# Research activities

# in PhD stage

# PhD: „Doctor of Philosophy”

- A PhD is a postgraduate doctoral degree, awarded to students who complete an original thesis offering a significant new contribution to knowledge in their subject
- Abbreviation of the latin term, *(Ph)ilosophiae (d)octor*. The word 'philosophy' here refers to its original Greek meaning: *philo* (friend or lover of) *sophia* (wisdom)
- This is an academic or professional degree that, in most countries, qualifies the degree holder to teach their chosen subject at university level or to work in a specialized position in their chosen field

# Doctorate vs. PhD

- A doctorate is a qualification that awards a *doctoral* degree. In order to qualify for one you need to produce advanced work that makes a significant new contribution to your chosen discipline. Doing so earns you the title 'Doctor' - hence the name
- The PhD is the most common type of doctorate and is awarded in most academic fields. Essentially, all PhDs are doctorates, but not all doctorates are PhDs.
- The PhD stage is viewed as a training process, preparing students for careers in academic research. Not all doctoral graduates end up working in higher education.

# Activities

- Unlike most Masters courses (or all undergraduate programmes), a PhD is a pure research degree.
- A typical PhD normally involves:
  - Carrying out a **literature review** (a survey of current scholarship in the selected field).
  - Conducting **original research** and collecting and disseminate the **results**.
  - Producing a **thesis** that presents the conclusions.
  - **Writing up** the thesis and submitting it as a **dissertation**.
  - **Defending** the thesis in an oral **viva voce** exam.

# Timeline: 1st year

- The beginning of a PhD is all about finding the path as a researcher and getting a solid grounding in the current scholarship that relates to the selected topic (training can be included – usual lectures, sommer/winter schools).
- Meetings with the supervisor and discuss a plan of action based on the research proposal.
- Carrying out a **literature review**. With the guidance of the supervisor, surveying and evaluating existing scholarship. This will help situate the own research and ensure the work originality.
- The literature review provides a logical jumping off point for the beginning of the own research and the gathering of **results**. This could involve designing and implementing experiments, or getting stuck into a pile of primary sources.
- The year may end with an **proposal upgrade**. You'll submit material from your literature review, or a draft of your research findings and discuss these with members of advisory board.

# Timeline: 2nd year

- Time for core research, main focus being on gathering **results** from experiments, archival research, surveys or other means.
- Intensive exploration of new ideas, methods, proof-of-concept implemetation
- Presenting the original work at academic **conferences**, gaining **teaching experience** or perhaps even selecting some material for **publication** in an academic journal.
- Begin **writing up** chapters or other pieces (e.g. based on material presented in conferences and journal) the that will eventually form part of your **dissertation**.
- Still have regular meetings with the supervisor to check your progress, provide feedback on your ideas and probably read any drafts that is produced.

# Timeline: 3rd year

- Referred to as the **writing up** phase.
- Pull together the results and honing the **thesis** into a **dissertation**.
- Fine-tuning experiments, collecting results or chasing up a few extra sources.
- **Writing up** the thesis and submitting the **dissertation**.
- The supervisor & advisory board will be very involved in this process. They will read through the final draft and let you know when they think your dissertation is ready for submission.
- Final **viva voce** oral exam. This is a formal discussion and defence of your thesis involving at least external examiners.

# Writing a research proposal for stage admission

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|---|---|
| Topic: | this project will study... |
| Question/problem: | to find out... |
| Significance: | so that more will be known about... |
| Primary resources: | the main data will be... |
| Secondary sources: | additional data comes from... |
| Methods: | the research will be conducted as follows... |
| Justification: | the method is most appropriate because... |
| Limitations: | there are some matters that this methodology may not help me to explain; these might include... |