

Strategies for a successful PhD: Experiences and Lessons

RSIF Cohort III Scholars Orientation

1st July 2021

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General Introduction to Ph.D. Studies



Sylvia Maina

Thematic area: Food security and agribusiness

PASET-RSIF Scholar, SUA

IPI: KIST

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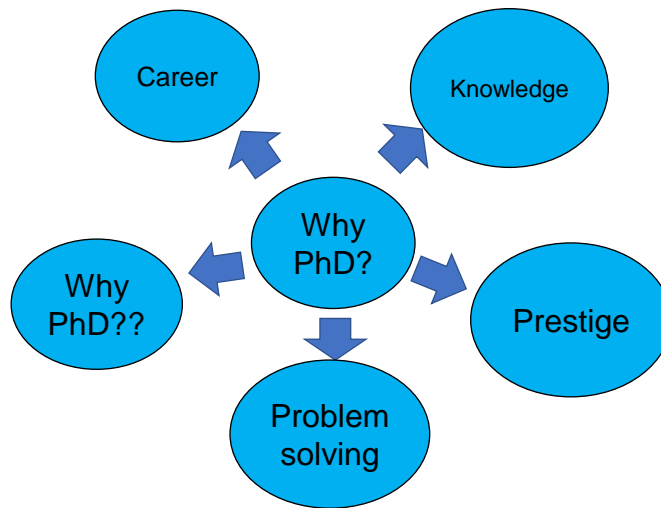


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Advancing to PhD



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The PhD

- Scope: deep
- Novelty, problem solving and knowledge acquisition
- Takes time
- Independency
- Research oriented
- No linear movement



*****Have motivating reasons*****

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Stages in PhD

Stage 1

Getting started

Adapting
Identifying and setting up the mind on PhD topic
Joining research teams
Networking

Stage 2

Getting immersed

Brainstorming and reading wide
Designing methodology
Course work
Field visits
Questioning
Co authoring team members research
Workshops and conferences
Networking

Stage 3

Getting focused

Reality on experiments analysis, modelling validations
implementation and testing,
Journal articles
Making presentations
Workshops and conferences
Networking
Mentoring

Stage 4

Getting done

Completion
Publication
Defense
Networking

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Tools, Players and agents for the PhD

- Supervisors: “fantastic supervisor”
 - Passionate about your research
 - Read Prof CV, publications prior
 - Gauge prof priorities, passion and align research objective
 - Willing to engage student in activities outside personal research
- Advisors and faculty: mentor, offer research advice
- Colleagues: Maximize them, seek help, learn
- Institutions (laboratories, equipment, expertise): availability of facilities to accomplish the research objectives
- Funders: minimize financial stresses

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RSIF Scholars' Experiences

- Lessons (AHU and IPI)
- Achievements and Challenges
- Observations and recommendations
 - Dos and don'ts

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Strategies for a successful PhD: Experiences and Lessons



Emmanuel Effah

Thematic Area: Computer Science, Agri-IoT

PASET-RSIF-Scholar, UGB-Senegal

IPI: WPI, USA

Lecturer, UMaT-Tarkwa, WR, Ghana

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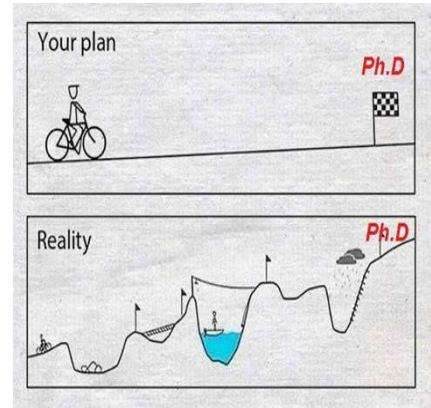
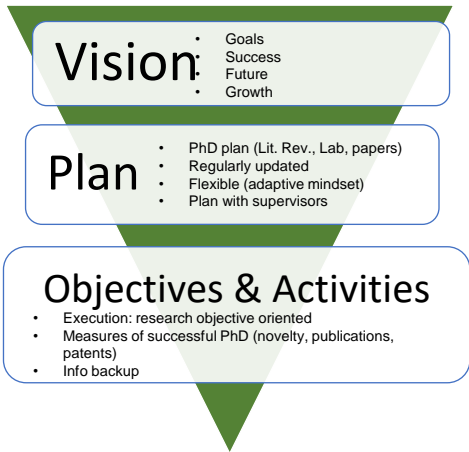


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Strategies to a successful PhD



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PhD plan reality - example

Activities	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1 Plot selection	Green																		
2 Proposal writing	Green	Green																	
3 Data loggers installation		Green	Green																
4 Documenting agronomic activities		Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5 Monthly pests and disease and coffee phenology		Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
6 Plot measurements of biophysical variables		Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
7 Land use land cover classification using multisource	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
8 Manuscript writing and submission																			
9 Landscape structure and composition analysis																			
10 Manuscript writing and submission																			
11 Spatial analysis of pests and diseases distribution																			
12 Modelling agroecological factors																			
13 Manuscript writing and submission																			
14 Analyzing agronomic practices and injury profile																			
15 Microclimate analysis																			
16 Manuscript writing and submission																			
17 Species distribution																			
18 Manuscript writing and submission																			
19 Finalizing on thesis																			

Complete activities	Green
Incomplete activities	Yellow
Incomplete activities due to lack of funding	Red
Key activities currently undertaken	Blue

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Self care during PhD

TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR

It is not always possible, but if you can approach your supervisor, discuss your mental health concerns with them. Other options include discussions to reduce workload temporarily and taking time out.



TAKE SOME TIME OUT

Taking a break can actually improve efficiency when you return to work. If you cannot justify taking a couple of weeks off, take a series of long weekends to get some time away.

CREATE MANAGEABLE CHUNKS

If everything is overwhelming, try to breakdown your research into manageable tasks. It may help to do this in consultation with your supervisor. When writing, consider starting with figures first.



TALK TO YOUR PEERS/POSTDOCS

It is highly likely that people around you have also experienced the stressful nature of a PhD. Reach out, if you feel able. Remember, postdocs have survived their PhD so may have some useful tips/ coping strategies.



SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

Speak to a medical professional about how you are feeling. This may lead to intervention such as medication or counselling to help you manage your mental health.

Don't feel guilty taking breaks

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Beyond the PhD: Build a Lifelong Career

- Post-Doc. & multidisciplinary research projects
- Career (Teach, research and service)
- Apply for research grant, fellowships & Consultancies
- Consultations and leadership training
- Travel to conferences
- Collaborate with others on their research and publications

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RSIF scholar experiences

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Thank you

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For more information contact

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