

Li's supervision

My name is Li from Shanxi, China. In 2004, I came to study at Middlemarch Metropolitan University (better not appear real name) and started my first year of pursuing knowledge in overseas after quitting my previous job in China. In the following couple of years, I successfully got through the language barriers and with the hard working of another 1 year and half, I got my MA degree in International Business Management.

After that, I applied to do a PhD study in research centre of SBS at university on the subject of China's plays. My Director of Study was a professor who had expertise in China's and Japan's cultures, which apparently no other tutors could be sharing his expertise in this field at this university, and luckily who was also so much interested in my proposal for PhD research. This no doubt helped me going through the registration easily and smoothly.

Subsequently, my research work went as well as I and my Director of Study were expecting. That lasted about 1 year or so until a dark night in winter, 2006, one of my colleagues was calling me saying that my Director of Study died suddenly. I was incredibly shocked by this bad news since what made me unbelievable was that he was still very young. What's more, his passing-away brought me and other doctoral students who were under his supervision into a dilemma because no one were clear who would be qualified to supervise us, especially me. The university then informed me that they would look for another Director of Study from staff for me as a substitute, but to find an appropriate one needed a considerable period of time.

So with no other options I had to suspend for a year. This was partly because that university would need a plenty of time to look for a substitute supervision team for me; and partly because the personal reason that I really needed a time getting myself back from that disastrous shock of the death of my supervisor.

One year later when I came back from China, I got to know that the process of looking for a substitute supervisor had been going very awful and inefficient. In the most time while I was away, my issue had been putting on shelf without being paid too much attention. Most of colleagues might have assumed that I would have given up continuing to pursue PhD study.

Being a Chinese student and due to the Chinese culture, we normally have a high degree of tolerance. Taking the fact and facing up with the reality, I asked for continuing to look for my supervisor again. My colleagues in research centre and I have been deeply engaging into the work over the past more than one year. Unfortunately, at the end of day I was told again that it has been impossible to find an appropriate supervisor for me in this university because no one has the expertise in China's plays. What I am able to do is to try some other universities. This no doubt causes another disaster for me. I have been losing nearly 2 and half years since my former director of study died, in which I have been psychologically tortured by all what have happened to me.

Now I have been applying for a registration of PhD study in some other universities in the UK, and what I can do at the moment is to wait...

The reality that my research has been conducted for at least 1 year really annoys me because I don't want to change my interesting topic to the other fields which apparently are very new to me. In the meantime, people who have the expertise on the research topic I am doing are very few, and those living in the UK who has the required related expertise are limited too. This results in more difficulties in looking for suitable professors who might have any interesting to my research programme. In the following days to re-apply for a PhD study on the same subject in some other university, this has been proved that it is incredibly difficult and is a long and tedious process.

Now I am waiting for the further notifications from the universities I have applied for. Hopefully ...

Team task

On the acetate provided list the main lessons from Li's experience for

1. International students
2. Departments
3. Institutions