

PhD Vlog Week 4: Samira Parhizkar Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:05	Samira Parhizkar	Hey guys! So in last week's video I promised that I would be talking about the interview process, funding, as well as how I set up my PhD. So instead of talking about the impress interview process very specifically, I thought instead I would talk about how it is to prepare for a general PhD interview, no matter which institute or university you might be applying to. These are some of the things that might commonly apply so to speak. The main things to do is obviously start out with sending the documents that are required for the PhD
00:00:35		this is normally listed in the PhD advertisement itself and if not, you can normally find these things in the university or institute's website. Another thing to do is to make sure that if you have any past research experience or your experience from your Bachelor's or Master's dissertation, then make sure you know it very well. Obviously you should do this for your dissertation, but also you might be asked questions on it during your PhD interview. Details on what you have been doing, what
00:01:05		research are you're interested in, and what kind of research the group you're interested in is currently conducting – any recent publications, any major publications that might have made a huge impact on the scientific community. But also it's very important to show that you're not only about the science but also you're a person and not a robot. A lot of the times, they might just want to get to know who you are as a person rather than all your accomplishments because if you already have an interview, it means
00:01:35		that your CV has already impressed them and they just want to see whether you would be someone suitable to be part of their team. Some of the things that you could be doing if you're applying for a PhD or are interested in it is make sure you have an online presence in one way in which you can do this is for example have LinkedIn and this allows you to not only

		upload your CV online but also bring in academic contacts. Another thing to do is obviously get as much experience as possible. You don't want to be
00:02:05		in a stage where the PhD experience can be a shock really so make sure you really want to do this by getting as much lab experience as possible. It would also help grow your portfolio obviously and this doesn't have to be something major like a year out or two years or something. It can be even a few months during the summer, can be voluntary work in any group you're interested in – just to know how it is to
00:02:35		be part of the scientific world. So previously I mentioned that one of the first things I did when I started here was outline my project and wrote a project proposal to make a detailed plan on exactly what I was going to do. This is a very important part of setting up your PhD. What writing a project proposal right at the beginning also allows you to potentially apply for funding if you want to, even after you've started your PhD. Some funding bodies will allow you to
00:03:05		Do that up until the first year of your PhD so it's never too late and this is something that is quite encouraged here. The funding for a PhD can actually come from different places. It depends on where you're working – if you're working in a specific institute, if you're affiliated with a specific university, whether the institute in itself is affiliated with different funding bodies – so this can come from different places - and also whether or not you're enrolled in a specific graduate school programme. So
00:03:35		since this is the last video, I thought I would share with you some of the things that I've learned during my PhD so far. One of the things is that people who get through their PhD and do well and make it to the finishing line are not necessarily the smartest ones. They're the ones that are the most stubborn ones. It's not about intelligence – it's about perseverance and mainly tenacity. A lot of the time – and no one will tell you this – I would say about 75-70%

00:04:05		of the time, your experiments will not work. You're very lucky if they work and obviously this can be very tough – handling failure, handling rejection can be very difficult and you will need to learn the skill of self-motivation because going through a PhD is sort of like a rollercoaster – it goes up and down, up and down – but it just depends on how much you want it. Another quite important
00:04:35		thing during your PhD and something that I actually wish I did more before my PhD as well is expanding your network. So when you have a seminar or workshops or anything where you meet new people – conferences are perfect for this – is make sure that you have a strong presence. Introduce yourself. Talk about what you're doing. Ask questions. Networking is not just about finding future employment opportunities but it can
00:05:05		also help you with specific issues during your PhD. Last but not least, I would say this is probably the most important point and something that I learned quite early on fortunately is really enjoy your PhD rather than thinking of it as this really hard and challenging burden and just make sure you focus on other things on your life rather than making your PhD the only point you focus on. Obviously you might not enjoy every day but as a whole, just make the best out of it. Doing a
00:05:35		PhD can definitely be quite difficult and challenging but there are some great moments too. I've made some wonderful friends from all around the world. I've obviously had the opportunity to move to a new country and that also means that there are great opportunities for new hobbies. So these are just a few things and I'm sure there's a lot more to come, a lot more to learn and I'm quite looking forward to it but obviously I'm also scared and nervous but it'll be find in the end. It just depends on how stubborn
00:06:05		you are and you'll be fine! I hope that these videos have helped you make a decision and given you an insight into how it is to a PhD. If

		you have any questions, obviously feel free to drop a comment and otherwise, good luck and I hope everything goes well for you!
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