



# The On-Demand Scientist

## Insights

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The phrase “gig economy” may immediately bring to mind transportation companies and food delivery services, but it has become so much more than that. Many different industries have begun to utilize the gig economy. As we have previously discussed, lawyers working on a short term contractual basis to perform tasks such as document review have recently become more common. Likewise, doctors are also taking part in the gig economy with the rise of telemedicine. Perhaps it should come as no surprise then that scientists are now also becoming active participants in the on-demand economy.

Today’s population of new workers continues to be very highly educated, but the number of high paying jobs has not necessarily kept up with the increase in workers. Considering the high levels of debt many need to accumulate in order to earn a degree such as a Ph.D., some individuals have needed to seek out unique ways to earn a living and pay off student loan debt. For example, working as a consultant for universities, healthcare providers, or private companies enables some scientists the opportunities to use their advanced knowledge in a highly flexible atmosphere to maximize their earning capabilities.

One platform that connects businesses with freelance scientists, Kolabtree, was launched in London in 2015. Since then, over 4,000 Ph.D. level scientists have registered themselves on the platform as available for freelance scientific work worldwide. Users include experts in fields such as chemistry, computer science, physics, mathematics, social sciences, and medicine. With platforms such as this, scientists may feel more comfortable giving up more traditional employment models in order to rely upon freelance jobs they can accept or turn down as they choose.

Additionally, some scientists have found it helpful to take positions as an adjunct professor in order to have some job flexibility while also staying connected with others in their profession. These non-tenured track positions allow professors to work at multiple universities, often on their own schedules, but lack the normal benefits and security that come with more conventional academic roles.

Scientists are obviously known for their skill in experimentation. The fact that so many have experimented with the on demand economy and continue to throw their support behind it is certainly evidence that the new economy is here to stay.

## ***Related People***

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