



Welcome – thank you for joining us today! The meeting slides and recording will be posted online. You can type questions/comments in the chat and we will do our best to address them. You can change your name for anonymity. For general discussion, please use the chat (select “All panelists and attendees”).

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What I wish I had known about doing a PhD



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What is a PhD?

A PhD, or Doctor of Philosophy, is the highest level degree that is earned following extensive, original research that is compiled in a thesis or dissertation. Science PhD programs typically offer an annual stipend as well as tuition, fees, and healthcare coverage.

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While PhD students share many common experiences, every individual's journey is unique. Gaining insights from a number of different people can help paint a more complete picture of PhD life.

How did you realize you wanted to do a PhD?

- Why did you want to do a PhD and how did you know you were ready?
- What steps did you take to prepare?
- Did you know what you wanted to research?
- How did you decide where to apply? (how many schools?)
 - How did you manage personal life considerations (e.g. moving with a partner)
- How did you prepare for interviews? Any advice/tips?

A couple resources on these topics:

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2018/09/applying-phd-these-10-tips-can-help-you-succeed>

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2019/02/ace-your-phd-program-interviews-prepare-answer-and-ask-these-key-questions>

What does a typical day in PhD life look like?

- How did you come up with your long-term research plan and how do you manage day-to-day activities to meet your long-term goals?
- How/how often do you communicate with your advisor about your goals and to ask for support?
- What materials (e.g. textbooks, software, technology) and skills do you use on a daily basis? Did you build these skills prior to or during PhD?
 - Did any of this come as a surprise to you?
- When do you apply for funding, conference presentations, etc.? How have you identified these opportunities?

A couple resources on these topics:

<https://phdlife.warwick.ac.uk/2018/08/29/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-phd-student-part-1/>

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/2020/04/day-in-the-life-grad-student/>

How do you balance work and life?

- Do you only communicate with your advisor for professional goals/support?
 - Is it common to seek personal/emotional support from your advisor?
- What does your support system look like and how did you build it?
- What interests do you pursue outside the lab?
 - Do you feel guilty for taking time off work?
- Has/how has pursuing a PhD influenced your future goals/plans?

A couple resources on these topics:

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/05/yes-you-can-have-life-outside-lab>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7654-375a>

Is a PhD worth it?

- How do you maintain your passion for studying the same topic 5+ years? What if your interests change?
- What's one lesson that took you the longest to learn?
- What can and should you do if you realize your expectations are incongruent with your advisor's/collaborators'?
- How do you deal with failure, burnout, impostor syndrome, interpersonal issues and/or biases?

A couple resources on these topics:

<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/9-things-you-should-consider-before-embarking-on-a-phd>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03459-7>

LIGHTNING ROUND!



What is one piece of advice you'd give your pre-PhD student self?

Some tips for new PhD students:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/caveman-politics/201509/6-insider-tips-new-phd-students>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07332-x>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/03/19/advice-students-just-beginning-their-phds-opinion>

A few more resources

“All About PhD Applications” by Lucy Lai

<https://lucyblogs.wordpress.com/2018/08/02/all-about-phd-applications/>

“Things I wish I’d known from Day 1 of my PhD” compiled by Ya’el Courtney

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tndw5xkcMLBQYrx62DDusQbSScKqx0qK/view>

“Resources and tips for undergrads and postbaccs pursuing PhD programs in psychology: by Meriah DeJoseph

<http://meriahdejoseph.com/grad-school/resources-and-tips-for-undergrads-and-postbaccs-pursuing-phd-programs-in-psychology/>

Application materials from NYU Psychology students

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eZ1CMG-bZQIPtB6OkduFy0Qq2-uS-mjH>