Planning and Managing your PhD

Presenter:
Dr. Tamara O’Connor

Student Learning Development
http://student-learning.tcd.ie
What is a PhD?
The long distance run...

Progress hard to monitor and much of the work is done in isolation
Your PhD

Your first piece of significant academic work
Contribution to new knowledge
AND a learning process for you
Become a professional researcher
Develop an effective and efficient process for working

“Without doubt comprehensive planning in the early months of the PhD sets the stage for successful and timely completion”
Write down on a piece of paper the greatest challenge you will face:

My greatest challenge might be......
6 Most Common Problems

1. Poor planning
2. Process difficulties
3. Writing
4. Isolation
5. Personal Problems
6. Supervision

Brown & Atkins, 1990
Challenge 1: Planning
# SWOT Analysis

**Complete for yourself**

## SWOT Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>Complete my PhD</td>
<td>New Programming Language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good technical skills</td>
<td>Knowledge of mental health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strong self management</td>
<td>Assertive Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Good learner</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Opportunities

- Establish a network of clinicians
- Fund from charities

## Threats

- New evaluations
- Fundy Extension
- Diploma
- External Projects
- Baby
Your Trajectory

- **Establish Foundations**
  - Reading
  - Learning skills & Tools
  - Planning

- **Deepen Understanding**
  - Identify problem
  - Set targets

- **Data Collection**
  - Run Tests / Studies
  - Procedure for storing data
  - Overlap with data collection

- **Analysis**
  - Frame your argument
  - Update Literature Review

- **Moving to the End**
  - Writing, Editing, Drafts
  - Submission

- **Wrap Up**
  - Update Literature Review

Source: http://www.vitae.ac.uk
Master & Minor plan

1. Master plan to guide you overall

2. Minor plan to guide you day-to-day week-to-week

www.auckland.ac.nz/.../postgraduate.../phd-calendar-for-students.pdf
## Possible Timeline

Submit - 27 April 2012

### Proposed draft deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Draft 1</th>
<th>Draft 2</th>
<th>Final Revision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ch. 1 - Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch. 2 - Literature Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch. 3 - Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch. 4 - Findings Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch. 5 - Findings Document/Inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch. 6 - Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch. 7 - Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
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## Overview – Gantt chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Method/Approach</td>
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<td>Analysis/Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion/Conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td>References Acknowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission to Tutor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Set Goals – Make them SMART

1. Increase motivation
2. Keep you on track (feedback)
3. Increase Productivity

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Action
- R = Realistic
- T = Time-based
Self-Management

Scheduling & Actions
Free your mind
If your system works, you trust it to remind you
# Energy Timetable

Complete the timetable using 3 different patterns or colours.

Use Red for example to indicate lecture times, meetings and so on. Use Yellow for time you plan to study and Green for your social and relaxing time.

The idea is to plan your week based on how you are likely to feel. While you might feel that after 4 hours of lectures you should head to the library, realistically you probably need to take a break.

Working efficiently means knowing when to take breaks and requires that you plan time for fun and relaxation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Red = Busy
Yellow = Study
Green = Free
To-do list

Work back from your goals
Make a list of all upcoming tasks
If it can be done in 2 mins do it now
Otherwise add it to your list
Order by importance
Where do you work **best**?
Place suitable to **task**
Break your day into different **tasks** & **spaces**
Procrastination

Is to delay needlessly something that we believe would be to our benefit
Discuss:

1. Do you have an established routine?
2. How do you manage your time?
3. How do you know what you have to do?

How will I know if I’m on the right track?
Challenge 2: Process
What skills do you need? (SWOT)

Department specific
• Course Handbook
• Department Seminars
• Ask Supervisor
• Ask Postgrad
• Contact GSU

Self-directed
Research Skills

Library
Literature Reviews, Database Searches

Information Systems Services
Software support (Word, SPSS, Endnote)

Student Learning Development
Academic Writing, Critical Thinking

Summer School – PhD skills event
Challenge 3: Writing
Managing your writing

Record

- What you read?
- What you did?

Thesis

- Planning
- Outline
- Writing
- Submission

Pubs

- transfer reports
- conferences
- journals
ideas
Brainstorm
Organise
Key message

planning
What do you want to say?
Structure

writing
Communicating your ideas
### Thesis types

**Find out the structure for your discipline**

**Read at least 1 thesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Simple</th>
<th>Topic Based</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Literature Review</td>
<td>2. Topic 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Materials and Methods</td>
<td>3. Topic 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Results</td>
<td>4. Topic 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Discussion</td>
<td>5. Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Complex</th>
<th>Compilation Based</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Literature Review</td>
<td>2. Background to the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Background Theory)</td>
<td>3. Research Article 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (General Methods)</td>
<td>o Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Literature Review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Materials and Methods</td>
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<td>o Results</td>
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<td>o Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Study 1</td>
<td>4. Research Article 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Introduction</td>
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<td>o Methods</td>
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<td>o Results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Study 2</td>
<td>5. Research Article 3</td>
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<td>o Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Methods</td>
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<td>7. Study 3+</td>
<td>6. Conclusions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is my thesis about?

Research Statement (25-30 words)
Get feedback early and often
Discuss with supervisor
Reach agreement as early as possible
Outlining – Level 1

Background
Objectives
Method
Findings
Conclusions
Outlining – Level 2

I. Chapter 1 – Introduction.
   1. A statement of the problem.
   2. Definition of terms.
   3. Review of literature.
   4. Description of the remaining chapters.

