

Fast-Track PhD Seminar

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Research into PhDs

- * **Work study of PhD** research & supervision (tasks, time, critical paths, lost time)
- * **Research literature on PhD** study, supervision, education, assessment...
- * **Educational theory-** aims, objectives, curricula, learning objectives, performance criteria, assessment modes ..
- * Supervisor vs course-based support
- * **Empirical** observation and testing...

Public concerns about PhDs



- * Lack of useful outcomes to society
- * Worth less than cost to society (\$500,000/PhD)
- * Poor completion rate (60%)
- * Overrun of time (5-10 years average)
- * Doctors are not competent and useful to society

Causes of delays in doctorates

- * Administration delays and errors
- * Unstructured literature review
- * Unstructured/late thesis writing
- * Student skills (reasoning, writing, perspective)
- * Time plan
- * Unhelpful/contradictory guidance by supervisors
- * Personal issues
- * Centralised research and writing courses
- * Wrong kind of research project

PhD issues

- * Choice of research project
- * Timeline
- * Personal development of candidate
- * Structured literature review and thesis
- * Where to learn reasoning, research methods & writing?
- * Effective perspectives
- * Doctoral competencies
- * 'Best practices' supervision
- * PhD administration

Four types of research

- * **Problem-based research (usually best)**
- * **Single question** research (not useful)
- * **Blue-sky** research (not suitable for PhDs)
- * **Hypothesis-testing** research (fields with tested body of theory)

Justification of Reasoning

- * **Logical** (If A true and B is true then logically C)
- * **Casuistic** (Because a famous and trusted research reported it on the basis of their research)
- * **Deontic** (self evident, e.g a cup is a cup)
- * **Rhetoric** (persuasion through emotion or fallacies)

Timeline - 3 year PhD

Task	Time
Application	1 month
Candidacy and ethics approved	4 months
Literature review & data collection prep	5 months
Data collection	4 months
Analyses	5 months
Contingency & personal crises	2 months
Holidays	3 months (4 week/year)
Proofing and editing of thesis	6 months
Examination and award	5 months
Total	36 months (3 years)

Personal development/ pastoral care of PhD candidate

- * PhD should have a radical personal effect on the candidate.

Structured literature review

A common fear of PhD candidates is ‘How do I know if I’ve reviewed enough material?’

- * Set Google Preferences - 50 items
- * Think up ‘keywords’
- * Search Google to find the *real* keywords
- * Learn and repeat

Use same for catalogues, databases.....

Structured Thesis

- * Too much effort and time goes into re-organising and re-writing PhD theses.
- * The solution is a standard thesis structure of limited size
- * Recommend the Perry '5 Chapter Thesis' structure.
- * PhD thesis size 75000-85000 words (75000 better)
- * Note: Put action research and similar in appendices rather than thesis.

Where to learn reasoning, research methods & writing?

- * Most effective – combination between supervisor and online learning (insight plus right material at right time)
- * Moderately effective – either supervisor or online learning alone
- * Least effective - University lecture courses (wrong material at wrong time)

Effective tools

- * View everything as a complex socio-technical system
- * 'Abstract' until it ceases to be useful
- * Stay 'concrete' at the same time as long as possible
- * Theory models are same in all disciplines
- * Ignore disciplines

Doctoral Competencies

- * Set up and manage new research projects
- * Develop new research and theory (different from their PhD)
- * High level reasoning skills
- * Collaborate effectively in a variety of team roles
- * Good team worker
- * Sound administrator
- * Accurate and honest budget management
- * Develop quotes for work and plan workflows and resources
- * Write professional documents and reports that will stand legal scrutiny
- * Manage their personal and work lives professionally
- * Establish and maintain professional networks
- * Make sound professional and ethical judgments
- * Be politically and administratively effective

Best Practice Supervision

* See next session!

Administration

- * Administration consistently is one of the unnecessary causes of delay in PhD completion
- * Manage administration tightly and manage your supervisor managing administration

Timeline – 18 month PhD

Task	Time
Application	1 month
Candidacy and ethics approved	2 months
Literature review & data collection prep	2 months
Data collection	2 months
Analyses	3 months
Proofing and editing of thesis 70,000 words	5 months
Examination and award	3 months
Total	18 months

Questions?

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