Pathway to Post-Graduate School Tool Kit

Everything a post-graduate student needs for success!
Job Search Timeline: PhD Student Seeking an Academic Position

The timetable for the academic job search is only relatively standardized. In many cases recruiting for academic positions revolves around initial screening interviews conducted at major annual professional conferences; followed by comprehensive interviews and research presentations ('job talks') on the institution's campus. But this is not true in all cases. In general, you will apply for academic positions in the late summer or fall, a full year before you plan to begin your new position. Work with your advisor and departmental faculty to thoroughly understand the time-table and application processes applicable to your particular field.

Years 1-4

• Use faculty members from your department together with Deans/Administrators to help you to identify relevant University resources

• Attend department orientations, training sessions offered by the library, Career Center, Graduate Studies and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, etc.

• Identify fellowship/grant/scholarship opportunities early in your tenure (many graduate student fellowships are for 1st or 2nd year graduate students - e.g., NSF fellowships; other fellowship application processes may take several months to one year to complete)

• Explore areas of research with different faculty members, complete your coursework expeditiously, and start your professional networking: attend departmental events, university seminars, professional conferences and lectures. Consider presenting at these events.

• Be a teacher assistant for a few classes to gain teaching experience. Ask to give a presentation during at least one lecture.

• Gain supervisory experience through mentoring an undergraduate research assistant.

• Volunteer or take part in outside experiential opportunities.

• Audit or take classes in areas outside or adjacent to your area of primary research to expand your breadth of knowledge.
Job Search Timeline: PhD Student Seeking an Academic Position continued

- Attend workshops on grantsmanship, publishing, presenting/public speaking, and teaching offered through multiple departments on campus.

- Try to attend and present a poster or slide presentation at one professional conference a year starting in your 2nd year; Discuss presentation opportunities with your advisor and fellow graduate students.

- Participate in the scholarly life of your department - arrange colloquia or symposia, attend presentations, help on committees where possible.

- Continue applying for grants.

- Submit articles for publication (ideally in refereed journals - discuss with your advisor), identify opportunities for collaboration on book chapters, edited volumes, and other publications and/or research with professors.

- Create a Curriculum Vitae (CV) as early as possible and keep it up-to-date by reviewing it every six months. It is easier to make new entries as they occur, than it is to retroactively create an entire CV.

- With your advisor, begin considering who will comprise your dissertation committee.

- Discuss with your advisor the application processes and search committee expectations of candidates in your field or area of specialization; Attend workshops or panel presentations on this topic.

- By Fall or Spring of Year 3 or 4, have your dissertation proposal approved by your (three) core committee members.

- Start outlining chapters and writing your dissertation in the Spring of Year 4, continuing over the summer prior to Year 5. Attend writing workshops, attend dissertation support groups, and write with a dissertation partner to keep each other on track.

- If you are planning to begin applying for positions in the fall of Year 5 (to start working the following fall), you will need to plan out your year carefully as the application process, dissertation completion, and other obligations (e.g., teaching) will be taxing.

- Keep a folder with all of your evaluations and/or positive email comments from students.
Job Search Timeline: PhD Student Seeking an Academic Position

Year 5 (or Final Year of PhD Program)

Preceding Summer

- Update your CV for your academic job search
- Have your CV reviewed by others: Make an appointment for a review at Career Services; as well as and seek opinions from your advisor(s) and colleagues/friends
- Make a list of faculty members, advisors, and others from whom you are planning to request a letter of recommendation or ask to be a reference
- Contact your recommendation writers AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (over the summer - or earlier - is best, when they have more time to prepare your recommendation letter) and set up a meeting with them to discuss your career plans. This will assist them greatly with writing specifically about your relevant strengths and skills in their letter.
- Review job openings in the Chronicle of Higher Education, on professional association websites and journals, and on other relevant locations - discuss them with your advisor
- Start drafting cover letters for use with your applications; These letters - and all written materials in your applications - can be reviewed by career counselors and your advisor/departmental faculty
- Prepare your Statement of Teaching Philosophy, if requested by an application
- Prepare a summary Statement of your Research or dissertation - again, if requested by an application
- Gather application materials together: course syllabi you have designed, teaching evaluations, submitted/published articles, conference abstracts, transcripts, etc.
- If you haven’t already done so, join professional associations within your field (if you are not already a student member)

