



Successfully Engaging with the Field

A student's experiences and opportunities in graduate school will vary widely across schools and disciplines. Even within the same school and discipline, students' experiences can vary substantially! Nonetheless, no matter where they attend school or what they choose to study, it is important for students to meaningfully engage in field-specific professional development. This can be accomplished by participating in activities such as 1) attending and presenting work at conferences, 2) publishing research, and 3) building strong relationships with mentors and other scholars in the field.

Presenting work at conferences

Academic conferences are opportunities for academics and researchers from different institutions and organizations to come together to share their work, meet other scholars in their field, and connect with colleagues from other institutions. Conferences are great places to learn about the latest research in one's field and to meet other researchers at all career stages. While most disciplines have their own annual conference, there are also regional disciplinary conferences (e.g., Southern Sociological Society) and topic-specific interdisciplinary conferences (e.g., Society for Research on Child Development). Resources are often available from schools or professional organizations to support the costs associated with attending conferences. For more information on networking and building professional relationships, see the section on [Cultivating professional relationships](#) below.

Resource	Description
<u>Academic Conferences: Why PhD Students Should Attend Them</u> <i>Online PhD Degrees</i>	Guide for navigating academic conferences that explains the importance of attending
<u>Six Reasons Why PhD Students Should Make Poster Presentations</u> <i>American Society for Investigative Pathology</i>	Blog discussing the benefits of presenting posters at conferences as a PhD student
<u>Tips on Presenting at Your First Conference</u> <i>Pubs and Publications</i>	Several students share their experience on presenting at their first conference and offer tips for new presenters.
<u>Presenting at Seminars and Conferences</u> <i>McGill Grad & Postdoc Support</i>	Practical advice for effective presentations
<u>Surviving Your First Conference: Tips for Anxious Newbies</u> <i>The Professor Is In</i>	Resource detailing what to expect at an academic conference as a PhD student, including the importance of an "elevator pitch," or short summary of one's experience

Publishing research

Publishing research in peer-reviewed journals is an important way for academics to share their work with the broader research community. Developing a body of research published in peer-reviewed journals—or via other professionally relevant platforms such as books, book chapters, or white papers—can signal a student’s interests and contributions to the discipline and may be used to evaluate their success. The resources below provide some tips to help students be more successful at publishing.

Resource	Description
<u>Publish or Perish: Graduate Students’ Guide to Publishing</u> <i>GoGrad</i>	A guide to the details of publishing while still in school
<u>Writer’s Forum— Writing for Publication While in Graduate School</u> <i>New Horizons in Adult Education & Human Resource Development</i>	A manuscript published by Joshua Collins on tips for publishing in graduate school
<u>Choosing the Right Journal— A Comprehensive Guide for Early-career Researchers</u> <i>Typeset</i>	A guide for new PhD students on identifying the right journal for publications

Cultivating professional relationships

Relationships with advisors and mentors (and other important figures in their professional field) can have a huge impact on the quality of students’ graduate school experiences. These people can connect students with opportunities such as research assistantships, research collaborations, and funding opportunities. Networking and relationship-building can be intimidating for graduate students, but it can be helpful to remember that mentors were once students themselves, and that many are eager to help young and emerging scholars. The resources below provide tips for successfully building these relationships, as well as opportunities for finding mentors. Some conferences also offer mentorship opportunities. For example, the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families frequently offers mentorship sessions at the Population Association of America (PAA) and Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD) annual conferences.

Resource	Description
Managing professional relationships	
<u>Red Flags to Consider When Choosing a PhD Supervisor</u> <i>Academic Positions</i>	Characteristics to consider when choosing a PhD supervisor
<u>MyMentor</u> <i>National Research Mentoring Network</i>	Virtual guided mentorship program for researchers
<u>Maximizing Mentoring: A Guide for Building Strong Relationships</u> <i>William T. Grant Foundation</i>	Guide to the types of mentoring relationships and advice on building effective mentor relationships

Resource	Description
Managing professional relationships cont.	
3 Practically Painless Ways to Expand Your Network <i>TED</i>	Describes three ways to effectively and painlessly network
Expanding Your Professional Network <i>Udacity</i>	Describes the importance of building a strong network, offers advice on how and where to network, and lists five steps to building a better network
Networking: Just Do It <i>Inside Higher Ed</i>	Advice for networking effectively
Managing professional relationships as a member of a racial/ethnic minority group	
We are Not Impostors <i>Inside Higher Ed</i>	Describes how graduate students can combat impostor syndrome
Imposter Syndrome in Academia and How I Beat It <i>The Life of Science</i>	Personal story of a graduate student struggling with and overcoming impostor syndrome
Managing Microaggressions <i>Inside Higher Ed</i>	Describes microaggressions in academia and offers advice on handling them
On Belonging in the Academy <i>Inside Higher Ed</i>	Article by a first-generation Hispanic scholar on a sense of belonging in academia
Research Scholar Program <i>National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families</i>	Annual mentorship program by the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families for advanced doctoral and early career scholars

