

Ingredients for a Successful Ph.D.

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While many factors impact the Ph.D. process, there are two items that are most critical:

- 1) the research topic, and
- 2) a one-track-mindedness on getting a Ph.D. degree.

So what to do with these ingredients? Being research, no recipe can exist and it will depend on if the topic is analytically-oriented or experimentally-oriented. The only common thread in becoming a Ph.D. is the student's desire to become the *expert in the entire world* on one technical topic that interested him or her.

Every Ph.D. student must become more expert than even his own advisor --- actually, when faculty observe that occurring then that's how they know that the student is ready to graduate. The student becomes his/her own Ph.D. not continually under the advisor's guidance. It is a process with tradition, like becoming a black-belt in karate, that has been handed down. It is rooted in apprenticeship to become eventual master oneself. When one is an expert on a technical topic then writing papers on that topic is straightforward; others will naturally want to read what one has written so they can learn from you: what you learned, and even how to learn it.

So ... keep in mind that it will take *unwavering determination* to become the *expert in the entire world* on your topic area. Strive at being *the* authority on the issues with the confidence that comes from a very deep knowledge of looking at the same problem from many angles. Getting a Ph.D. is not so much about convincing the committee or even your advisor that you are doing a good job; instead, it is more about *being* the expert.

Also, see my Ph.D. Overview [1], Ph.D. Plan [2], and Technical Writing [3] documents for additional information.

References

- [1] R. F. DeMara, *Ph.D. Overview*, available at <http://cal.ucf.edu/demara/advising>
- [2] R. F. DeMara, *Ph.D. Plan*, available at <http://cal.ucf.edu/demara/advising>
- [3] R. F. DeMara, *Presentation Writing*, available at <http://cal.ucf.edu/demara/advising>