## Professional Development Timeline

**A Resource For Doctoral Students in the Materials Science & Engineering Program at the University of Texas at Austin**

### Coursework Phase

- ☐ Plan your course of study with your supervisor/academic adviser. Choose a Thrust Area and remember to focus on Core Course selection and MSE 397 Seminar.
- ☐ Discuss program Milestones with academic adviser. This should be done in your first semester of study.
- ☐ Participate in program’s orientation and attend any required training sessions.
- ☐ Begin learning lab etiquette and safety. Learn how to use lab equipment and begin experiments.
- ☐ Be certain you understand degree requirements and timeline. Gain understanding of expectations of graduate students.
- ☐ Prepare personal timeline for degree completion, including realistic intermediate goals.

### Qualifying/Research Proposal Phase

- ☐ Complete Core Coursework with a 3.3 minimum GPA.
- ☐ Discuss committee member selection with research supervisor and potential committee members.
- ☐ Prepare research proposal abstract, according to the requirements listed in the Student Handbook, and utilizing the example abstract online.
- ☐ Submit candidacy application to Office of Graduate Studies.

### Dissertation Research and Writing

- ☐ Learn about the expectations, rules, and requirements for dissertation preparation and completion.
- ☐ Attend a dissertation writing workshop.
- ☐ Create a personal research timeline with intermediate realistic goals for completing necessary research in a timely manner.
- ☐ Seek help from the Sanger Learning Center with dissertation prep if necessary.

### Dissertation Completion

- ☐ Consult the Office of Graduate Studies Deadlines page and become familiar with various deadlines pertaining to graduation.
- ☐ Apply for graduation.
- ☐ Understand dissertation format guidelines.
- ☐ Schedule dissertation defense according to university policy.
- ☐ Submit all paperwork related to graduation, including final dissertation, by university deadline.

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### Graduate Degree Completion

- ☐ Gain teaching experience if possible and participate in community outreach
- ☐ Join professional organizations and attend meetings
- ☐ Apply for fellowships/grants
- ☐ Attend job talks and colloquia
- ☐ Consider non-academic opportunities, as well. Only about 50% of PhDs acquire tenure-track faculty positions.

### Academic Careers

- ☐ Spend time thinking about your professional goals:
  - Explore career options
  - Discuss opportunities with your research supervisor and graduate adviser
  - Take responsibility for planning your career
- ☐ Begin reading the Chronicle of Higher Education for a better understanding of academic job market.
- ☐ Prepare your CV
- ☐ Read books and articles on the academic job search.
- ☐ Attend and present at professional meetings.
- ☐ Pursue dissertation fellowship opportunities
- ☐ Ask your research supervisor and graduate adviser for advice about pursuing an academic career
- ☐ Attend workshops on academic jobs and CVs
- ☐ Explore postdoc options
- ☐ Explore job openings
- ☐ Network!

### Non-Academic Careers

- ☐ Gain pertinent work experience, such as volunteer work, internships, and summer jobs.
- ☐ Conduct some informal interviews
- ☐ Read books on career options and discovering transferable skills
- ☐ Gain experience to expand your marketability and skills.
- ☐ Consider courses that might support your career goals
- ☐ Determine the career path you want to pursue
- ☐ Refine your resume
- ☐ Develop a job search strategy
- ☐ Obtain non-academic work experience
- ☐ Network!

### Professional Development For: Academic Careers

- ☐ Determine the career path you want to pursue
- ☐ Refine your resume
- ☐ Develop a job search strategy
- ☐ Obtain non-academic work experience
- ☐ Network!

### Professional Development For: Non-Academic Careers

- ☐ Determine the career path you want to pursue
- ☐ Refine your resume
- ☐ Develop a job search strategy
- ☐ Obtain non-academic work experience
- ☐ Network!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSEWORK PHASE</th>
<th>THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING</th>
<th>THESIS COMPLETION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Plan your course of study with your research supervisor and academic adviser</td>
<td>☐ Create a “project plan” for thesis completion.</td>
<td>☐ Learn about the requirements for graduation and incorporate these into your deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Participate in MSE program orientation</td>
<td>☐ Share this with your adviser.</td>
<td>☐ Be mindful of deadlines pertaining to defense, graduation, deposit, and commencement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Prepare a personal timeline for degree completion, being realistic about goals</td>
<td>☐ Attend a Thesis Writing Workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Spend time thinking about your professional goals and deciding whether you plan to pursue a nonacademic career or continue your education:</td>
<td>☐ Determine the career path you wish to pursue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Start to think about whether you wish to continue your education after your master’s degree. Investigate programs and the career options available with a more advanced degree. Talk to your adviser and other doctoral students in your department about degree options.</td>
<td>If you plan to pursue a nonacademic career:</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Explore nonacademic career options by conducting informational interviews.</td>
<td>☐ Attend Graduate College workshops related to non-academic careers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Meet with a Graduate College counselor and/or your adviser to discuss career options.</td>
<td>☐ Refine your resume with help from the Graduate College Career Services Office and your adviser.</td>
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<td>☐ Take responsibility for planning your career.</td>
<td>☐ Develop a job search strategy.</td>
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<td>☐ Network! Meet people who are in careers that you want to pursue.</td>
<td>☐ Obtain non-academic work experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Gain pertinent work experience, such as volunteer work, internships, leadership experience, and summer jobs.</td>
<td>☐ Continue to network!</td>
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<td>If you plan to continue your education:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>☐ Investigate potential doctoral programs</td>
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<td>☐ Begin the application processes.</td>
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<td>☐ Continue to learn more about job opportunities available to doctoral recipients in your field.</td>
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<td>If you are pursuing a nonacademic career:</td>
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<td>☐ Begin to distribute your resume to potential employers.</td>
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<td>☐ Attend job fairs.</td>
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<td>☐ Apply for jobs.</td>
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<td>☐ Participate in mock interviews.</td>
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<td>☐ Talk it up – the most successful means of landing a satisfying job is by using your network!</td>
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<td>If you are continuing your education:</td>
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<td>☐ Learn more about the graduate programs you are accepted to, including average time to degree, graduation rates, and job placements of alumni.</td>
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<td>☐ Visit the programs if possible to meet other graduate students and faculty members.</td>
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<td>☐ Make your decision and reject your other graduate school offers.</td>
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