



Research Methods in Science in Engineering

Psychological Aspects of Graduate School

Slide 1

Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is when a person *doubts their skills* and fears they will be *discovered as a fraud*.

Many people seek advanced degrees because they are insecure about their level of knowledge.

You will likely never feel like an expert. There are no experts. There are only people who get stuff done anyway.

Slide 2

PhD Guilt

PhD guilt is the guilt associated with doing things other than research that make a person feel like they are neglecting their research.

Work as hard as you possibly can so that you are still enjoying the research.

You need breaks and a life outside of research. It helps maintain energy, stamina and sanity. Getting out of your environment also helps you be more creative.

Post-PhD Guilt

Post-PhD guilt is when you look back at your research and feel guilty and underserving because you could reproduce all of your research in a very short amount of time.

The reason you can reproduce your research in such a short amount of time is why you have earned the PhD.

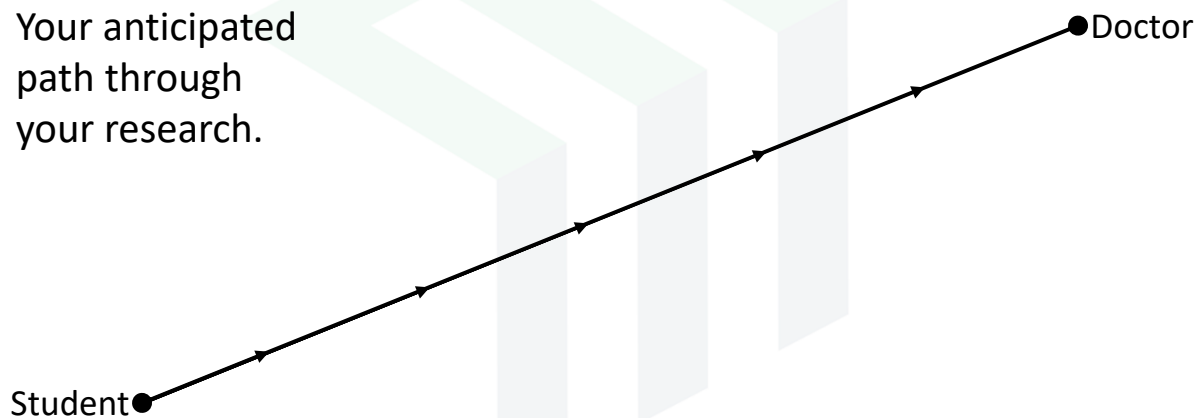
Significant Others

Significant others (and family) will struggle with your graduate studies and research.

- SO/family may feel your research is more important to you than them.
- SO/family may feel neglected and lonely.

Manage Your Expectations

Your anticipated path through your research.



Manage Your Expectations

Your actual path through your research.

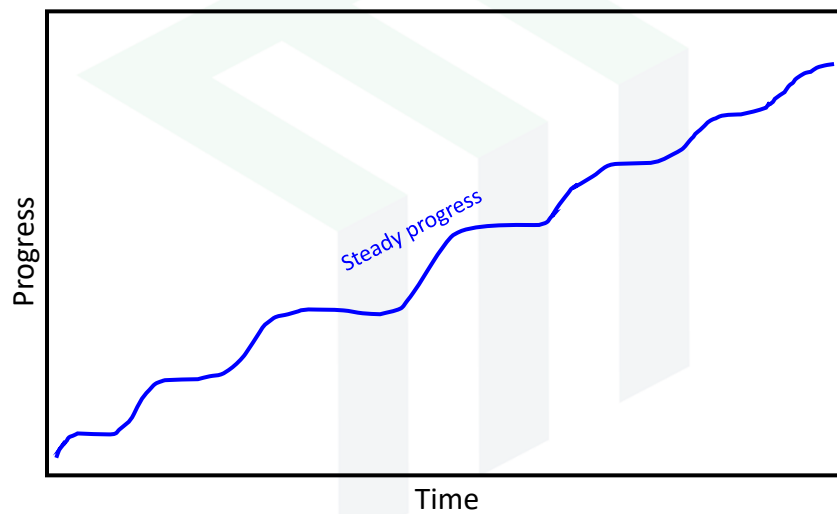
Student •

• Doctor

EMPossible

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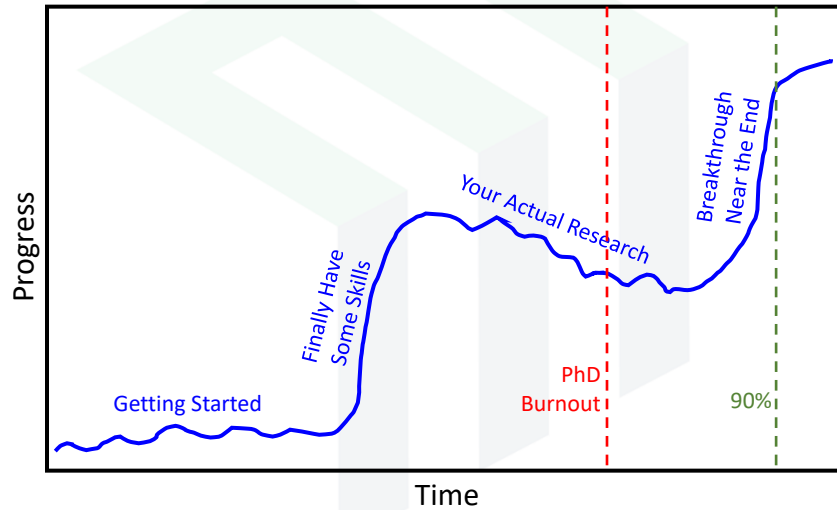
What You Think Your Progress Will Look Like



EMPossible

Slide 8

What Your Progress Will Actually Look Like



When you are 90% done, you are only half way there.

What it Really Takes to Get a PhD

~~Intelligence~~

Stamina

Advice

- Have a sense of humor about the frustrations and struggles of graduate research.
- Take breaks and find a release (i.e. sports, games, movies, hobbies, etc.).
- Enjoy the journey! Don't be in a rush to finish.
- Keep talking your advisor and make sure what you need to accomplish for graduation is clear and specific.
- It is not your professor's job to layout HOW you get these things accomplished. A PhD is an independent researcher.

Conclusion

You are not alone and your feelings are not unique.

In fact, these psychological conditions are much more the norm than the exception.

UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services

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