

HOW TO BECOME A HIRED "GHOST HUNTER" (AND WHERE THE HELL TO GET THE TRAINING TO BECOME ONE)

Currently, there are no actual courses or accredited schools that teach you how to become a "paranormal investigator." One major reason is due to the fact that paranormal phenomena, is still considered a controversial subject for many reasons. But you can get training in fields used to investigate "the paranormal"

Historically, academia has regarded psychic phenomena and the paranormal as an embarrassment due to the sensational spin that the entertainment industry puts on this topic, along with the often outrageous claims made by proponents of New Age ideas. As a result, while funds to create programs and courses in parapsychology have been available, they have languished for years.

But with paranormal investigations... First of all, how can one be trained to become an investigator of something that has not yet been proven or accepted on a massive scale? You'd be considered a quack at best. And WHO is qualified to teach you to become a legitimate ghost buster????

Hunter, buster, phantomologist, it boils to the same thing. It all sounds like terms used by 6 year-old kids out on the playground doesn't it? I'm not trying to be donkey hole here but just saying how hard it really is to be taken seriously and to pursue a career in this field. You are like the red-headed step child that does not fit in with mainstream science, and yet the story tellers and New Age gurus can't stand you! Let alone understand you or your primary objectives. It's NOT impossible however. If you change the title or do away with the term "paranormal" and actually adhere to scientific methods, then attitudes around you change. It's funny but true. Your approach also changes. It is human nature. But you're still paying out of pocket and everyone else around you thinks you're crazy and/or "messing with things that are scared".

There are a lot of organizations (especially on the net) who offer courses or workshops on how to become a "paranormal investigator" but I would not trust just anyone who claims to be a teacher of such things. Especially if they say you must be an approved member of their "society" It's laughable.

First of all, conducting research and actual investigations of inexplicable phenomena entails a lot of training in several fields and disciplines. I'm not talking about being a former cop or electrician either. We aren't playing Dick Tracy or Nancy Drew here. So forget the two-week training courses and having to kiss anyone's butt. It takes years but that doesn't mean you can't go out and conduct an honest investigation that will yield great results! If you stick to the basics you will do very well.

Unless you already have the background, it can't hurt to have former training or a degree in psychology, or to study different cultures, their cultural differences, religions, electronics,

photography, telecommunications, physics, etc.

You can't do it all of course but any one of these things can help. And this is why having a team is beneficial. **Each person can be a specialist.** There are supplemental training seminars. If that's not discouraging enough, don't expect to be paid for your time and effort as funding for such endeavors and positions are very limited even for some of the government-funded projects. So what do we do?

Well, there is the field of parapsychology, which is a lot easier to digest than "paranormal investigation" or "ghost busting" And parapsychology has a pretty impressive group of professors, researchers, doctors and associations with well-known and well-respected organizations around the world. It also has a **peer-reviewed track record of documentation, experimentation and scientific protocol.** (I will get into protocol in a minute) Parapsychology does not have anything to do with other things that might interest you however, such as big foot, occult practices, UFOs and demons, theology.

But it does cover a lot of things that you would come across as a "ghost hunter". Things like, apparitions (of the living and dead), OBEs, poltergeists, telepathy, NDEs, etc.

Here is what you do:

Read up as much of the literature as you can. There is a lot of great stuff out there written by real life scientists and people who have specialized in this field for over 30 –40 years.

Get in touch with the SPR [Society for Psychical Research] in London, and get literature on it. [If you are in the US, then the Parapsychology Association is the place] Do not believe all the stories that you read, because people, when they write about this, do tend to exaggerate. You find that a lot. Read the sensible literature, not the fictional stuff. Also, groups like these where seasoned investigators (I dare not say "experts") can offer advice based on EXPerience and research is good if you can avoid the fiction and Hollywood type stuff...

The fiction is written for effect. It's to entertain you. It's not the serious side of things. Try to get confirmation with THE RIGHT equipment. **What is the right equipment? The better question would be what is NOT the right equipment.** I will cover this in a different section, but for now I will say that using an AC tri-field meter is not a good idea, as oppose to using a DC tri-field meter. And you must use them when APPROPRIATE. You can't pull them, out and expect for 100% validation of anything at anytime.

A lot of people go for gadgets that do not even work for investigating the paranormal. There is a lot of crap out there being sold as "ghost hunting gear" I see a lot of it on EBAY. To be fair, there are independent people and companies who specialize in building instrumentation designed to be used for certain duties or data collection. Be very cautious. There are many out there that are part of the small but effective business trend designed to take your money. Don't worry too much about not having all of the gear. It's the same deal as when you're trying to learn jazz guitar; Do you really need a \$2,500 dollar Marshall stack and the latest effect pedals?

