

A Graduate Student's Guide For a Long and Happy Life

Free Advice by S.D. Sudhoff

- 1.) Maintain a research notebook. Buy a good one, one which you will keep indefinitely for your career (or a series thereof). Keep this throughout your career.
- 2.) In the end, it is up to you to keep your research program on track. Keep a written typed plan for your prelim and thesis. Keep it up to date.
- 3.) If you plan to go into academia, always remember that your publication record when you graduate is critical to getting an interview.
- 4.) When whiteboard markers have run out, throw them away.
- 5.) When starting a program, do not buy a house unless you plan on living in the area permanently. If you buy a house, you will need to maintenance (which you don't have the time for), you will need to pay taxes (which aren't cheap if you are anywhere close to Purdue), and you will lose 8% of the value of the house when you sell it for realtors fees (this will be hard to make up given you will only live here for 4 years or so; you won't have time to sell the house yourself). If you have children and need room, rent a house. It will save you time (your most critical resource), taxes, interest, and 8% of the home value when you sell it.
- 6.) If you wish to graduate, do not use the work "thing" or "stuff" in your prelim, your thesis, or in any published work. This will save me going postal. I do not like first person in any published work, except for textbooks.
- 7.) Address faculty as Doctor (Lastname), Professor (Lastname), or simply Professor, unless specifically asked to do otherwise. Most faculty do not like to be called by their first name until students have completed their degree.
- 8.) The bad news: there is no problem that hasn't been worked on before by someone. Get over it. The good news: there are few problems where the solution doesn't have room for improvement.
- 9.) I prefer all students to keep regular business hours, so it is easy to get a hold of you. This does not mean working all the time on your research; rather it means I encourage students to use their offices for their academic as well as research duties.
- 10.) Note that many of the labs are very cold, especially in the summer. It is best to keep cold-weather gear in your office all year round.