Continued on back...
Early Fall
• Check job postings in The Chronicle of Higher Education and in other professional association websites and journals
• Ensure all your letters of recommendation are ready, and send thank you notes to your recommenders; Keep them your references apprised of your application progress
•Finalize your CV, cover letters, and other application materials
• Work with career counselors at Career Services and advisors/faculty in your department to have your application materials reviewed
• Prepare and rehearse your job talk presentation
• Deliver your job talk or research at departmental colloquia, lab meetings, and regional conferences
• Keep in close contact with your advisors regarding the positions to which you are applying; they may be able to network on your behalf
• Send in applications
• Prepare for first-round interviews

Late Fall
• Present a poster or presentation about your research at professional conferences
• Expect to network and undergo first-round interviews at (typically) professional conferences
• Continue applying for positions
• Send thank-you notes following any interviews
• Set aside time for campus visit interviews (“fly outs”), which typically occur between January and March

Spring
• Go on campus visits for interviews, job talks, and teaching demonstrations
• Send thank-you notes
• You will begin to hear back from tenure track and post doc positions
• Work with a career counselor and/or your advisor on negotiating your job offer(s) - ALWAYS take the time needed to consider all of your options
• If you have not yet found a position, don’t worry! In many fields, the academic job market is very tight, and new PhDs (or post-docs) often do not get offers in their first year of applying. Because of this, it is important to pursue contingency plan(s) to sustain and help you develop professionally through the next year - or two: adjunct or visiting professorship teaching opportunities, post-doctoral research, etc. It often takes more than one year to find a position - Discuss your options with your advisor or with a counselor
Spring of the Year Before You Go On the Market

Communicate with committee members. Make sure they are supportive of you going on the market in the fall. This includes having a conversation about the likelihood of you being ready to finish your dissertation within the next year. It also means asking how much of your writing needs to be completed before they will be willing to write letters of recommendation on your behalf.

Communicate with other potential letter writers not serving on your dissertation committee, and confirm whether or not they are willing to write you letters, and what their availability will be for the following year. For example, will they be on sabbatical and unable or unwilling to write letters during that time?

Ask your advisors and other academic colleagues about regularly offered postdocs and think about which ones might be a good fit for you. Many postdocs require you to already be in conversation with a member of the faculty at the hosting institution when you apply. That can take the form of a requirement for a faculty member to officially sponsor you, to write you a letter of recommendation, or to work with you on a collaboratively developed research proposal. Use your academic networks to get introduced to appropriate faculty members at the host institutions. The earlier you do this, the better. However, if you don’t get to this task in the spring, keep trying in the summer and fall.

Summer

Ask to see the job documents submitted by any friends who have gotten academic jobs in the last few years.

Prepare the following documents for use in your applications. Not all applications will ask for every one of these documents, but if you do a large search, you will need to use all of them at some point. You may also need to prepare a Diversity Statement, though only a small minority of applications require this document.

- CV
- Cover letter
- Research statement
- Teaching Statement
- Evidence of Teaching Excellence
- Research Proposal (for postdoc applications)
- Transcripts
- References
- PDFs of your publications

Tell friends in your academic networks that you are going on the market this year, and ask them to send you job announcements that they think might be a fit for you.
Sign up for job announcements. Ask your advisors and other colleagues what listserves and job banks frequently post jobs in your area, and sign up for them.

Create a system for tracking jobs that you plan to apply for, or have already applied for. Here are some header examples for a possible template: School | Home Dept/Institute | Location | Due Date | Position | Job Description | URL for Job ad | Letter writer 1? | Letter writer 2…? | Address letter to: | Letters submission process | Application Instructions | Application submission confirmation #

Get access to software with which you can edit pdfs. Many of your job applications will ask for multiple documents to be put together in a single pdf, so you will need to be able to combine and divide pdfs for different purposes.

Shop for interview clothes, but keep in mind you might not get any campus visit requests in which to wear them in your first year on the job market.

