

# PhD Notes

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD A COMMENT TO SUGGEST CHANGES.**

## **PhD Application Roadmap & Notes**

### **1. Research Phase**

- Explore PhD programs that align with your research and career goals.
- Review professor profiles, publications, and current projects.
- If impressed by a professor's work or the program:
  - Reach out to the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair.
  - Show genuine interest: emphasize that this is your dream school and why you're a strong fit.
  
- Typical PhD class sizes:
  - Smaller schools → 4–5 students per cohort.
  - Larger universities → ~15 students per cohort.
- Background diversity: some students join right after undergrad, others after work experience.

### **2. Early Communication Email Template**

Draft professional outreach emails to faculty and program leaders. Use a template like this:

Subject: Prospective PhD Applicant – Interest in [Program Name]

Dear [Dr. Last Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am preparing my application for the [PhD Program Name] at [University Name].

I have been very impressed by the program's focus on [specific aspect of program] and by the work of faculty such as [Professor's Name]. I believe that my background in [your academic/professional area] and my research interests in [specific research area] make me a strong fit for your program.

I would be grateful for any guidance you could provide on how best to position myself as a candidate. I am particularly drawn to [University Name] because it aligns closely with both my academic goals and career aspirations, and I am very motivated to contribute meaningfully to the program.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Contact Information]

### **3. Application Preparation**

- Letters of Recommendation (LORs):
  - Standard = 3 letters.
  - Some programs allow 4–5 letters.
- Prepare other key documents:
  - Statement of Purpose (SOP).
  - Resume/CV (academic + research focused).
  - Writing samples (if required).

### **4. Career & Exit Options**

- After PhD:
  - Academia (professor, researcher, postdoc).
  - Industry (R&D, consulting, data science, policy, think tanks).
  - Government or entrepreneurship.
- If you drop out of a PhD program:
  - Many schools allow you to exit with a Master's degree.
  - A U.S. Master's degree may qualify you for OPT (Optional Practical Training) work authorization.

### **Webinar Recording:**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1psGkMeGXqS1769fjHy\\_69c9moOOhhuJd/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1psGkMeGXqS1769fjHy_69c9moOOhhuJd/view)