

Helpful quotes about getting a Ph.D.

If you are self-motivated and enjoy teaching and learning, there is no better career! My Ph.D. program experience was the most challenging, yet enjoyable and rewarding, academic experience of my life, because I like to learn. Having worked in “industry”, they couldn’t pay enough to go back. I metaphorically pinch myself everyday I wake up to realize I am living my idealized life. Nothing is more professionally fulfilling to me than to help students learn, to build the Kingdom, and to create new knowledge in Information Systems. I have no regrets, and I am absolutely thrilled with my new career. But that does not mean this career is for everyone. This is one of the few careers where you are truly your own boss (unlike entrepreneurs who are continually hounded by their clients and customers). We don’t have managers in academia, and it is up to you whether you are going to publish or be a good teacher. It is up to you whether you are going to take four months off in the summer, or actually do some work of your choosing. Some people cannot handle such freedom. Thus, do not enter this career for the high salaries or time off in the summer. Enter for love of learning (research) and service (teaching students). If you don’t care for at least one of these you will not be very happy. Enjoying both is better.

--Dr. Paul Benjamin Lowry, *Assistant Professor of Information Systems*

Academia leads industry. I will say academia is leading the industry by about 10 years. I have a lot more respect for my professors at BYU now that I am working on a Ph.D. I am working with top professors in the IS field. Currently I am working on projects that most of industry won’t consider for several more years, namely model driven architecture (MDA). Industry has not caught the vision of this new paradigm even though it allows developers to complete their projects in a shorter amount of time and at lower costs. We are exploring both the pros and cons of this paradigm.

--Tom Meservy, *Ph.D. candidate at the University of Arizona (Eller)*

There are benefits from work experience. It is helpful but not absolutely necessary. Work experience is only helpful if it is related to what you are doing. I would not stop my education to go to work. Just go for it. Some people will go to work and get seduced by the money and what they are doing, and will not come back. It is really easy to miss the opportunity because of a car or a new home.

--Dr. Douglas Dean, *Assistant Professor of Information Systems*

Know what you are getting into. Be ready to work hard. Make sure this is something you want to do. When you are picking a place to go, make sure you have a good relationship with one member of the faculty before you apply...It would be great if you could already have your mentor picked out before you start the program. Your odds of getting into a program are pretty much guaranteed if you already have a mentor. Once that big decision is out of the way, you will be a mile ahead of the other students.

-- Brian Carini, *Ph.D. candidate at Carnegie Mellon University*

Self-motivation makes a person a good candidate. You will never finish if you are not self-motivated. Obstacles will likely be thrown in your path and you have to overcome them. Your success depends on you. You need to be a hard worker. A Ph.D. is an endurance contest, many people do not finish....You can succeed in a masters program with intelligence alone, but a Ph.D. program requires intelligence, effort, and endurance.

--Dr. Bonnie Anderson, *Assistant Professor of Information Systems*