**Fall and Winter (Sept-March)**

Watch for new jobs to apply for, and apply for the ones you already have on your list as their due dates approach. This will be the equivalent to taking on a part time job on top of your existing obligations, so lean on your friends and support structures for help dealing with the stress.

If you get any phone or Skype interview requests, set time aside to prepare as needed. This involves coming up with a list of questions you may be asked, preparing answers for them, and asking friends to run you through several practice interviews.

If you get any campus-interview requests, set aside time to prepare for them as well. You will also likely need to prepare a job-talk based on your research, and perhaps also a teaching demonstration.

Keep applying for jobs! Stick it out and just keep applying even when your energy starts to flag. You never know which job might end up working out.

**Spring**

By March and April, most of the tenure-track job application deadlines will have finished, but lingering postdoc opportunities will continue. At this time there will also likely be an upswing of non-tenure-track job opportunities. Calls for lecturers, adjuncts, and visiting assistant professors will continue through the spring and in some cases the summer, before the job market starts all over again the following year.

**Resources**

- The Professor is In http://theprofessorisin.com/, covers all of the above tips in great detail.
- National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, webinar on "Strategies for Dealing with Stress and Rejection." to deal with the stress.
- Read the job-market advice at The Professor is In, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Vitae.
- Academic life is not for you? Karen Kelsky and others also have advice about how to transition into an "Alt-Ac" or "Post-Ac" job - a job outside of academia.
CV Categories and Grad Skills List: Categories and Clarifications

**Publications:** If lengthy, include subheadings such as refereed, non-refereed, textbooks, chapters, technical papers, etc. Distinguish between those in press, submitted, under review, limited distribution and in preparation. Use bibliographic style appropriate for your discipline.

**Professional Development:** List workshops, conferences or courses related to training. For example, the seminar on college teaching or workshops related to teaching or research methods.

**Other Relevant Experience:** Could contain non-academic position related to current field or field of study.

**Grants And Contracts:** Include only if you have authored or co-authored the proposal and received funding. Indicate the funding source and the name of the principal investigator.

**Shows/Exhibits/Performances:** Cite works composed, conducted or performed.

**Certifications/Licensure:** Follows Education.

**Languages:** Indicate fluency: reading, writing, speaking.

**Relevant Coursework:** Use only if requested or if it serves to clarify preparation. If more than 2-3 lines, substitute “See Addendum I” and attach the addendum.

**Support Documents For Academic Positions:**

Cover Letter/Statement of Interest (Always included; length varies depending upon number and type of other supporting documents requested. In other words, if none of the following additional documents listed below are requested, then the cover letter should be more comprehensive and will thus be longer in length, but no more than three pages.)

- Research Statement/Agenda
- Statement of Teaching Interests
- Teaching Philosophy Statement
- Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness
- Diversity Statement
- Sample Course Syllabi
- Writing Sample/Reprints
- Dissertation Abstract
- Letters of Recommendation
- Transcripts (Only if requested)

*Tip:* Make individual word documents for each of the above categories
General Skills Particular to Graduate Students

Communication Skills

Ability to:

- write clearly and concisely
- listen well
- speak publicly
- interpret the dynamics of interpersonal relations
- distinguish fine shades of meaning
- distinguish verbal and non-verbal messages
- teach and train
- counsel and advise
- serve as resource/referral person

General Research Skills

Ability to:

- retrieve data
- acquire data
- analyze data
- manipulate data
- use methodology
- produce survey work, e.g., develop questionnaires
- interview
- observe
- classify
- test hypotheses for acceptance or rejection against known evidence
- identify and use resources

Technical Skills

Ability to:

- program computers
- edit
- condense material to its important components
- manipulate abstract concepts
- formulate hypotheses
- think flexibly
- impose structure—create order out of “chaos”
- evaluate programs

Field Research Skills

Problem-Solving/Analytical/Conceptual Skills

Ability to:

- analyze
- reason logically
- identify problems
- analyze problems
- perceive parts in relation to whole
- see patterns
- develop theories out of pattern
- synthesize
- establish goals
- set objectives
- motivate people
- tolerate ambiguity

Managerial Skills

Ability to:

- supervise
- evaluate performance of others
- assume authority
- delegate authority
- manage time
- establish goals
- set objectives
- motivate people
- tolerate ambiguity
Cover Letters

Cover Letter Basics
A cover letter or letter of intent should go with most resumes submitted for consideration for jobs or internships. If you can only upload one document, you can make your letter/resume into a two page document with a page break in-between the two sections.