As time goes by you will be able to afford the high tech stuff. The important thing to do is to observe and document, document, document! Be 100% honest and be thorough.

The easiest things to get without having to have a degree or much training, if you can afford it, are good cameras (one digital, and one SLR 35mm film camera) film, tripods, and lenses with filters. And an "old school" tape recorder. I prefer analog (magnetic) tape over digital recorders due to how EVP seems to function most of the times....

Also, attend parapsychology seminars and workshops that are hosted/attended by real parapsychologists and luminaries in the field. Avoid the psychic fair, witches brewing association types. Read the scientific journals...

Now I will tell you, there are monies available to us by way of donations and chiefly by way of becoming a non-profit organization.

But mostly, this is a labor of love, as we dip into our own pockets to finance our equipment and cover gas, food and lodging. Several of my core-members in the past have spent thousands of dollars of their own money, most of us hundreds. I have found that after the equipment, I don't have much more cost. Mostly it's gas, film, batteries etc. For me personally I like to keep up to date with what is going on with the latest experiments and knowledge base, so my costs include academic books and joining parapsychology associations oh and coffee...of course man! :)

After you've been established I don't think there is anything wrong with asking for voluntary contributions to cover expenses. If you become a non-profit org, you could get anywhere from 1,000 dollars up to a million dollars for research and traveling /living expenses, but you better be good at writing proposals. Or hire a writer.

Most parapsychologists (and by this I mean professionally trained scientists, not "paranormal investigators") usually make a living teaching or doing some other conventional job. Only 30 to 40 people in the entire world are employed full time in this field as researchers, and fewer still are actually paid reasonable salaries to do so. Realistically, the chances of landing a decent job are extremely small, although the situation in Europe is much better than in the United States. If you are so dedicated that this doesn't stop you, that's great!

Most students solve the problem of wanting the advantages offered by a mainstream academic position, but without giving up their interests in parapsychology, by going to a recognized school (where they are wisely discrete about their deeper interests). They learn how to conduct research in some well-accepted discipline they get their degree and then quietly join the Parapsychology Association and start reading the primary parapsychological journals. This may not satisfy the student's passion, but at the present time many academicians today do not consider this topic a legitimate academic pursuit.

Pursuing parapsychology as a career requires

- (1) strong entrepreneurial skills, (2) enormous persistence, creativity and resourcefulness, (3) solid training in one of more of the mainstream sciences or in a scholarly discipline, and (4) the ability to acknowledge but not acquiesce to the fads of conventional wisdom and academic dogma. **This is not a career track for the faint-hearted or for the orthodox.**

If you want ghost stories or a an occasional thrill, then that's ok too and there are other avenues for those types of "extra curricular activities" just be careful-but if you want to go in this other direction welcome aboard. ..

The payoff is that parapsychology, like other scientific frontiers, is an extremely challenging discipline with plenty of room for exploring creative ideas and making significant advancements to the state-of-the art. If you expect fast solutions to easy problems, or absolute answers to clear questions, then parapsychology is definitely not for you. If you enjoy exploring the full range of human potential and pushing your creative talent to its limit, then there is no better discipline than parapsychology.

Here is a small list of places where you can get some REAL TRAINING FOR WHAT YOU MAY WANT TO DO:

American Institute of Parapsychology (recommended)

<http://www.afterlife-psychical.org/> will certify you as a parapsychologist. The guy who runs it is very well established and respected in the parapsychology community.

<http://www.medicine.virginia.edu/clinical/departments/psychiatry/sections/cspp/dops>

<http://www.aspr.com/index.html>

Institute for Transpersonal Psychology

<http://www.paradigm-sys.com/cttart/sci-docs/ctt98-iasoc.html>

Dr. Tart is on the cutting edge of parapsychology. Although this link is to a science journal article, it gives the address and department for the ITP and the University of California in the header of the article..BTW, this has changed to SOFIA UNIVERSITY <http://sofia.edu/>

Rhine Education Center provides professional education in parapsychology and public events at the Rhine explore psychic abilities, experiences, techniques, and the culture of ESP throughout the world.

In addition, the Rhine provides significant resources on the history of parapsychology, archival footage, a large research library, and a complete set of the Journal of Parapsychology from 1937 to present. <http://rhine.org/>

List of colleges & links to studying parapsychology:

<http://www.psiresearch.org/para3.html#eighteen>

Note that the link above is a part of the Parapsychology FAQ that Dr. Dean Radin and others

have compiled. You will get an excellent and accurate overview of the topic. Note -there are a number of colleges and universities in Scotland, England, and Germany listed here. Both Harvard and Stanford Universities have fellowships endowed explicitly for psychological research (but they don't advertise it, and most of the available funds have been usurped for other purposes)