II. Chapter 2 – Methods Used.
    1. Requirements and specifications.
    2. Algorithms and data structures.

III. Chapter 3 through $N - 1$ – The middle chapters depend on your particular project.

IV. Chapter $N$ – Conclusions.
    1. Statement of your results.
    2. Statement of problems left unsolved.


VI. Appendix B – Maintenance Manual.

VII. Appendix C – Design Documents.

VIII. Appendix D – Source Code.

IX. Appendix E – Test Suite.
1.0.0.0 Introduction
  1.1.0.0 Field of study
  1.2.0.0 Scope
  1.3.0.0 Contribution

2.0.0.0 Context
  2.1.0.0 Conflict affected societies
    2.1.1.0 Worldwide overview
    2.1.2.0 Case Study: Lebanese social structure
      2.1.2.1 Historical conflicts
      2.1.2.2 Contemporary conflicts
  2.2.0.0 The potential of young generations in social integration
    2.2.1.0 Research and theories
    2.2.2.0 Introduction to the target group in Lebanon
  2.3.0.0 Review of interventions for social integration
    2.3.1.0 Social interventions
      2.3.1.1 Worldwide overview
      2.3.1.2 Case Study: Lebanon
    2.3.2.0 Communication design interventions
      2.3.2.1 Worldwide overview
      2.3.2.2 Case Study: Lebanon

3.0.0.0 Methodology
  3.1.0.0 Socially informed communication design methodologies
    3.1.1.0 Theoretical and empirical research
    3.1.2.0 Multidisciplinarity
    3.1.3.0 Participatory methods
  3.2.0.0 Developing a communication design methodology for social integration
    3.2.1.0 Theoretical review of contributing methodologies
      3.2.1.1 Social science methodologies
      3.2.1.2 Communication design methodologies
    3.2.2.0 Empirical application of methodologies
      3.2.2.1 Exemplifying
      3.2.2.2 Evaluating
      3.2.2.3 Reviewing
  3.3.0.0 Transferability and limitations

4.0.0.0 Set of guidelines
  4.1.0.0 Planning
    4.1.1.0 Secondary research
  4.2.0.0 Research design
    4.2.1.0 Scoping interviews
    4.2.2.0 Link tracing
    4.2.3.0 Pilot testing
  4.3.0.0 Research execution
    4.3.1.0 Recruitment
    4.3.2.0 Ethnographic fieldwork
    4.3.3.0 Discussion groups
    4.3.4.0 Co-design sessions
  4.4.0.0 Analysis
    4.4.1.0 Prototyping communication design interventions
    4.4.2.0 Testing interventions communication design interventions
    4.4.3.0 Implementing communication design interventions
  4.5.0.0 Evaluation
    4.5.1.0 Measuring the impact of the interventions

5.0.0.0 Conclusion
  5.1.0.0 Reflections
  5.2.0.0 Progression
Start writing

Formalities (one file)
- Cover Page
- Key words
- Abstract
- List of Tables and Figures
- Ethics statement
- Statement of original authorship
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents

Chapters (one file each)
- Chapter 1. Introduction and overview
- Chapter 2. Literature review
- Chapter 3. Research question
- Chapter 4. Methodology
- Chapter 5. Results
- Chapter 6. Discussion
- Chapter 7. Summary and conclusions
- References/bibliography

web: http://student-learning.tcd.ie | email: student.learning@tcd.ie
1. How will you manage your writing?
2. Do you have a clear research question?
Challenge 4: Isolation
Academic Isolation

Get your material reviewed by peers (seminars, conferences, publish)
Make contact with people doing similar research (network)
Get Involved

Volunteer [http://www.tcd.ie/Community/](http://www.tcd.ie/Community/)

Get involved in **social events**:

- Get involved in a society | [http://www.trinitysocieties.ie/](http://www.trinitysocieties.ie/)
- Join the gym | [http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/](http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/)
- Join one of the 50 sports clubs | [http://www.ducac.tcdlife.ie/](http://www.ducac.tcdlife.ie/)
Challenge 5: Stress
When stressed, try to come back to what you know.

When bored look for the novel.
Need more help?

I need advice on dealing with stress
• Student Counselling Service | Ph:018961407 | email: student-counselling@tcd.ie

I need general advice on being a post-graduate
• Postgraduate Advisory Service | http://www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/postgraduate/
• Graduate’s Student Union | http://www.gsu.tcd.ie/node/
• Student Learning Development | http://student-learning.tcd.ie |
Challenge 6: Supervisor
Your Supervisor

- What you want to do
- What your supervisor wants you to do
- How to communicate with your supervisor?
- Know supervisor’s strengths/weaknesses
- Set task targets with your supervisor
- Make maximum use of resources
- Establish Process
Managing the Process

- Agree a plan of supervisions
- Prepare for supervision
- Submit work for supervisor to read
- Attend supervision
- Summarise what you agreed
- Send summary to supervisor

Six monthly review of progress

Annual review of progress

Source: www.vitae.co.uk
6 Most Common Problems

1. Poor planning
2. Process difficulties
3. Writing
4. Isolation
5. Personal Problems
6. Supervision
What can you do now?

1. Make a **plan**
2. Establish a **routine / rhythm**
3. Start writing **now**
4. Read **one book** on writing
5. Read **one thesis**
6. Set long-term / short-term **goals**
Further help

How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors
by Estelle Phillips & D.S. Pugh

How to Write a Thesis (Paperback)
by Rowena Murray

www.vitae.ac.co.uk/pg
In groups, take some of the challenges written down earlier and find solutions for them.

Challenge

Possible Solution:

Are there common themes?
Thank you for your time

Visit our website at: http://student-learning.tcd.ie