A cover letter is important because:
- It introduces you and your resume.
- It explains why you are a good fit for this opportunity.
- It bridges the gap between your resume and the reader/employer.
- It supplements and expands on projects, education and experiences directly related to the opening.
- It can make the difference between having your resume read or ignored.

Cover Letter DOs
- Use the same font, format and paper as your resume.
- Limit a cover letter to one page.
- Personalize each cover letter to the specific position.
- Check for typos, proper grammar and accuracy. Use SPELLCHECK first, but do not rely on it to catch all errors. Have an ICC Advisor review it before you send it.
- Use “standard business letter” format even if it is an email.
- When emailing, also attach a pdf version of your cover letter.
- Standard salutations are: Dear Mr. Smith, or Dear Ms. Grey.
- If no specific name, use: Dear Hiring Manager, Dear Graphics Department Hiring Team, Dear Recruiter, and To Whom It May Concern: (this last one takes a “.” not a “,“)

Cover Letter DON’Ts
- Don’t try to say everything in your cover letter.
- Do not repeat or summarize your resume.
- Don’t use a generic, “one size fits all” cover letter.
- Don’t write long, wordy letters.
- Don’t overuse adjectives, especially subjective ones. (example: You are the best X company in the world. I am the most hardworking student intern you will ever meet.)
- Do not exaggerate your skills or experience.
- Don’t focus on what you want, but on what you bring to the employer.
**Verb List for Resumes & Letters**: Use strong action verbs to describe your experience and skills. Choose words from the lists below to express yourself.

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Dear [Mr., Mrs., Dr., (or Hiring Manager, or To Whom It May Concern): ]

In the FIRST PARAGRAPH, tell how you heard about the job and, if appropriate, name the person who told you about it. Mention the specific job title. Express your interest in the company or position. Say you are enclosing/attaching a resume that shows how you are qualified for this job. (optional)

In the SECOND PARAGRAPH (AND MAYBE IN A 3RD PARAGRAPH), analyze your background and skills in relationship to the specific job description. Show how you make a “good fit” with this job/organization and how you can contribute. It is about what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. Give one or two examples of related experience. Keep the job description in mind and do NOT restate your resume. This letter shows brief highlights of your “fit” with a specific job using specific skills, qualities, knowledge, interests you have that relate to the opening. (Break big paragraphs up, using one paragraph for each skill set is one way to organize them. Smaller paragraphs are more readable.)

In the LAST PARAGRAPH, tell how you will follow through with this application. For example, “I am eager to meet with you to discuss this opportunity. I am available for an interview at a mutually convenient time. And remind the reader how to reach you best.” For example, “I will be in the Bay area during the week of March 25,” or “I am able to drive to Roseville any day except Tuesdays and Thursdays.” And “I can best be reached at 530-555-1212 or james.stewart@ucdavis.edu.” I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name] (if emailing, use a script-like font to simulate your signature in this space)

[Name] (Just type your name here—2 spaces below signature)

Attachments (if email) referring to your resume
Do…Enclosures (if paper mail)

Avoid overuse of adjectives and adverbs. Strive to be objective.
Avoid: I am an incredibly hard worker. Better: My past supervisor noted that I am able to complete projects earlier than deadlines.

Explain in the cover letter how your experience relates to this opening using one or two key examples. Do not summarize your whole resume.

Use SPELLCHECK often, but do not rely on it to catch all errors. Then copy and paste your letter as the text of your email and attach it in pdf format.
Writing a Winning Teaching Statement

When you apply for a job or come up for tenure, you will be asked to submit a teaching statement. Of course in some instances, a teaching statement is not a serious factor in the hiring or the tenure process. An institution requires a statement simply to send the message that it regards teaching as important. And it is no doubt the case that a poor teaching statement can hurt more than a strong statement can help. A bad statement clearly identifies a grad student who is disdainful of students and who dislikes teaching.

