



Academic Expectations

Steps to success!

A Presentation by
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Pre-Departure Orientation for 2009 Fellows and Scholars

Campus orientations

- **Early summer: for domestic students**
- **Before or at the beginning of the semester**
 - **International office**
 - **Department**
 - **Graduate school**
 - **University-wide orientation**



Language assistance

- **Acronyms: ESL, EFL, EAP, ITA/FTA**
- **Pre-academic program**
- **English language testing**
- **English language centers**
 - Writing center
- **English language courses during the year**
- **Help with your reports, papers**
- **Tutoring**



Course choices

- **Help with selecting courses**
 - **Adviser TITLE: Academic Adviser, Graduate Student Adviser, Department Adviser**
- **Registration procedures**
- **Planning in advance**
 - **For the academic year and summer**
 - **For the degree program**
- **Required courses**
 - **Graduate school**
 - **Department**
- **Number/type of courses covered by tuition**
 - **400, 500 level**
 - **600, 700, 800 level**
- **Pre-requisites**
- **Choice of professor**
- **Drop/Add**



Grading



- A, B, C and Pass/Fail
- GPA = Grade Point Average
 - 4.0 = A
- Grading policies
 - Graduate school
 - Department
 - For Graduate Assistantship, University funding
- Testing
 - Tests/Exams, Mid-terms, Finals
 - Pop Quiz, Take-Home, Open-Book
 - Multiple choice, short-answer, essay questions, papers
- Transcript (Fellows only)
 - To VEF at the end of each term: Upload to OMS
 - GPA for the term
 - Overall GPA





Problems??

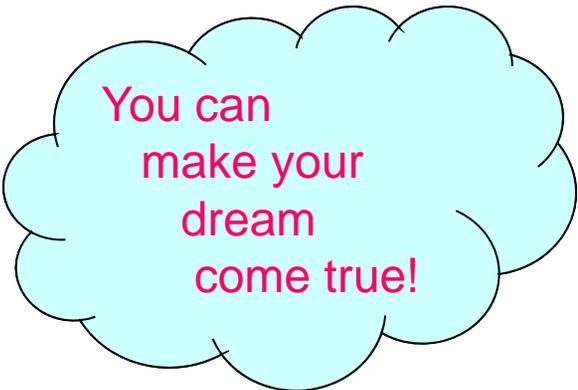


- **Immediate action**
- **Seek assistance from your adviser, professors, Library staff, classmates, VEF colleagues.**
- **Practice time management.**
- **Re-evaluate your living arrangements.**
- **Weekly consultations and action steps.**



STAGES to completing a graduate degree

1. **Courses**
2. **Qualifying exam(s), Comprehensive exam(s), Doctoral exams**
3. **Research**
4. **Thesis/Dissertation**
5. **Orals, Oral Defense**



You can
make your
dream
come true!

Your Thesis or Dissertation



Preparing in advance

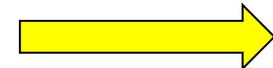




A Personal Pre-Test

**On a scale of 1-10 (1 = not prepared, 10 = highly prepared),
give yourself points for the following:**

1. _____ I have chosen or been assigned an adviser for my research.
2. _____ I know how a masters/doctoral committee is organized.
3. _____ I have chosen a topic for my thesis/dissertation.
4. _____ I have approval for my research topic.
5. _____ I am well-trained in statistics.



A Personal Pre-Test (continued)

6. _____ I am able to do quantitative research.
7. _____ I know the titles for, and intended content of, the chapters required in the thesis/dissertation.
8. _____ I can write academic English and edit and proofread my own writing to perfect native ability.
9. _____ I can accurately use a specified style sheet to use citations in my written work and to compose a list of references/sources.
10. _____ I can distinguish between writing about another's ideas and writing about my original thinking.

An adviser for your research

- **Check *graduate school and departmental guidelines*: timeline, procedures, process for choosing and changing advisers.**
- **Ask *present students* about the best advisers and why they're the best.**
- **A *quality adviser*:**
 - Advises and helps you with the details. 
 - Reviews draft documents thoroughly and in a timely manner, commenting with positive criticism for useful changes.
 - Graduates a good number of students each year.
 - Is interested in you and your ideas.
 - Meets with you regularly (once per week).

An adviser for your research (continued)

- **“Interview” several candidates for advisers.**

- Set an appointment to talk about your research interests and theirs.
- Ask their advice about your research interests.
- Ask how they work with students that they advise and what they do AND don't do.
- Ask how many Masters and Ph.D. degree students they have graduated over the last two years.



IF YOU BELIEVE THIS INDIVIDUAL WILL HELP YOU,

- Ask if they would be interested in being on your committee and, if so, in what capacity.



