



What goes wrong in academia? Further resources - IICSSS 2023 Tübingen

The resources below are not an exhaustive list of resources, but a starting point for you to dive deeper into the topic. Pick and choose the advice that helps you.

Supervisor-relation in academia

[Hands-on advice: Starting a the relationship and recognizing problems](#)

[Hands-on advice: Improving the relationship](#)

[Discrimination and power imbalances](#)

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Work - life balance in academia

[Why do we need Work-life-balance?](#)

[4 Important aspects reoccurring in articles about work-live balance as a \(PhD\) student:](#)

[Think of research as a 9-to-5 job!](#)

Mindful Science

[Some encouragement from your peers <3](#)

[Why did you choose academia/ research for the time being?](#)

[What is your biggest struggle \(in your academic life\) right now?](#)

Supervisor-relation in academia

Note: most resources specify the relationship with PhD supervisors, the information contains relevant points for Master or Bachelor theses or projects during your study as well

Hands-on advice: Starting a the relationship and recognizing problems

- Maastricht University: Relationship with your supervisor
<https://library.maastrichtuniversity.nl/study/thesis-supportall/relationship-with-your-supervisor/>, last accessed 07/09/23
- Academia exchange: How do you build a healthy and productive relationship with your supervisor?
<https://academia.stackexchange.com/questions/118465/how-do-you-build-a-healthy-and-productive-relationship-with-your-supervisor>, last accessed 06/09/23
- Elsevier Connect: 10 ingredients for a successful supervisor/ PhD student relationship
<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/10-ingredients-for-a-successful-supervisor-phd-student-relationship>, last accessed 06/09/23



Hands-on advice: Improving the relationship

- Franziska Hartung, PhD: How to manage your supervisor
<https://storiesandthebrain.com/2017/12/05/how-to-manage-your-supervisor/>, last accessed 06/09/23
- Madhura Panse: Tips to maintain a good relationship with your PhD supervisor
<https://researcher.life/blog/article/good-relationship-phd-supervisor/>, last accessed 06/09/23
- Elephant in the lab MELISSA LAUFER: When Relationships Between Supervisors and Doctoral Researchers Go Wrong
<https://elephantinthelab.org/when-relationships-between-supervisors-and-doctoral-researchers-go-wrong/>, last accessed 06/09/23
- The Thesis Whisperer: When good supervisors go bad...
<https://thesiswhisperer.com/2014/08/27/when-good-supervisors-go-bad/>, last accessed 06/09/23
- Sellers TP, LeBlanc LA, Valentino AL. Recommendations for Detecting and Addressing Barriers to Successful Supervision. Behav Anal Pract. 2016 Aug 30;9(4):309-319. doi: 10.1007/s40617-016-0142-z. PMID: 27920962; PMCID: PMC5118258.
(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5118258/>)

Discrimination and power imbalances

- J. Lasser L, Bultema, A. Jahn, M. Löffler, V. Minneker, C. van Scherpenberg, Power abuse and anonymous accusations in academia – Perspectives from early career researchers and recommendations for improvement, Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung, 43. Jahrgang (1–2) (2021) 48–61
(https://www.bzh.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/Beitraege_zur_Hochschulforschung/2021/2021-1-2-Lasser-Bultema-Jahn-Loeffler.pdf)
- The Thesis Whisperer: How I broke up with my supervisor
<https://thesiswhisperer.com/2013/10/02/how-i-broke-up-with-my-supervisor/>, last accessed 07/09/23

Research (for supervisors)




- Trinity College Dublin: Trinity Disability Service
<https://www.tcd.ie/disability/information-for-teaching-and-professional-staff/inclusive-learning/guidelines-for-inclusive-teaching-methods/thesis-supervision/>, last accessed 07/09/23
- de Kleijn, Renske & Meijer, Paulien & Brekelmans, M. & Pilot, Albert. (2014). Adaptive research supervision: exploring expert thesis supervisors' practical knowledge. Higher Education Research & Development. 34. 1-14. 10.1080/07294360.2014.934331.



