

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

THE REALITIES OF COMPLETING A PHD

How to Plan for Success

Nicholas Rowe

ROUTLEDGE

Focus

The Realities of Completing a PhD

The Realities of Completing a PhD gives a balanced and evidence-based view of the realities of PhD life. Full of practical tips and including a checklist to complete before sending an application, the book helps prospective PhD students prepare for the realities of taking on a PhD from an informed basis and offers guidance on submitting a well-planned application.

This is the first book of its kind to bring together a range of international data that helps to paint a more balanced picture of the PhD process. The book outlines different types of PhD, how to select a topic for a PhD, how to write a robust research proposal and application, and the realities of PhD study in relation to student wellbeing, social commitments and employment prospects. By considering the issues raised in this book, students are less likely to be overwhelmed by the PhD process, and better equipped to complete their award.

The book will be invaluable for potential doctoral students as well as those already embarking on a PhD. It will also enable university mentors and supervisors to consider how the application phase is key to managing student expectations, and how they can further promote a healthy and productive PhD experience.

Nicholas Rowe is a trans-disciplinary educationalist, with interests in scientific communication and academic/professional development. A dual fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy and the Society for Education and Training, he worked as a full-time lecturer in the UK and did his PhD in education in Finland.

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This book is dedicated to all those past, present and future PhDs who have worked their way through the PhD system, often relying on pure grit, determination and resilience. Equally, it acknowledges all of those who have not reached the finish line (possibly through no fault of their own), and whose voices are often not heard. Hopefully, this portrayal of the realities of doing a PhD and how best to approach the process will help university staff understand the wider PhD student experience, and enable future PhD students to walk into their programmes better prepared and ready to face the challenges ahead.



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Glossary

ABD (All But Dissertation) A term sometimes used to indicate that someone has completed their PhD coursework, but has not gone on to complete the award (i.e. the dissertation and examination).

Academic discipline An academic discipline is the main field you wish to study in. It is divided into sub-disciplines that define a particular area, and branches of the sub-discipline that define specific areas of approach or interest.

Bachelor's degree A first-level degree examined at level 6 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). A bachelor's degree with honours (Hons) usually contains a larger volume of material, a higher standard of study or both, rather than an ordinary bachelor's degree. It often has a research element.

Dissertation (see Thesis) In Europe, the term dissertation is often used interchangeably with thesis but reflects a broader post-graduate research project. In the US a thesis is often used to describe master's-level work, and the term dissertation is used for doctoral work.

Doctorate A qualification that awards a doctoral degree examined at level 8 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It is seen as a terminal degree and is the highest-level award a university can bestow.

Master's degree A second-level degree examined at level 7 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It may also be referred to as a graduate degree.

Monograph thesis A monograph thesis presents a candidate's overall research in one document for evaluation for a doctoral award.