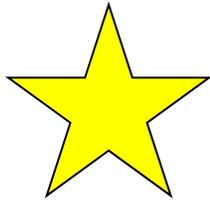
The committee

- ***Check graduate school and departmental guidelines: timeline, procedures, process for changing members.***
 - **Consult with **your adviser** about the best members, why they are the best, who could be alternates, and the next steps to take.**
 - **Determine **the members**.**
 - **Arrange for **a meeting**.**
- 
- **Prepare the agenda for the meeting with your adviser.**
 - **Once or twice per term, visit your committee members and **update** them on your progress. Let your adviser know about this intention and get his/her advice.**

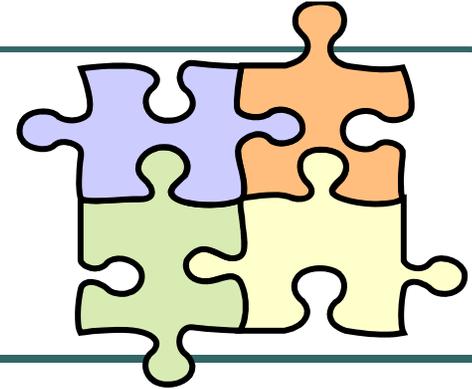


A topic for my thesis/dissertation

- ***Check graduate school and departmental guidelines: timeline, procedures, process for selecting a topic.***
- Discuss several **possible topics** with your adviser.
- Accept that this is **your first research** and that it doesn't need to receive the Nobel Prize.
- **Narrow the topic** to something that can be completed in a reasonable time. (Get your adviser's help.)
- Get the **written approval** of your committee.

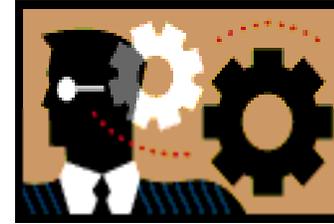


Statistics



- ***Check graduate school and departmental guidelines: timeline, procedures, process for studying statistics and using a statistician.***
- **Take the required **courses in statistics** as soon as possible. Work with one or two study partners to do well.**
- **Ask for recommendations from your adviser and other graduate students about a good and reasonable **statistician**.**

The Statistician



- **Contact/meet** the statistician(s) to understand the fee, the timeline, any advance notification necessary to complete the work, and other conditions.
- **Select the best** one that you like and **get a commitment** that s/he will do the job when you are ready.
- Review your topic and methodology with the statistician to **get advice on procedures BEFORE you determine your research approach**. If changes are recommended, review with your adviser.
- **Meet** with the statistician once or twice per term, and once per day when your data is complete.

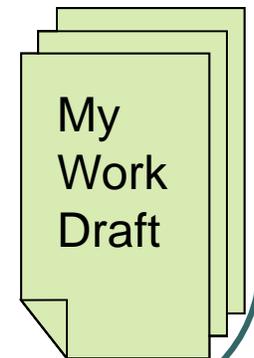
Quantitative research



- ***Check graduate school and departmental guidelines: procedures, process, restrictions, and regulations for doing quantitative research.***
- **Take *required course(s)* on doing research to understand the various types of quantitative research.**
- **Choose *the best method* to use for your research.**
- **Review with *your adviser* and your statistician.**

Chapters of the thesis/dissertation

- ***Check graduate school and departmental guidelines: sections and content of each chapter.***
- **Review several **original theses/dissertations** in your subject area to see how they are organized. (Available in the department and in the library.)**
- **Ask your adviser for the titles of several **exceptional theses/dissertations** in your subject area. Ask him/her why they are outstanding.**
- **Take the **required course(s)** offered by the graduate school, the department, and/or the library to learn about writing your thesis/dissertation.**



Begin your research right away!

- Focus your **papers and projects** for all courses on some aspect of your research topic.
- Use the **content and the citations** from these papers and projects in your final thesis/dissertation.





What about
your English language skills?

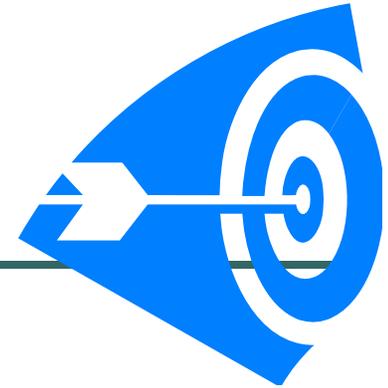


Academic English

- **Active vs. passive skills:**
 - **Active: Speaking and writing**
 - **Passive: Listening and reading**
- **Editing: Style, organization, clarity**
- **Proofreading: Punctuation, spelling, format**
- **Outsource** final draft of thesis or dissertation to an expert.



Designated style

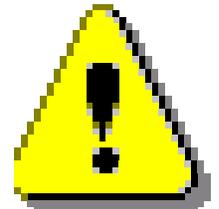


- **Check graduate school and departmental *requirements for formatting* thesis or dissertation.**
- **Purchase the designated *style guide* or *manual*.**
- **Follow specifications for all written work.**
 - **Cite sources in text accurately.**
 - **Compose list of references precisely.**

Your ideas vs. another's



- **Original thinking**
- **ANY IDEA FROM SOMEONE ELSE** must be documented and cited.
- **Plagiarism = Copying = Cheating**
- **TurnItIn.com**
- **Rewording, paraphrasing, summarizing**



*Thank you
and
we wish you success!*



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VEF Acting Executive Director