

UTSA COEHD Doctoral Program Guide

Welcome to UTSA and your doctoral program! We are so glad you have chosen this university to continue your educational journey. We have compiled helpful tips and resources to assist your transition into your program and coursework this fall.

Tip #1

Your application is one of many who applied. If you are reading this as a student, it means you were selected to be in your Ph.D. program because you earned your spot in your doctoral program. “Imposter syndrome” is a common phenomenon experienced by doctoral students where they struggle to accept that they are “enough” to be in a program (Deconinck, 2015, Fernandez et. al, 2018). Accept this is a normal feeling that researchers have studied and allow your cohort members, faculty, staff, and most importantly, yourself, to embrace being a doctoral student because you belong here!

Tip #2

You will not know everything and that’s okay. As a student, we want you to use your coursework to help you grow. It is okay to feel confused, to have questions, or struggle to understand (Deconinck, 2015, Schwartz, 2008). Martin A. Schwartz argues it is good to embrace this feeling of “stupidity” and use it to help you grow as a scholar (2008). Use it to help you foster a growth mindset, the psychological mindset that encourages an individual to perceive challenges an opportunity to grow instead of looking at these challenges as setbacks or failures. (Deconinck, 2015). Talk with your fellow students, your course instructor, or faculty advisor in these scenarios. You are surrounded by (including yourself) very intelligent people; talk with them to learn and build upon the various bag of tricks you will develop over the course of your program (Deconinck, 2015).

Tip #3

Remember that your personal health is important and needed for the marathon you are about to begin to earn your doctorate. Think about your time management habits and how you incorporate breaks that allow you time to eat, sleep, exercise, and take care of your mental health. You will need a balance between your personal, work, and academic life that allows you to have time for self-care practices that will prepare to avoid burnout (Deconinck, 2015, Fernandez et. al, 2019). As faculty member would frequently share, “it is a marathon, not a sprint.”

Tip #4

A key to your success as a student is learning how to handle the many responsibilities you will have throughout the program. Be intentional about how you will organize your time for your academic work in the program (Fernandez et. al, 2019). Focus on one task at a time to maximize your time and cognitive efforts (Deconinck, 2015). Learn what works best for you, create a routine, and embrace your academic journey.

Additional Resources

Click on any of the links below to access additional resources and information!

[How to Talk to Your Advisor](#)

[University Resources & Links](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

References

Deconinck, K. (2015). Trust Me, I'm a Doctor: A PhD Survival Guide. *Journal of Economic Education*, 46(4), 360–375.

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