

Academic Secret Menu

The purpose of this document is to compile links, advice, questions, and answers on how to navigate academic environments. Here we will collectively demystify the “hidden curriculum” of academia by providing a central location for advice on this topic. Please feel free to add your thoughts!

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General Advice

Hello Bio
Hellobio.com

[Ter Horst Lab](#), CSUN, [The Hidden Curriculum of Academia](#), Sept 22, 2021

Curated lists of advice for graduate students

<http://www.indiana.edu/~halllab/grad-student-resources.html>
<http://www.des.ucdavis.edu/faculty/baskett/links.html>
<http://www.cs.unc.edu/~azuma/hitch4.html>
<https://sites.google.com/a/d.umn.edu/professional-skills/home>
<https://github.com/gwisk/gradguide>
<https://katherinehrogers.com/resources/>
<http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/>

Estien, C. O., Chapman, M., Schell, C. J., Lowy, N., and Gerson, J. R.. 2022. Demystifying the Graduate School Application Process. Bull Ecol Soc Am 00(00):e02029. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bes2.2029>

Science Careers

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers>
<https://info.addgene.org/sign-up-to-receive-addgenes-science-career-guide>

Hidden curriculum Twitter thread

<https://twitter.com/thehauer/status/1021179403680862218>

Q: I'm falling behind in this class. What should I do?

<https://www.theclassroom.com/fall-behind-grad-school-19505.html>

Q: How do I tackle office hours? What if I'm afraid to go? What if I feel too lost in class to have questions to ask?

<https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/using-office-hours-effectively/>
<https://www.wm.edu/sites/neurodiversity/documents/hidden-rules-for-office%20hours.pdf>

Finding a Research Position and Joining a Lab

Twitter thread on choosing a mentor from @Dr.Oligo

https://twitter.com/Dr_Oligo/status/1165666561480220672

Twitter thread by @AmyCharkowski on what to ask when interviewing PIs (Principal Investigators, aka the professor/scientist who'll advise/fund you).

<https://twitter.com/AmyCharkowski/status/1223682402079260672?s=20>

Twitter thread by @SusannaLHarris on questions to ask of the graduate students in a PIs lab

<https://twitter.com/SusannaLHarris/status/1441519349206962176?s=20>

Lily Khadempour on [How to Apply for Graduate Student Positions](#)

Sarah Evans' [Tips on Writing an Email of Interest to Potential Graduate School Advisors](#)

Twitter thread from @itatiVCS on spotting red flags when looking for an advisor:

<https://twitter.com/itatiVCS/status/1191399225235406848>

Columbia E3B Program's [From Pre-Application Meeting to Post-Admission Questions: A Guide to Applying and Deciding on a PhD Program](#)

Columbia's [Definitive 'what do I ask/look for' in a PhD Advisor Guide](#)

Applying to Grad School

[Getting into Graduate School in the Sciences : a step-by-step guide for students by S Kersey Sturdivant and Noelle J Relles](#) ISBN: 1107420679

[Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning an M.A. or a Ph.D. by Robert Peters](#) ISBN: 9780374524777

Inquiry Email

<https://contemplativemammoth.com/2013/04/08/so-you-want-to-go-to-grad-school-nail-the-inquiry-email/>

FreeApp to apply for fee waiver to apply for PhD or MFA programs at Big Ten schools:

<https://www.btaa.org/resources-for/students/freeapp/introduction>

Twitter thread for grad school application tips

<https://twitter.com/suchinarayanan/status/1134113769980923909>

A list of funded biology MS programs

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1f34fVzPkKviz0732mU8YtkTnLVaNNUjK_SKC_TSGlD0o/edit?usp=sharing

PhD application process from the National Research Mentoring Network

<https://youtu.be/IMb4Mc2M67g>

https://youtu.be/O_k-zGf4xLY

<https://youtu.be/SoeYDr3t81U>

Questions you might be asked at a PhD interview:

<https://twitter.com/FinchKaruna/status/1349736074105376773>

The German Lab at UC Irvine Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (EEB) wrote a guide to applying to grad school in biology, esp EEB.

https://german.bio.uci.edu/images/PDF/Application_Guide.pdf

Mordecai Lab - How to apply for grad school in ecology and evolution

<https://www.mordecailab.com/news-marquee/applying-for-grad-school>

Tips

<https://dynamicecology.wordpress.com/2013/02/05/thoughts-on-applying-to-grad-school-for-prospective-students-and-their-mentors/>

STEMCulture Podcast Part 1 “How to Apply to Grad School” (link is for Apple Podcasts, but you can find STEMCulture Podcast wherever you find podcasts).

