**Guide to Ph.D. Students**

To potential Ph.D. students:

My experience of supervising graduate students leads me to design this guide to facilitate the matching between a student and a supervisor.

**1 Goals**

Upon graduation, you should have achieved these goals:

1. Be able to do high-quality research independently, including coming up with good (important and interesting) research questions; be able to write fluently in both Chinese and English.
2. High quality means your papers should be publishable in top Chinese journals and decent SSCI journals.
3. Be able to give a full seminar in both Chinese and English fluently and professionally.
4. Be able to defend yourself from criticizers and attackers, but do not be too defensive.
5. Be professional and follow professionalism and academic integrity (this is also a life-time learning process).

If you are not this ambitious, then we are not a good match.

**2 Required readings**

Before you sign this agreement, you should have carefully read these materials:

1. A Guide for the Young Economist, by William Thomson; especially, chapter 1 “Being a graduate student in economics”.
2. Writing tips for Ph.D. students, by John Cochrane.
3. Ph.D. thesis research: Where Do I Start? By Don Davis.
4. My Rules of Thumb, by Gregory Mankiw.
5. The young economist's guide to professional etiquette, by D. Hamermesh.
6. The elements of style, by W. Strunk and E. White.
7. Economic writing, by D. McCloskey.
8. A Guide and Advice for Economists on the U.S. Junior Academic Job Market, by John Cawley, 2016-2017 edition.
9. David Laibson’s advice for job market candidates.
10. Academic job market advice for economics, political science, public policy, and other professional schools.
11. Guide to Etiquette, edited by Graduate Students Association of WISE at Xiamen University.
12. Weisbach, M., A field guide to economics: A young scholar’s introduction to research, publishing, and professional development.
13. Feibelman, P., 2011, A PhD is not enough! A guide to survival in science, Basic Books.
14. How to Have Fun Without Failing Out: 430 Tips from a College Professor, by Robert Gilbert.

Although this is a guide book for college students, I find graduate students should read it to learn shortcuts to success.

Check more resources for economists and economics graduate students at www.aeaweb.org.

**3 Qualities you need to develop**

1. Creativeness;
2. Open-mindedness;
3. Initiative;
4. Sociability;
5. Leadership and teamwork spirit;
6. Good citizenship and etiquette.

**4 Things you need to do well and regularly before graduation**

1. Meet with me regularly during office hours to discuss your research progress. I require meeting at least once a week during academic semesters. If either of us cannot meet, email communication is required to report your progress.
2. Attend seminars regularly. Attend all seminars in your related field if possible and communicate with the speakers.
3. If you have good working papers, I encourage you to go out to give seminars or presentations in conferences or workshops.
4. Teach at least one course for one semester before you enter the job market.
5. Focus on one project at a time but think about a few new projects constantly.
6. Follow professionalism and etiquette all the time. For example, if you decide to attend a seminar, be there and listen, think, ask questions; do not play with your phone or computer.
7. Practice writing and speaking in both Chinese and English. It is your own job to improve your public speaking skills.
8. If you plan to present a paper in a workshop, conference, or in front of a group of people, email me your PPT a few days in advance. I will go through the PPT with you to make sure any avoidable mistakes or flaws will be avoided so that you won’t feel embarrassed during the presentation.
9. Meet deadlines.
10. Be initiative to engage in the development of new research ideas.
11. When you face pressure or psychological problems, read some books on self-help, such as books by David Niven (for example, 100 Simple Secrets of Successful People: What Scientists Have Learned and How You Can Use It).
12. Work out regularly, such as running, jogging, or any of your sports hobby.
13. Talk to professors who are not in your committee.
14. Develop co-authorship with your fellow students.

**5 What I can offer and cannot**

1. Regular office hours; if not, email appointment is available.
2. I can provide research assistantship for at least one semester.
3. I do not give you ideas for your thesis but give you ideas for co-authoring.
4. I can copy-edit your first paper in Chinese and first paper in English till it is well written and publishable, and this is the chance through which you can learn how to write well.
5. I provide you conference travel funds subject to budget constraint.
6. I cannot help you find a job, but I can provide an honest recommendation letter and a strong recommendation if you are truly good.
7. I may not be able to help you for non-academic hardship but if you let me know I may be able to help you figure out a solution.
8. If I repeat a piece of advice more than twice, that means that advice is very important to you (very often such advice is from established economists). Failing to follow such advice will most likely do harm to your career.

If you agree with these statements and are willing to sign it to promise that you will follow these guidelines, I’ll be happy to supervise your thesis research. Serious violation will lead to termination of the supervisor-student relationship. I may update this guide with notice.

P.S.: If you don’t contact me for more than one week, I assume everything going well with you.

During the past decade, among students I have supervised, almost no one can strictly follow this guide. That means all those students should have achieved much more than what they have achieved so far. Unfortunately, although I can lead a horse to water, I can’t make it drink.

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