1. What you did in the Department?

When I was at Cambridge I studied risk factors and correlates of non-suicidal self-injury among young people. I did so through quantitative analysis of a number of existing datasets, and one data set that I collected on my own. Specifically, I used a number of statistical techniques (structural equation modelling, dimension reduction techniques, latent class analysis, factor analysis, as well as all your standard regressions and correlations etc.) and statistical platforms (MPlus, Stata, SPSS, R).

I'm actually not that statistically minded, and I had to google a lot and frequently ask for help, but I found the work interesting because it was something that I cared personally about. I don't think I would have been able to self-motivate for 3+ years if I hadn't been trying to shed light on a question that I felt was important, namely how to help young people avoid engaging in self-harm.

The actual data collection I did on my own was also really rewarding. It was useful to learn how to a) convince other people to participate in my project, b) ensure their data were coming in properly and into an organized database, c) and have that level of ownership and responsibility over the entire project.

2. What you are doing now?

For the past year and a half, I've worked as a consultant for a company called Principia Advisory, which you probably have not heard of but which is also probably the premier firm in the field of organizational ethics. If this sounds like a surprising career turn, it was a surprise to me too. I have never worked in a large organization and my ethics may be dubious. Originally, I was hired to a small piece of statistical analysis, which was similar to the work I did in my PhD. However, it soon became clear that I really enjoyed and excelled at the actual consulting part of the business as well. I now do very little statistics and a lot of really interesting other work.

We do two major lines of work: 1) in depth evaluations of organizations' cultures around ethics, involving quantitative analysis of employee survey data, quantitative insights from focus groups and interviews, and a review of the organizations' internal systems and infrastructures; and 2) advisory work on difficult ethical questions such as how a technology company's new products should be used and by whom, and whether this is going to have a net positive impact on society and the world. I've worked on and led teams in both lines, and almost every week presents a new puzzle.

Principia is primarily comprised of academics with backgrounds in philosophy. Most of them are current working professors of philosophy at top tier universities including Oxford, Harvard, Stanford. I never took an intro to philosophy course, so much of what my collogues discuss may as well be Greek (and often is). However, our clients are not philosophers, they are typically senior leadership of fortune 500 companies, meaning they're very smart successful people, but they don't understand philosophy jargon. In that way I've used my own ignorance as a strength, operating as our company's litmus test. I am utterly unabashed about telling my colleagues I have no idea what they're talking about. And if I don't get it, the client probably won't either, in

which case we go back to rewrites. This helps us deliver our advice in an impactful way, and that's ultimately our primary goal; giving clients sound advice they can act upon to really improve their organizations.

3. Any career tips for new incoming students?

I wonder if the department will regret asking me this? My advice is not to worry too much, and not to spend all your time on your studies. My job, which is more interesting, enjoyable, and better paid than I had hoped for, found me. And it did so through a personal connection I made at school outside of my PhD work or the department. I never thought of myself as a networker and I've never been to a networking event. I did however host an awful lot of barbeques in my backyard at Cambridge, ate in college about three times a week, rowed for three years, held served as freshers rep for my MCR, and rarely missed a Superhall or my college's weekly port night. These activities were not only fun, they were also the basis of the many amazing friendships and relationships I made over the years which have already proved to be professionally as well as intellectually and psychologically invaluable.

Some people have a clear vision of where they want to go and what they want to do. I never did, and now I'm loving a job that I didn't even know existed two years ago. So I'm grateful I didn't worry too much about getting somewhere specific or following a prescribed path to a defined goal.

In sum my advice is: do your best to do well without stressing or beating yourself up, go with the flow, enjoy your time in that amazing place, make friends, try new things, and see where it all takes you. It may take you somewhere unexpected, but based on where you are now, you'll almost certainly end up somewhere wonderful.