(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271822156_Adaptive_research_supervision_exploring_expert_thesis_supervisors'_practical_knowledge)

- Beinar, Helen. "Building and sustaining the supervisory relationship." The Wiley international handbook of clinical supervision (2014): 255-281.
(<https://drjeffchang.webs.com/beinar%20supervisory%20relationship.pdf>)
- Felix Strebel, Stefan Gürtler, Beat Hulliger & Johan Lindeque (2021) Laissez-faire or guidance? Effective supervision of bachelor theses, Studies in Higher Education, 46:4, 866-884, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2019.1659762
(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2019.1659762>)
- University of Oslo: Ethical guidelines for supervision relationships at UiO
<https://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/ethical-guidelines/ethical-guidelines-supervisors/>, last accessed 07/09/23

Videos or Podcast ideas

- Tara Barbazon: How to upset your supervisor  Vlog 9 How to upset your supervisor , last accessed 06/09/23
-  PhD Supervisors - The good, the great and the rest
-  Sneaky ways to build a GREAT relationship with your PhD supervisor
- <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-resilient-researcher/id1627114488>

Support instances and possible points of contacts

- Find it at your university
 - Central equal opportunity office of the university
 - Decentral equal opportunity officer of your faculty
 - Center for PhD students / postdoc students
 - Mentoring teams or programs
 - International office
- Regarding scientific misconduct: Ombudsperson at your university or state level
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ombudsman>
- Talk with peers, in online forums, etc.
- Look for training programs to support yourself (e.g. time management, writing support,...) or the communication with your supervisor (e.g. direct communication, setting boundaries...). Your university might offer courses you can attend.

Work - life balance in academia

Why do we need Work-life-balance?



- For health, both physical and mental!
- Subsequent also for (sustained) good work

- Remember: academia is not special per se. Of course research can lead to essential things, however and despite what your PI may say: it is just a Job.

4 Important aspects reoccurring in articles about work-life balance as a (PhD) student:

1. Scheduling – make a schedule and keep to it.
Also: know your peak productivity hours and make use of them.
2. Exercise – mental and physical
Unisport – almost every University offers ‚cheap‘ possibilities
3. Get a Hobby – that has nothing to do with your research 😊
4. Friends Family – ‚Quality time‘ is an overused phrase, however very important!
In the end we are social beings...

Article: [How to Achieve Better Work/Life Balance for PhD Students](#)

Article: [PhD work-life balance: 5 Tips to help students manage the PhD workload](#)

Think of research as a 9-to-5 job!

If you worked your 8 hours, you may enjoy your time off with less guilt – because your work is ‚measurable‘. Of course it’s really hard to set boundaries yet this can also help
Also: no one could or should expect more from you!



by Sabrina Frohn & Katharina Stein, Sep 2023

Mindful Science



by Sabrina Frohn & Katharina Stein, Sep 2023

<https://www.mindfulnesscience.de/>





by Sabrina Frohn & Katharina Stein, Sep 2023

Some encouragement from your peers <3

You are not your achievements. - You are just you. Don't let part of you take you down. Hope you be happy 😊

Everybody else is just faking it, too.

It's okay to not be able to write/ focus/ not remember why you are doing this - be kind to yourself and remember everyone (including famous professors) sometimes feel this way.

Not everyday needs to be productive.

When you are at the bottom it can only go up.

I gave up on myself and left academia. But then I decided to give it a try again. Second time is better.

All the suffering is momentary, if you are patient it will lead you to better things.

AT LEAST YOU ARE NOT A PHILOSOPHY MAJOR! ;)

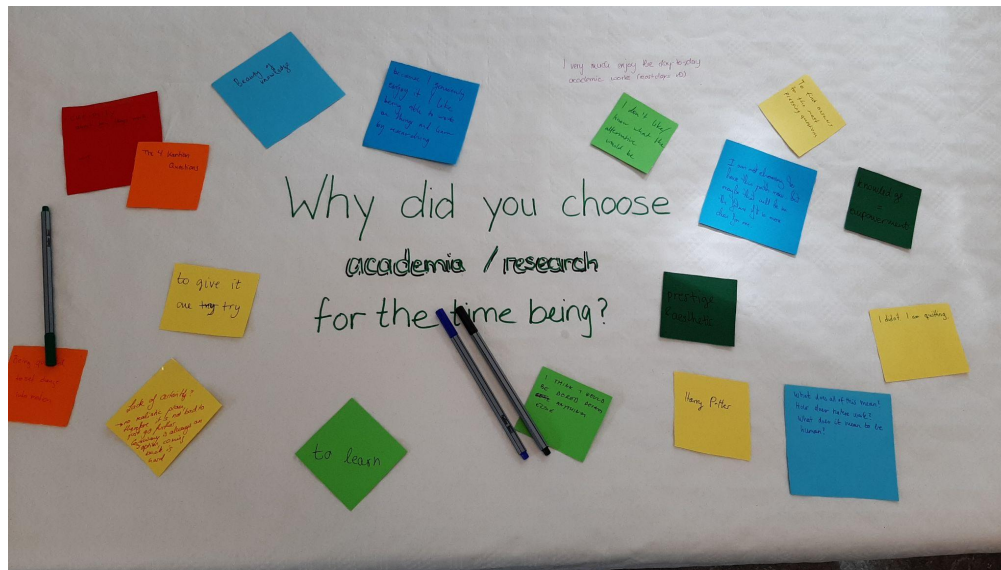
The pressure you feel only comes from you. Give it your all because noone can ask more of you.

