He had two prior jobs before becoming an insurance agent, which right away assured me that there are numerous job opportunities with a degree in physical education. Also, physical educators have other endorsements that they can receive as well. Health, special education and driver's education are some of the most common. Physical educators can find jobs in other areas than just the school environment thanks to their people skills, time management, flexibility and understanding of others' backgrounds.

— *Jamie Johnson, student,
Western Illinois University,
Macomb, IL.*

Once an individual receives their college diploma and enters the job market, there will not be

many options to choose from, if any. In this field, there are the limited career choices of being a physical education teacher, a coach, a personal trainer, or of working for a nonprofit recreational center. Unfortunately, the job outlook is not improving. Opportunities for becoming a physical education teacher are more scarce due to reduced school budgets. Schools are allowing single-subject teachers to take on the responsibility of teaching physical education without having proper credentials. There is the option of working at recreational centers like the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs, but advancement into management positions as club directors and managers requires a master's degree. To have a greater variety of career options, an individual should pursue their master's degree.

— *Melrose Yamsuan, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

A higher degree is an important step for advancement in job opportunities. Apart from a degree, certifications, licenses and association memberships can help a graduate stand out from others who just have a bachelor's degree. One can go from being a physical education teacher or trainer to being the owner of one's own training facility. Whether they want to teach children, adults or the elderly, physical education graduates are sure to have an active career.

— *Jorge Sanchez, student, California
State University of Los Angeles,
Los Angeles.*

It ultimately depends on the college graduate to make their degree useful by reaching out and working at different places that relate to physical education. Graduates have more credibility and priority than the others who do not obtain a physical education degree. Among all the job opportunities being offered, physical education graduates earn an average salary of \$55,260 (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211091>).

htm). Overall, a person with a physical education degree has the potential to become well-rounded in the various duties that involve planning nutrition, exercise, budgets, activities, etc.

— *Kate Maglalang, undergraduate
student, California State, University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

There are more opportunities for someone who majors in physical education than people would think. Aside from the obvious option of being a physical educator in a school district, another possible occupation would be as a sports director for an organization such as the YMCA. As a physical educator you know the fundamentals children need to learn in order to be successful in sports. As a sports director, you could make the proper accommodations in order to ensure that children are taught the proper sport skills. Another possible occupation would be as a summer camp director. As a physical education major you learn how to work with children, as well as a ton of different games or sports to play with children of all ages. These two things are largely applied when organizing something such as a summer camp. One last occupation would be as a coach of a sports team. As a physical education major you learn all the different ways to teach progressions in sports, which you could apply as a coach.

— *Bryce Kelly, student,
Western Illinois University,
Macomb, IL.*

One highly sought-out possibility would be in the field of physical therapy. The reason behind this idea is that the "baby boomer" generation is in the transition from middle age to becoming elderly. This could very well result in a growing need for physical therapists to assist this population. Another opportunity arises from the growing concern about obesity and the need for trainers to help combat this epidemic. An occupation in this field is not solely restricted to adults. Organiza-

tions that focus on lowering obesity rates would also look for ways to help teach the younger population to get involved in exercise and nutrition.

— *Manuel Juarez, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

Many students major in physical education because they were once athletes or are still athletes; however, anyone with an interest in physical activity can do it. All a person needs to have is passion for their major. The most common physical education positions include athletic coach, athletic trainer, PE teacher and referee. But there are other physical education jobs that require advanced education such as occupational therapist, activities specialist, sports manager and college professor. Physical education can give many health advantages to your community and the people around you. Make the world a healthier environment and major in physical education!

— *Lilibeth Amaya-Ardon, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

Job opportunities are seemingly endless for a person with a physical education degree. Physical educators can be endorsed to teach many other subjects with a few extra classes during their time in college or post-college work. Becoming endorsed in health or driver's education seems to be more common these days. Physical education majors can also work in the recreation field and in various positions at community centers. Being a teacher requires social skills, so other jobs with this requirement are also a possibility. The biggest recent trend has been to get jobs in the coaching field because of their experience in fitness and sports and their ability to work with others. There are so many intangible qualities needed to be a teacher that the opportunities are truly endless.