But in other cases, especially at liberal arts colleges, a memorable, skillfully written teaching statement helps to set you apart from other candidates. It can demonstrate that you have reflected seriously about your learning objectives, methods, and the relationship between your research and your teaching.

Do's and Don'ts - Many teaching statements are insipid, vague, grandiose, or mired in generalities.

Don'ts:
1. Don't simply rehash your c.v. - Instead, demonstrate that you are well prepared to "hit the ground running" at a particular institution.
2. Don't pontificate - Don't let the word "philosophy" lead you to adopt a dry or pedantic or airy style. Avoid empty, excessively abstract philosophical generalizations.
3. Don't be generic - Tailor your teaching statement to the institution. Demonstrate that you understand what a particular department expects of you. A “bulk mail” approach to a job search is a recipe for failure.
4. Don't plagiarize - Make sure your statement is unique to you.

Do's:
1. Ground your statement in your discipline. 3. Consider this an opportunity to sell yourself.
2. Be humble - Avoid hyperbole and excessive superlatives. 4. Connect your teaching and your research.
5. Remember, your statement is a writing sample.

How to Write an Effective Teaching Statement
1. Identify your learning objectives - What are the most important skills and habits of mind that you want students to learn in your classes? These might include:
   • Developing students' problem solving strategies
   • Insuring that students understand foundational concepts
   • Modeling expert problem solving
   • Teaching students to work collaboratively
   Reduce math or science anxiety
2. Explain—with concrete, specific examples—how you accomplish these goals.
A teaching statement offers a chance to discuss the exciting, innovative, and effective things you do in the classroom. Make sure you identify the most successful assignments and activities you have used in your classes.

Explain:
   • How do you interest and engage students.
   • How do you help students understand difficult ideas and concepts.
   • How do you assess student learning.
3. Identify, again with examples, challenges you have faced in the classroom and how you addressed them.
   • You need to demonstrate that you have meaningful classroom experience and are well prepared for a full teaching load.
4. Integrate strong, supportive statements from student course evaluations.
5. Explain how your research contributes to your teaching.
6. Describe the courses you’d like to teach.
7. Keep it short and succinct - In a job application, a teaching statement should be no more than 1-2 pages long.
Reflecting on Student Learning

In recent years, we have learned a great deal about how students learn and what pedagogical techniques work most effectively. Here are some of the findings:

1. Learning is a developmental process: Students must develop a capacity for self-direction, self-monitoring, and self-generation of ideas. In addition, students must learn how to formulate questions, conduct research, and write in a professional manner.

In order to mature as a learner, a student must shed earlier identities, ways of thinking, and forms of self-expression. The process of intellectual maturation is often emotionally wrenching, for it doesn’t simply involve rejecting long held beliefs, it involves fundamental transformations in one’s self-perception, thinking, and behavior and modes of relating to others.

2. Conceptual learning: Advanced learning requires students to construct a conceptual framework which allows them to integrate and organize new knowledge and information into a coherent structure. If students are going to construct a conceptual framework, it is important to give them opportunities to reflect and revisit important ideas repeatedly throughout a semester.

3. Learning has an affective dimension: Engagement is a key component of learning. Without engagement there is little motivation to learn. We need hooks to stimulate student curiosity and interest.

4. Students learn best when they are engaged in active inquiry: Students learn most when they have opportunities to undertake tasks similar to those undertaken by professionals within a discipline.

5. Students need to critically engage primary sources: Students need opportunities to work on authentic problems using authentic kinds of evidence.

6. Experiential learning: This means learning by doing. Project-based learning gives students the chance to do original work. It might mean researching and writing a research paper, or undertaking an experiment or making a video.

7. Collaborative inquiry: One way to deepen students’ understanding is to develop collaborative projects that give each student a clear role and set of responsibilities.

8. The importance of dialogue: Despite appearances, learning is a social, not a solitary, activity. While many of us have had unhappy experiences with small group learning, we need to envision ways that students can contribute to one another’s intellectual growth through a process of intellectual give and take.

