



## Important Questions about Organization Development

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If you are an educator, researcher, or consultant in the field of Organization Development (or OD), you've probably run into the following questions from students, employers, and fellow researchers, and (not to mention) friends and family who wonder exactly what OD is!

**Prospective OD graduate students** and certificate seekers often ask: what exactly is OD? Which graduate program is right for me. And when I graduate, what type of career can I expect? Should I be an external consultant or an internal consultant? And since I'll be paying off student loans, how do I make sure it pays well? I also want my career to be a natural extension of my professional narrative, so I want to know if I can practice OD without calling it that - maybe as an HR or Talent Development professional? I want to find a career that plays to my strengths, but I'm also interested in developing the kinds of competencies I need to advance or transition. Where do I start?

**Employers also have questions!** How can I attract, develop, and retain the right type of employee for this current opening? How do I write the kind of job description that directly inspires the type of employee I *really* need? And for that matter, what *do* I really need? What don't I know?

**Even OD educators** are asking questions, in part because the evolution of our field seems to be outpacing the speed of research. Educators and researchers ask how can accomplish studies that are relevant, and timely, when it's so difficult to pinpoint the field? How can we develop and change our courses to keep up with the so called "real world of OD?" And given the unique mission and vision of our program, how do we find candidates for our degrees who will stick around, benefit most from our unique coursework, and refer others like them?

Questions also exist for **professional associations** who cater to organization and systems change professionals... what is our market segmentation? How can we produce the most meaningful learning and networking opportunities to our members? What should next year's conference theme be? How can we confidently benchmark the state of the field? How do we gain diverse representation on our boards, and what types of new webinars should we be planning for?

So, that's a lot of questions. The keen observer will notice the **answers to these questions exists in the very same pool of stakeholders who ask them!** For instance, employers have a lot to say about skills that are in demand, and the blend of course work educators should champion for their students. At the same time, researchers can save employers time spent on google, by sharing exactly what types of competencies to look for and develop in their employees. People making career transitions could use information from employers, educators, and researchers to hedge their investments in professional development opportunities and even use the right kinds of key word searches to find fitting jobs. We can all learn a lot from each other about the evolving nature and allure of this elegant and complex field.