— *Michelle Maher, student,
Western Illinois University,
Macomb, IL.*

In today's economic climate, a bachelor's degree of any kind is more of a starting point than a career launcher. A degree in physical education, in particular, is most beneficial when supplemented by a certification or a graduate education. In order to become a teacher, one would still need to earn a teaching credential. Athletic trainers, personal trainers, and fitness instructors require at least a certification, and physical therapists must have a graduate degree.

These requirements are partially a result of a shift in the public perception of the field. As the field of physical education has grown, the requirements have increased. Public health issues such as obesity are now receiving more attention, and, as a result, people with a background in physical education are needed in order to provide information and services in nutrition, fitness and rehabilitation, among other related fields.

— *Jessica C. Carroll, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA*

When the average person thinks of physical education, they think of the teachers who just roll out the balls. Physical education, however, has a greater purpose. It is one of students' favorite classes where they learn valuable skills to be active for a lifetime. Students also get to learn new sports and activities over the course of a unit that they would not normally go out of their way to learn. Besides the obvious options, physical educators' experience can be applied in many different environments, such as sports officiating, outdoor education centers and coaching. A physical education degree also allows individuals to teach at different levels and in different school systems. Physical educators are qualified to teach K-12 in the public school system, private school system, on military bases and even in juvenile detention centers full-time or part-time. A physical education degree has opened up many doors for the profession and can take teachers anywhere around the world.

— *Sarah H. Peterson, student,
Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL.*

A college student goes to school to get a high-paying job. However, what does one do with a degree in physical education? The answer is simple: nothing is worth all the money, time and effort you spent trying to earn the degree. A physical education degree can probably give you an opportunity to work as a personal trainer or work at a local YMCA if one is lucky. The reality is that a person without the degree can get the same job and get paid the same amount as a person with a degree in physical education. In order to make something of a degree in physical education one must continue to go to school and get credentials in teaching, and maybe then a person can make a living. Even then society has made it difficult for many degrees since it is not about what you know but who you know. There are also many people who graduate at the same time, which means there is competition. When it comes to employers trying to find an applicant, a good resume may look better than a degree in physical education.

— *Erika Cuevas, student, California
State University of Los Angeles,
Los Angeles, CA.*

There are very few opportunities for a college graduate with a degree in physical education in today's world. Most possibilities would revolve around high school sports coach or actual physical education teachers. In the corporate world other avenues could include supervisory positions for personal trainers in fitness gyms. Other more ambitious opportunities could be available as a freelance personal or private trainer who could market to a more affluent clientele. A bachelor's degree in physical education can position someone for a career in physical therapy but would eventually require a PhD in physical therapy. Entry-level positions as an assistant physical therapist could be possible but would also require hands-on experience with sports-related injuries. As well with occupational therapy, most patients have physical injuries and need an abundance of rehabilitation that

requires countless hours of hands-on experience. Since kinesiology majors are not required to take bioscience classes, they have more limited job opportunities. Exercise science majors mostly take bioscience classes and not enough hands-on training classes, which also lessens the job opportunities. College graduates would need to obtain at least a master's degree or doctorate degree to increase the opportunity of a high-paying career.

— *Melody Rodriguez, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

To work in a school, one must obtain a credential and join BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment). That allows first-year teachers to shadow, mentor and better prepare themselves to be the best physical education teacher they can be. After receiving the credentials and getting a job, the BTSA program has to be done in consecutive years in order to get cleared. Before going into the field, you want to know it is right for you. One important factor is to enjoy working with people. There are many opportunities within this field, but it is more than having fun and having a relaxing job. It is about helping others live a healthy lifestyle, providing a safe environment, and improving their confidence.

— *Betsy Pulido and Patricia Davies,
students, California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

There are more opportunities than just teaching physical education (PE) in the school system. Careers could include being a camp counselor, a fitness instructor, working with the park district to create activities for families, or even working with a Special Olympics crew. The classes that individuals are required to take when pursuing a PE degree teach not only the rules and expectations of different games, but also all about human anatomy, ways to adapt to certain people's needs, the biomechanics of how the body should move with or

without objects, and much more. There are individuals who believe PE is just about playing games and having fun. We as future educators need to get that idea out of people's heads. There is so much more to a physical education degree than just teaching in the schools.

