

Dilma's musings on "What is life as a graduate Student?"

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How do I still know it?

- Long time ago ...
- My path was very “focused”, dream-oriented. Many successful people have less-direct paths to graduate life
- My perspective now is a mix of:
 - nostalgic longing 😊
 - wish-list for the people I hire and collaborate with (and hopefully will work for one day)
 - advice I wish I had taken

Why? What?

- common reasons:
 1. Inertia
 2. Step towards a “successfull” career path
 3. Burning desire
- Path without passion can be difficult. Better to think and talk to mentors *a lot* before/during the journey
- **Trying research & technical depth for real!**
- MSc vs Phd path

What is research ?

We all do problem solving ... research is about the OPEN part

open

- Either unsolved or existing solutions have flaws
- no blueprint to follow
- Straightforward approach by practioners not enough

problem solving

- discover solutions
- articulate convincing demonstration the approach works
- systematic evaluation of strengths & weakness
- positioning into existing body of knowledge

What is research ?

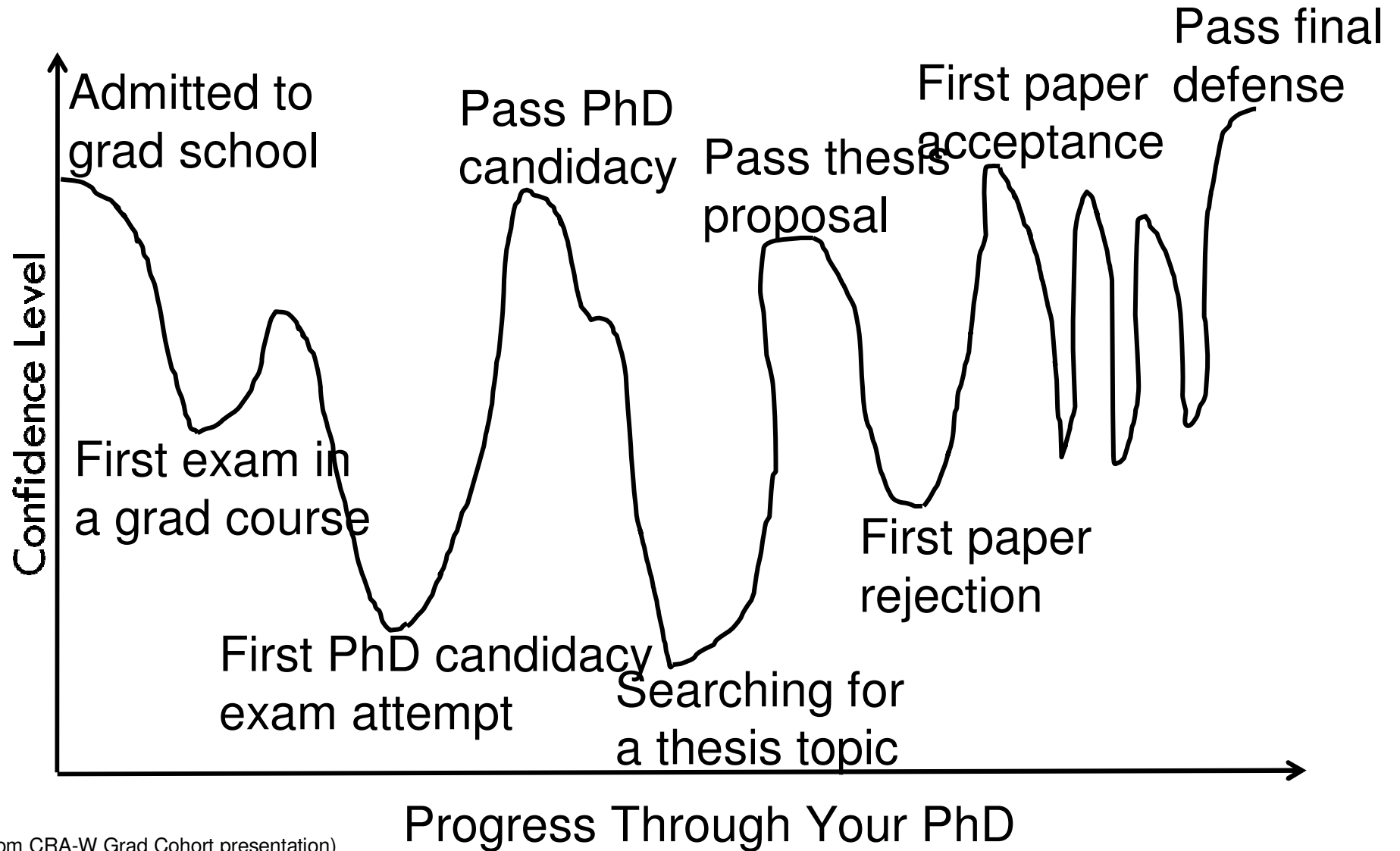
Open problem solving



Additional aspects for industry research:

- Driven by customer needs
- Path to “real life”
- Additional constraints:
 - Legacy
 - Business models (cost!! market!!)
 - Product cycles

Grad student confidence “plot”



The “research” crowd

- It's not about genius
- Passionate & smart is very common
- Skills to be refined/acquired/exercised while in grad school:
 - Abstraction
 - Solid knowledge & depth
 - Communication
 - Hands-on experience
 - Time management
 - Taking risks
 - Dealing with fellow researchers
 - Networking

You still have a life!

- There is exciting work to do ... work-life balance may be a challenge for some people
- There is *really hard* work to do ... procrastination may be a challenge for many people ... you may “waste” work *and* life
- On a journey taking so many years, chances are that life will surprise you with additional challenges. Excellent practice opportunity!