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/stemculture-podcast/id1444712122>

Or STEMCulture posts on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDA-aF_VRH8

The Taproot Podcast interviews plant scientists, usually on how a given study/article came about. These two episodes focus on applying to grad school and how to interview:

Grad school applications: https://plantae.org/blog/taproot_s4e3/

Interviewing for Grad School: https://plantae.org/blog/taproot_s4e4/

Naia Butler, a Black NASA scholar, shares their guide for going to grad school in aerospace. <https://www.naiabutlercraig.com/forum/welcome-to-the-forum/some-considerations-for-getting-a-phd-in-aerospace-engineering>

Olivia H. Wilkin’s one-stop page for the Astronomy and Astrophysics, Bio/Biomed, Chemistry and Physics #GREExit lists: <http://theskyisnotthelimit.org/student-resources>

One-stop spreadsheet of #GREExit spreadsheets. Astronomy, Bio/Biomed/, Chem, Geography/Geology, Plant Science, Botany, Horticulture, Agronomy, Plant-Associated Fields, Public Health, Clinical/Counseling Psychology: [Master List of GREExit Lists - Megan Lynch](#)

Apply early for GRE fee waivers if you're eligible. ETS is a monopoly and does not grant fee waivers to everyone eligible, but to a limited number on a first come-first served basis: <https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/gre-fee-waiver/>

If you are disabled and need accommodation, apply super-early as it's done by snail mail on top of the usual medical proofs hurdles:

https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/disabilities/

What to do if you apply and are not accepted this time?

<https://www.cientificolatino.com/post/rejectedfromgradschool>

Post-baccalaureate programs you can get more experience at before reapplying to grad school: <https://www.cientificolatino.com/post-bac>

Applying to grad school after rejections on the first round

https://www.cientificolatino.com/post/yessica_santana_reapplyingtogradschool

From Application to Graduation and Finding a Job

Published in 1999 so it's likely outdated in many ways, but still... [The Ph.D. Process: A Student's Guide to Graduate School in the Sciences](#) by Dale F. Bloom, Jonathan D. Karp, Nicholas Cohen

Lab Culture and Social Interactions

List of lab manuals (expectations etc.) from @RemiGau
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kn4A0nR4loUOSDn9Qysd3MqFJ9cGU91dCDM6x9aga-8/edit?usp=sharing>

Ten simple rules towards healthier research labs

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1006914>

Dealing with sexism in the workplace + an awesome episode on imposter syndrome

<https://www.kuow.org/podcasts/battle-tactics>

Emailing Professors

<https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/emailing-professors/>

A guided reflection on how you want to be mentored:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pShDOIZyodPQs4HjiPnCfG-OzgNlygWjCfUCVxuE-y0/edit>

Acquiring Research Skills

Q: How can I start doing research?

A student's guide to undergraduate research:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00871-x>

Q: How should I contact a professor I'm interested in doing research with? Are there any email templates or scripts I can use? How should I prepare for talking with them?

Email templates for undergrad research experience:

<https://ugr.ue.ucsc.edu/email>

Applying for field jobs: <http://aurielfournier.github.io/field-tech-applications/>

Organizational & Research Tips for Folks In Grad School Who Suspect They Have ADHD:

<https://kconrod.medium.com/so-youre-abd-and-also-you-re-beginning-to-suspect-you-have-undiagnosed-adhd-661c57e99b7d>

How to read journal articles:

https://twitter.com/Nicole_Lee_Sch/status/1436414224939601922?s=20

How what you did in a testing & grade environment can be bad prep for grad school and why to adjust:

<https://twitter.com/cesifoti/status/1437043299852996608?s=20>

Presentation Tricks and Tips

<https://betterposters.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.activatedocaptivate.com/blog>

<https://tinyurl.com/4ahfnje>

Writing and Building a CV

Q: What is the difference between a resume and a CV?