— *Justine Pater, student,
Western Illinois University,
Macomb, IL.*

Being a physical educator opens doors to other jobs that typically go along with the career such as coaching, officiating, health education, outdoor recreation, and adapted physical education. Many PE teachers are also asked to become coaches. This is beneficial for both the school system and the teacher, as physical educators typically have a passion for sports. School districts often have a hard time finding officials for all sports: basketball, football, softball, baseball, etc. Coaches, athletic directors and officials create unique relationships and advertise for one another by giving out names and positions. In addition, PE teachers often take on the responsibility of the health teacher. This makes perfect sense because the school district does not have to hire an extra employee, and the scope of PE correlates with health. Receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education does not limit one to being a physical education teacher; rather it creates other opportunities in the fitness and health fields.

— *Carl Fisher, student,
Western Illinois University,
Macomb, IL.*

It is a huge misconception that people who acquire a degree in physical education do not have many job options to consider after graduation. A person with an undergraduate degree in physical education is able to acquire a teaching job in any K–12 school, and if they wanted to teach at the college level they just need to go to graduate school. They could also pursue a job in coaching or work as a trainer in various loca-

tions such as private gyms or recreation centers. They may also go into research, especially if they achieve a doctoral in their field. They could even become a performance analyst as many amateur and professional athletes seek these people out to pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve themselves. With a graduate degree they may also coordinate activities at a sports or recreation center and even in a municipal recreation program.

— *Tristen Escano, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

Many students, such as myself, may have thought that getting a degree in physical education meant that one would have to work as a physical education teacher or at a gym as a trainer. But graduating with a degree in physical education allows the graduate to interact with many different people from different ages and settings. As an example, the graduate student may want to work with students in a fitness and/or sports setting. He or she may be able to work as a dance instructor, sports coach for a school or for recreational purposes, or as an athletic trainer or director.

— *Karen Mendoza-Lugo, student,
California State University of
Los Angeles, Los Angeles.*

I believe that social media will influence the future of physical education graduates. The hundreds of millions of social media users are constantly being exposed to photos of the incredibly fit and toned (and occasionally Photoshopped) bodies of their favorite models, athletes and entertainers. The social media fad is here to stay. The hundreds of thousands of images of these models and entertainers are here to stay. The hundreds of millions of users who are constantly being exposed to these images are going to seek help in their pursuit of becoming like their idols. Who will they turn to for help? They will turn to those who are educated on topics like weight loss and muscle gain.

They will turn to graduates with physical education degrees.

— *Ahleen Bagoian, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

In today's society the job market is more competitive than ever, especially in Southern California. There are millions of people that reside in Los Angeles who are actively attending an institution of higher education — not only to pursue a great career but also for the monetary compensation that comes with the promise of higher education. This being said, the opportunities or options for a college graduate with a degree in physical education are limited. Career possibilities are restricted to positions within parks and recreation, coaching, or teaching certain fundamentals of a sport, as other possible career choices within physical education require an advanced degree or credential. In order to thrive in the discipline of physical education, one considering this field must be aware

that a bachelor's degree will provide only entry-level qualifications, not the qualifications necessary to obtain an advanced professional career. Many career options within the field require specialized credentials, a master's degree, or a doctorate/PhD. Once these qualifications are met, the possibilities of professional careers become much more diverse.

— *Richard Nunez, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

The website www.indeed.com is helpful for searching for job opportunities in physical education. It lists many options to choose from, as well as the description of the job and additional information needed before applying. Also, joining a graduate program in physical education is a great option. These programs tend to help the participants find a job upon graduation.

— *Trong Nhan Truong, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

Physical education students learn how to analyze human performance, the effects of muscular and skeletal human functions on performance, and the overall study of human movement, which requires anatomy and physiology. College graduates with a degree in physical education have plenty of job opportunities such as teaching, coaching, training, performance analysis, sports and recreation management, research, and other specialties including nutrition specialist, corporate fitness instructor, and many more. Because of the current American health trends, a physical education degree allows graduates to help their community become more active and break through the sedentary lifestyle. Kindergarten through 12th-grade PE teachers can make a difference in the life of an obese child. Nutrition specialists can make a difference in the life of a 50-year-old woman with diabetes.

— *Cynthia Moreno Mora, student, California State University of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.*

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