

Navigating the path to a PhD

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For many college students with chemistry-related majors, the next step in their career path is not always clear. Should they go to graduate school? If so, how does one choose a research program and advisor? What if something unexpected happens? These and many other questions about the chemistry graduate school experience are tackled in this week's cover story for *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the

weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Some students struggle over whether [graduate school](#) is the right choice for them. Maybe the thought of five to seven years of combined school and research after college is intimidating. Perhaps they love teaching but hate research, or vice versa. For others, the choice is obvious: They've always dreamed of leading a high-powered lab at a prestigious university, or even of winning the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. But whether or not the decision to attend grad school is a no-brainer, bumps and detours often lie along the path to a Ph.D. In a series of articles by various writers, C&EN provides glimpses of graduate school life and advice on how to navigate it.

The articles address all of the major milestones of a chemist's graduate school experience, from deciding if grad school is right for them to preparing for life after a Ph.D. In addition, they offer advice on navigating highs and lows and recovering from unexpected situations. Several students share their stories of issues they've faced, such as research burnout, finding their voice and the challenges of being a blind student. Although every graduate student's experience is unique, these articles provide a roadmap for the journey ahead.

The article, "The chemistry graduate school experience," is freely available [here](#).

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