Yo, it's not like this is the only chance you have. Things don't work out, people fail, you fail and you can be sure that's normal. I know where you got this note ;) You made it here, you can make it much further. You will get it, if you want it ... Otherwise be a goldsmith, go somewhere where your skills are valued!

EVERYONE suffers from imposter syndrome. You are doing great. :)

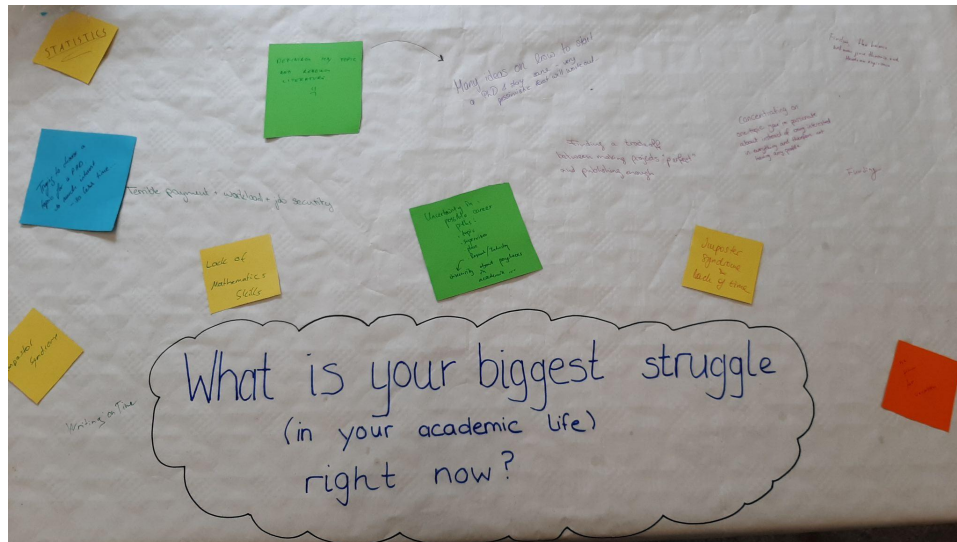
Your job does not have to fulfill you, if you prefer to get that in your free time.

Why did you choose academia/ research for the time being?



- I very much enjoy the day-to-day academic work (most days xD)
- Curiosity about how things work (+1)
- Lack of certainty? -> no realistic plan, therefore it's not bad to go further. Going away is always an option, coming back is hard
- Being qualified to set change into motion
- To learn
- I think I would be bored doing anything else
- Prestige and aesthetic
- Harry Potter
- I am not choosing to have this path now, but maybe this will be in the future if it is more clear for me.
- Knowledge = empowerment
- I don't like/ know what the alternative would be
- Because I genuinely enjoy it. I like being able to work on things and learn by researching
- The [4 Kantian Questions](#)
- To give it one try
- Beauty of knowledge
- I didn't. I am quitting.
- What does all of this mean? How does nature work? What does it mean to be human?
- To find answers to the most pressing questions

What is your biggest struggle (in your academic life) right now?



- Terrible payment + workload + job security
- Writing on time
- Many ideas on how to start a PhD & stay sane - very pessimistic that will work out
- Finding a tradeoff between making projects “perfect” and publishing enough
- Concentrating on one topic you’re passionate about instead of being interested in everything and therefore not having any profile
- Funding
- Finding the balance between pure theoretic and hands on experience
- STATISTICS
- No time for vacation
- Imposter syndrome & lack of time
- Trying to choose on a topic for a PhD. So much interest - so less time...
- Defining my topic and reading literature :(
- Lack of mathematics skills
- Imposter syndrome
- Uncertainty in possible career paths: topic, supervisor, place, research vs industry -> insecurity about paychecks in academia...