

# Completing your D.Phil

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# Exercise: plan of your thesis

Write down:

1. Your thesis title
2. Your primary research question(s)/hypothesis(es)
3. Your chapter headings
4. The key message(s) of your thesis in (at most) five bullet points
5. Describe your thesis to the person sitting next to you in a maximum of two minutes
6. Get the person sitting next to you to tell you what your thesis is about

# Exercises

1. What makes a good D.Phil Thesis?
2. Have you got a plan for writing up?
3. What problems are you encountering in writing up?
4. How long do you expect it to take you?
5. What do you expect from your supervisor(s) and what help are you getting?

# What constitutes good writing?

- The ability to tell a story and hold the reader's attention
- Rhetoric
- Structure
- Clarity
- Coherence
- Grammar
- Punctuation.....(**including mathematical**)
- **Reference list**
- **English language**

# What does this mean in practise?

1. In chapter 1 you say what you are going to say
2. In the rest of your thesis, you say it
3. In the final chapter, you say what you've said
- 4. 1-3 above also apply to each chapter**
5. Remember your examiners are not likely to read your thesis in one go – *make it as easy as possible for them to follow your arguments*
6. Overall the thesis must flow and tell a coherent story of the research you have done –
  - you do not have to give a chronological report of what you have done, the thesis structure should follow the logic of your arguments/theses

# What is the viva for?

Three things:

- 1.To check that the research in your thesis is of the required standard for a D.Phil (usually decided before the exam)
- 2.To check that the work in your thesis is your own
- 3.To check that you have a general knowledge of the research area covered by your thesis commensurate with holding a D.Phil in that area

# What are D.Phil examiner's asked to check?

The examiners must include in their report statements that:

1. the student possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
2. *the student has made a significant and substantial contribution in the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;*
3. the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
4. in their opinion the thesis merits the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy;
5. the student has presented a satisfactory abstract of the thesis.

Examiners shall bear in mind that their judgement of the substantial significance of the work should take into account what may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student after three or at most four years of full-time study in the case of a full-time student, or eight years in the case of a part-time student.

# FAQs

1. **What to do if you have no decent results?**
2. Which forms do you need to complete before you can have a viva and where do you find them?
3. What to expect in a viva. Dress code. Length. What to revise beforehand.
4. How do you go about deciding on examiners for your viva?
5. Job hunting during your write up?
6. If you are an international student, don't forget to check when your visa expires
7. What are the word limits for your thesis - departmental dependent so make sure you check in advance of writing. Same for format.
8. Binding of thesis: soft for your examiners, don't forget to get one done for yourself. Hard only after final corrections have been approved. Where to get it done?
9. Allow time to do your corrections after the viva - important if you're starting a new job. Do them straight away.
10. **What is your status at the university if you run out of funding but are still writing up? e.g. do you still have to pay college fees and a continuation fee? [Yes]**
11. Don't forget to back up ALL your work including your thesis!