

## Tips for New PhD Students

### 1. Build Relationships

PhD Students spend a lot of time learning in the classroom, debating ideas, and sharing knowledge. Therefore, building relationships with your professors and peers is an essential aspect of your PhD program. Building relationships with support staff and other advisors on campus can also be advantageous to you, increasing your comfort on campus and ensuring maximum utilization of services on campus.

### 2. Take Advantage of Resources

UCSB has a wealth of services, support, and activities geared toward graduate students! Take time to discover the services on campus and use them as often as you can. For example, the Graduate Division hosts many workshops for graduate students, and the Graduate Student Association offers great social meetings and advocacy opportunities. Don't forget that Student Health and the Rec Cen are convenient to you too! Check departmental websites to see what programs are offered, sign up for listservs around campus (if you haven't heard about **UCSB Gradpost**, now is the time to check it out), and take advantage of the various opportunities made for graduate students.

### 3. Be Proactive

As a PhD Student, you will be regarded with esteem as well as high expectations. Therefore, it is important to realize that it is up to you to ask questions to clarify expectations, assignments, and responsibilities. Professors appreciate students who are self-motivated and communicate openly. Hint: this skill is important for the job market as well!

### 4. Get Involved

You are encouraged to get involved with the UCSB community and be an active member in your department and field. There are many benefits to this. First, it builds your own network and helps you gain a better understanding of what opportunities are out there. Additionally, being involved ensures that you are not stuck in front of a computer or in a lab all day – it adds variability to your day which can help decrease burnout.

### 5. Plan Ahead for your Future

Getting your PhD isn't enough in and of itself to land you your dream job. There is still a lot of work ahead. Your ultimate career choice is a combination of your degree and the experience you gain along the way. It is important that while you're here, you gain clarity on what career you want and set goals to get there. We cannot stress enough that this process needs to start early and be revisited often to ensure that you are getting what you want out of your degree. Visit a career counselor to establish a strategy.

### 6. Take a Break

All work and no play is the wrong mentality for getting through a PhD program. It is important to set aside time from your research and books to take a break. For starters, you are on one of the most magnificent campuses in a magical place! Walk around the lagoon, hike the Santa Barbara mountains, take a surfing lesson, and visit family and friends. The weekends aren't only for studies – take the time for yourself to recharge (and remind yourself why you're putting in all this effort!).

### 7. Evaluate Progress

The PhD process is rarely linear and direct. More often, there are turns, challenges, and obstacles that you didn't realize would come your way. Take time to evaluate your progress and adjust your course as necessary. You may be on the right track (which would be encouraging) or perhaps you find yourself in a place that is unsettling. Academic advisors, professors, and career counselors are some resources UCSB has to assist you with evaluating your progress.

### 8. Keep Perspective

Your graduate program is important, but don't forget about what else is important to you. You came into it with family and friends surrounding and supporting you – don't overlook that! Remember your bigger goals and what the purpose of your PhD is supposed to get you. Keep perspective on the fact that your PhD is one aspect of who you are and what you are doing, but it isn't the full picture.

### 9. Create Good Habits

The most successful PhD students get a good handle on their strengths and weaknesses early on and use them to their advantage. The most critical skill is time management, and if that is not a strength of yours presently, make it your goal to find ways to become better at this. For many, finding a good structure to the day and keeping a day planner helps keep various demands in order. Structure and sticking to set times to write, read, and research will help you progress through your PhD goals efficiently.

### 10. Work Hard in your Research and Expertise

It may seem obvious to you as a PhD Student that working hard is an inherent aspect of a PhD Program. But nonetheless, we wanted to reiterate the importance of studying and putting the effort into becoming an expert in your field. You were chosen for a reason – your advisor and the department see great potential in you! Utilize this time to hone your interests, gain new skills, and contribute to your field of study in a strong way.

**Welcome to the Gaucho family**