9. Students do not learn in a single way: To reach a wide range of learners, it is important to combine a variety of approaches, including demonstrations, simulations, lecture, discussion, and collaborative activities.

10. Reaching students at their own level: The early 20th century developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky wrote about the “zone of proximal development,” an awkward phrase that refers to that level of understanding that a student can reach with a teacher’s help. Thus, an instructor seeks to stretch and broaden a student’s understanding by identifying those areas that are within the student’s grasp—not too easy, but also not too difficult.

11. Classroom climate: Student learning can be enhanced or hindered by the classroom environment. A safe and stimulating environment encourages students to actively participate. Fostering such an environment requires instructors to be sensitive to individual differences and to make sure that students understand their expectations and goals and the steps they need to take to meet those objectives.
Writing a Research Statement

What is a research statement?

A common component of the academic job application is the Research Statement (or Statement of Research Interests). This statement provides a summary of your research accomplishments and current work and discusses the future direction and potential of your work. The statement can discuss specific issues such as funding history and potential, requirements for laboratory equipment and space, and potential research and industrial collaborations. It should be technical, but should remain intelligible to any member of the department. Because it has the potential to be read by people outside of your subdiscipline, the "big picture" is important to keep in mind. The strongest research statements present a readable, compelling, and realistic research agenda that fits well with the needs, facilities, and goals of the department. Research statements can be weakened by overly ambitious proposals, by lack of clear direction, by lack of big-picture focus, or if inadequate attention is given to the needs and facilities of the department or position.

Some general advice on research statements:

The goal of the research statement is to introduce yourself to a search committee, which will probably contain scientists both in and outside your field, and get them excited about your research. The statement may be 2 or more pages, keeping in mind that you want people to read it. So don’t make it too long, use informative section headings, don’t use a tiny font, don’t make the margins ridiculously small, etc. It is better to use a larger font and let it run over another page than to squeeze it all onto two pages.

Think of the overarching theme guiding your main research subject area.
Write an essay that lays out:

- The main theme(s) and why it is important and what specific skills you use to attack the problem.
- A couple of specific examples of problems you have already worked on with success - to build credibility and give people outside your field an idea of what it is you do.
- A discussion of the future direction of your research. This section should build on the above and be really really exciting to people both in and outside your field. Don’t sell yourself short. If you think that your research could lead to answers for big exciting questions - say so! You’ve already built up credibility in the previous section, now reach for the stars.
- Tie it all off with a final paragraph that leaves the reader with a good overall impression of your research.
- There is a delicate balance between a realistic research statement where you promise to work on problems you really do think you can solve and over-reaching or dabbling in too many subject areas. You probably want to select an over-arching theme for your research statement and leave some miscellaneous ideas or projects out of it. Everyone knows that you will work on more than what you mention in this statement.
- Pay attention to jargon. You want most readers to understand everything in your statement. Make sure that you describe your research in language that many people outside your specific subject area can understand. Ask people both in and outside your field to read it before you send your application. Remember that the goal is to get the search committee excited about you - they won’t get excited about something they can’t understand.
- It will be helpful to point out how some faculty at the department/university that you are applying to could be your collaborators in research and/or teaching.
- Be sure to include potential funding partners, industrial collaboration! Be creative!
- The research statement should convince the search committee not only that you are knowledgeable, but that you are the person to carry out the research.
- If you have something that sets you apart, (e.g. a publication in Science, Nature, or a very prestigious journal in your field) you may want to include it.
- There are no excuses for spelling errors.
10 Academic Survival Tips from the Crunk Feminist Collective

1. Be confident in your abilities.
If you feel like a fraud, you very likely are suffering from impostor syndrome, a chronic feeling of intellectual or personal inadequacy born of grandiose expectations about what it means to be competent. The academy itself creates grandiose expectations, given the general perception of academics as hyper-competent people. Secret: Everybody that’s acting like they know, doesn’t really know. So ask your question. It’s probably not as stupid as you think. Now say this with me: “I’m smart enough, my work is important, and damn it, I’m gonna make it.”

2. Be patient with yourself.
Be patient with your own process of intellectual growth. You will get there and it will all come together. You aren’t supposed to know everything at the beginning. And you still won’t know everything at the end (of coursework, exams, the dissertation, life…).