A. Twitter thread of people sharing CV examples

<https://twitter.com/CaballeroGill/status/1145753930640453632?s=20>

B. <https://www.careeraddict.com/CV-resume-difference>

Applying for Fellowships

Graduate fellowship - NSF GRFP

<http://www.christineliuart.com/writing/2018/8/31/advice-for-applying-to-the-nsf-grfp>

<https://www.alexhunterlang.com/nsf-fellowship>

https://twitter.com/_katrinarenee/status/1026129135175905280?s=20

<http://www.malloryladd.com/nsf-grfp-advice.html>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxTJoMOw_GADcU1tcTIsQTNpNGs/view

<https://scientistamaggs.wordpress.com/2018/08/21/yes-you-should-apply-to-these-fellowships-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

Asking for a letter of recommendation:

<https://twitter.com/christinaludema/status/1171523623200256001?s=19>

Fellowships for international scholars:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1J7J_1hz0AjxkExUcPX24W80ZvGi71ZLS8ktUaV4bpd/edit?usp=sharing

Writing a Research Thesis

<https://twitter.com/WriteThatPhD>

<https://thesiswhisperer.com/>

Josh Schimel's *Writing Science* (great for scientific writing in general)

Josh Schimel's book is ISBN: 9780199760244

A presentation is available on Vimeo "Josh Schimel - Writing Science: Framing the story: structure": <https://vimeo.com/17432903>

[Reasoned Writing](#) and [A Framework for Scientific Papers](#):

<https://sites.google.com/view/reasonedwriting/>

TAing

Hannah Brazeau thread on managing your students' and your own expectations when working as a TA: <https://twitter.com/HABrazeau/status/1205254546743799808?s=20>

The Autistic & Neurodiverse Community at UC Davis volunteered their labor to do a workshop for TAs on how to teach accessibly for autistic & neurodiverse students: https://video.ucdavis.edu/media/Graduate+Student+Workshop-Accessibility+and+Inclusion+in+TeachingA+Perspectives+of+Autistic+and+Neurodivergent+Students/1_hkuea1d7

Preventing Burnout

Taking leave is an option. Not all schools make this easy to do, though. If you decide to take leave part-way through a quarter/semester, they may not reimburse you for your tuition, so be aware of what the cutoffs are. And returning can be difficult, depending on

the institution. READ UP as much as you can on the process, and don't assume that administrators know all the answers!

Asking for homework extensions is an option. Just be careful - assignments can pile up really quickly.

Work fewer, more efficient hours, time management advice

<https://asngrads.com/2018/11/27/work-smarter-not-harder-resources-for-time-management-in-graduate-school/>

<http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/surviving-and-thriving-in-academia/>

Financial Advice

There are often paid work opportunities on campus for undergraduates, emergency funds you can apply for, and food pantries. Check your universities website to find out what resources are available to you.

Personal Finances for PhD students:

<http://pfforphds.com/>

[How to Prepare Your Grad Student Tax Return \(written in 2019\)](#)

Conferences

How to pack for a conference

<https://contemplativemammoth.com/2011/07/21/inqua-2011-part-1-packing-for-a-conference/>

<https://emilycontois.com/tag/packing/>

Research trip travel

Checklists for field travel, conference travel and first aid kits:

https://github.com/BrunaLab/research_trip_checklists

Fieldwork safety

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eel9vet5ThFc1vxpo9HSWfavKB6GZsCy?usp=sharing>

A guide for developing a field research safety manual that explicitly considers risks for marginalized identities in the sciences

Comic Relief

<https://twitter.com/AcademiaObscura>

<https://twitter.com/AcademicPain>

<https://twitter.com/PHDcomics>

<https://twitter.com/YourPaperSucks>

<https://twitter.com/redpenblackpen>

<https://twitter.com/AcademicsSay>