Life As A (International) PhD student

Rachael Taitt
2nd year PhD student at Institute des Nanotechnologies de Lyon (INL)
If we knew what we were doing it would not be called research, would it?
My Academic Journey

Undergrad
Bsc. Chemistry

Masters
Msc. Physical Chemistry

PhD
Questions I asked myself

• What interests me?

• Who in my network can I speak to for advice?

• Is a PhD necessary for me?
How I chose my subject

Does this topic excite me?

How are the resources of the lab?

Do I think I can work well with the team?

What are the opinions of the current PhDs of the lab environment?

Can I have a good social life here?

Can I see myself living here?

• Funded by Ecole Doctorale EEA (Electronique, électrotechnique et automatique)
THE TRUTH: It is hard, but not impossible.
The Actual PhD Experience: Debunking the myths

- Define clearly the objectives of your thesis
- Know your doctoral school’s requirements to obtain the PhD
- Be open to new ideas, and always eager to learn
- Manage expectations
- Organization is key!!

**THE TRUTH:** It is hard, but not impossible.
Bonuses to PhD Life

- Best of two worlds: A student, but salaried and NO EXAMS!! ;)
- You can focus on what you really like
- Meet new, diverse and interesting people
- Travel!! (conferences, summer and winter schools)

It’s a great adventure!
Explore your field and the world around you!!
Have a good reason for starting, and then remember it.