

# Making Your Way through Graduate Study: Advice for International Doctoral Students

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## Rationale

- Being a doctoral student with a balancing personal life is a complex task that can be stressful.
- International students experience the cultural and social differences, language difficulties, and financial struggles.
- Research findings indicated that academic pressure, culture shock, financial issues, emotional and adjustment difficulties are the major barriers for international students to have a successful learning experience (Hwang, Bennett, Beauchemin, 2014).
- The attrition rate of doctoral students is about 50% (Cassuto, 2013).

## Purpose

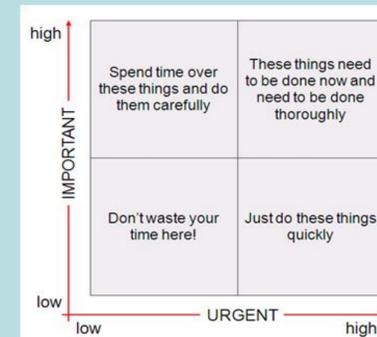
Provide an overview of strengths and needs of international doctoral students based on the presenters' personal experience as well as the recommended practices for preparing future leaders that advocate for diverse young children and families in different countries at the local, national, and international levels.

### DEC Recommended Practices:

- **L2.** Leaders promote adherence to and model the DEC Code of Ethics, DEC Position Statements and Papers, and the DEC Recommended Practices.
- **L4.** Leaders belong to professional association(s) and engage in ongoing evidence-based professional development.

## Time & Health Management

- Identify your goals
  - Ultimate
  - Program
  - Personal
  - Relational
- Prioritize
  - Find your productive time
  - Find your restorative time
  - Balance between the two!



Retrieved from: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/study/time>

- A few tips
  - Control your environment
  - Self monitor or group monitor
  - Set personal deadline and reward yourself
  - Use lists and organization tools as needed
  - Solicit feedback
  - It is OK to say "No"
  - Make use of wasted time
  - Take care of personal relationships
  - Be flexible at times
  - Control your environment
- Nutrition, exercise, and sleep
  - Eat healthy
  - Exercise consistently: Set a time, team up
  - Avoid long-term sleep deprivation.

## Employment

### During Doctoral Studies

- On Campus (Part-time; < 20 hrs/week)
  - Instructor
  - Research/Teaching/Graduate Assistant
- Off Campus (Part-time or Full-time)
  - After two semesters enrolled in the Doctoral Program
  - Apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) before you start to work

### Upon Graduation

- Different job options (US/Overseas)
  - Tenure-track positions
  - Non-tenure track/clinical positions
    - Research
    - Teaching
  - Non-profit organization positions
  - Others
- Sources of job openings
  - Chronicle of Higher Education
  - HigherEd Jobs
  - Professional organizations
  - Faculty advisors
- Most job openings for the next year are posted between August and December.
- Apply for OPT 3 months before graduation.

## General Expectations of Doctoral Program in U.S.

- READ your program's handbook
- Make a full-time commitment to the graduate education
- Communicate regularly with faculty mentors
- Keep satisfactory progress on your coursework
- Learn ethical dimensions
- Find opportunities to practice teaching
- Involve in activities of professional communities

## Scientific Writing & Research Basics

- Doctoral students have ample opportunities to develop interdisciplinary interests
  - READ the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 6th Edition
  - Subscribe to journals and become a member of professional organization(s)
    - Seek for volunteer opportunities
  - Attend research groups/meetings
  - Practice, practice, and more practice of writing
  - Find people of similar interests to write together!
  - Proofread and solicit feedback from your colleagues
  - Be persistent (being rejected is VERY common)

## Funding and Resources

- Funding
  - Scholarship
    - External
      - Private foundations
      - Professional organizations, like CEC
    - Internal
      - University level
      - College level
  - Assistantship
    - University/College level
    - Department level
- Resources
  - Office of International Scholars and Students (or a similar office in your university)
  - Student association
  - Graduate student senate or office
  - Counseling services
  - Faculty advisors



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