Getting the actual degree isn’t about intellect. It is about sheer strength of will and dogged determination. “Damn it, I’m gonna walk out of here with that piece of paper if it’s the last cotton pickin’ thing I do.” That kind of thinking helps you to keep going after you’ve just been asked to revise a chapter for the third time, your committee member has failed to submit a letter of recommendation on time, and you feel like blowing something or someone up.

3. Be your own best advocate. Prioritize your own professional needs/goals.
You have not because you ask not. You have to be willing to ask for what you need. You deserve transparency about the rules and procedures of your program, cordial treatment from faculty, staff and students, and a program that prepares you not only for the rigors of grad school but also for the job market (should you desire a career in academia). But folks won’t hand it to you on a silver platter. You have to build relationships, ask questions, and make demands.

Figure out your writing process (the place [home, coffee shop, library], time [morning, afternoon, night], and conditions [background noise, total silence, cooler or warmer]) under which you work best and try to create those conditions as frequently as possible during finals, qualifying exams, and dissertation.
Your self-advocacy will often be misperceived as aggression and anger, entitlement or selfishness. Don’t apologize.

4. Be kind to yourself.
Reward yourself frequently. Most of us need positive affirmation of a job well done, but for long stretches, especially during exams, dissertation, and the job market, the rewards elude us; and often given the time crunch, once we conquer the mountain, there is little time to enjoy the view before it’s time to trudge back down and start climbing the next one. All that hard work in high stakes conditions for anti-climactic ends can take a toll on your psyche. So be kind to yourself. Figure out the things you really like and make sure to enjoy them as much as is possible and healthy.
5. **Be proactive about self-care.**
   Figure out your non-negotiables. For me, sleep is non-negotiable. I must have it. I don’t do all nighters. I also generally don’t do weekends, so I adjust my schedule accordingly. What are your non-negotiables?
   - Take advantage of on-campus therapy services.
   - Cultivate a spirit-affirming practice. Grad school/the academy is a mind-body-spirit endeavor. So meditate, pray, exercise, do yoga, go to church, cook a good healthy meal. Do whatever you need to do to keep your mind, body, and spirit in balance.

6. **Be a friend/comrade to others and let them do the same for you.**
   Build community with colleagues inside or outside your department.
   Build community with non-students/non-academics. You need folks who live life outside the dungeon. They will affirm you and help you keep things in perspective.

7. **Be willing to get CRUNK!**
   If the environment is hostile, it is most probably characterized by microaggressions of various sorts. Racial microaggressions—“brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color— are quite common for women of color, but microaggressions can be used in sexist, heterosexist, or ableist ways as well. A microaggressive environment demands resistance of various sorts. So do you and be you.
   Unapologetically. Keep a copy of Sister Audre near by so you can make sure you’re channeling your legitimate anger productively, and then, get crunk if necessary.

8. **Be better not bitter.**
   Fail forward. Being the overachievers that we are, we tend not to deal with failure well. It tends to become an indicator to us of our intelligence, worth, and competence. (See #1). But failure is a part of the process. Unless you are incredibly, exceptionally lucky, you will hit a snag in a course, while writing the proposal, on the dissertation, submitting a journal article or submitting a book.

   Two tips: take the time to process, particularly for big issues like proposals, dissertation chapters or books. Cry, scream (not at your committee or editor), go to a kickboxing class. And then dust yourself off and try again. Look at the suggestions offered; determine their validity. Heed them or disregard them depending on your best judgment, and then proceed to the next step. And one more thing... don’t let the resentment fester. It may be well-justified but it simply isn’t productive. Just think of it as hazing, and for your own sake, let it go.

   A lot of anger comes from bitterness at mentors who have not met our expectations. But all mentors are not created equal. Some will build your confidence, some will give you hell, some will go above and beyond, but a mentor is there to illumine the process and give you tools to be successful, not to be your friend. So have multiple mentors; know the difference in function; and adjust your expectations accordingly.

9. **Be tight. Bring your A-game.**

10. **Be a light. As you make your way, show the sisters and brothers behind you how it’s done, so maybe they won’t have as many dark days as you’ve had.**