

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







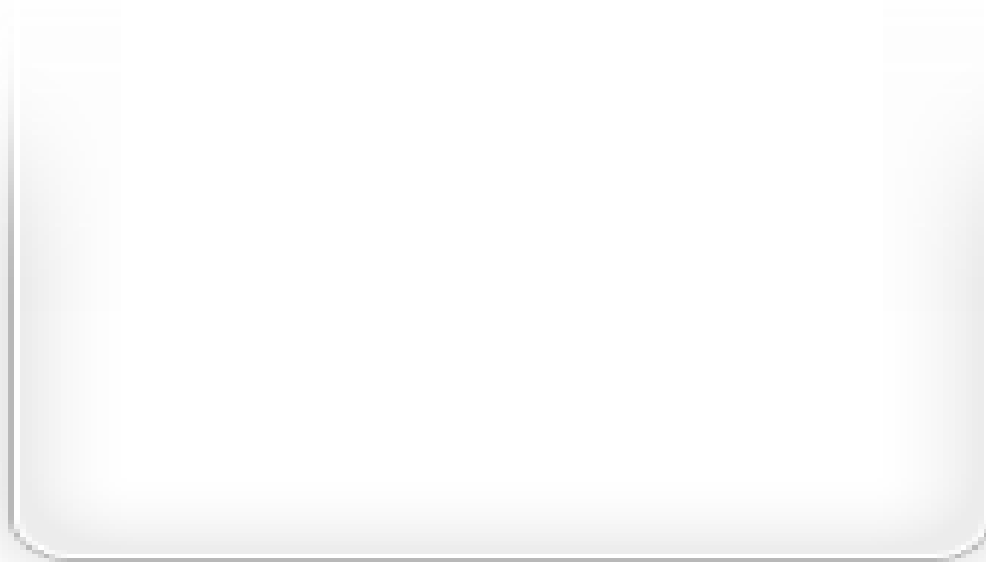
Your first piece of significant academic work
Contribution to new knowledge
AND a learning process for you
Become a professional researcher
Develop an effective and efficient process
for working

“Without doubt comprehensive planning in the early months of the PhD sets the stage for successful and timely completion”

James, R. & Clark, S. (2008) The PhD Calendar: Navigating a path to successful completion.

Write down on a piece of paper the greatest challenge you will face:

My greatest challenge might be.....

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a subtle drop shadow, intended for writing the greatest challenge.



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

Objective: Complete my PhD

Strengths e.g. skills, knowledge, personal characteristics	Weaknesses i.e. areas where you could improve
Good technical skills Strong self management Good learner	New Programming Language Knowledge of mental health Assertive Communication
Opportunities i.e. external chances to improve the situation or help achieve the objective above.	Threats i.e. external elements that might obstruct your progress.
Establish a network of clinicians Funding from charities	New evaluation Funding Extension Diploma External Projects Baby



Your Trajectory

Wrap Up

**Writing, Editing, Drafts
Submission**

Moving to the End

**Frame your argument
Update Literature Review**

Analysis

Overlap with data collection

Data Collection

**Run Tests / Studies
Procedure for storing data**

Deepen Understanding

**Identify problem
Set targets**

**Establish
Foundations**

**Reading
Learning skills & Tools
Planning**



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:

	Draft 1	Draft 2	Final Revision
Ch. 1 - Introduction			
Ch. 2 - Literature Review			
Ch. 3 - Methods			
Ch. 4 - Findings Interviews			
Ch. 5 - Findings Document/Inventory			
Ch. 6 - Discussion			
Ch. 7 - Conclusion			
Abstract			

Overview – Gantt chart

Months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Topic Agreed							
Aims & Objectives							
Opening Sections							
Draft Outline							
Literature Review							
Method/ Approach							
Analysis/ Results							
Discussion/ Conclusions							
References Acknowledge							
Binding							
Submission to Tutor							

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

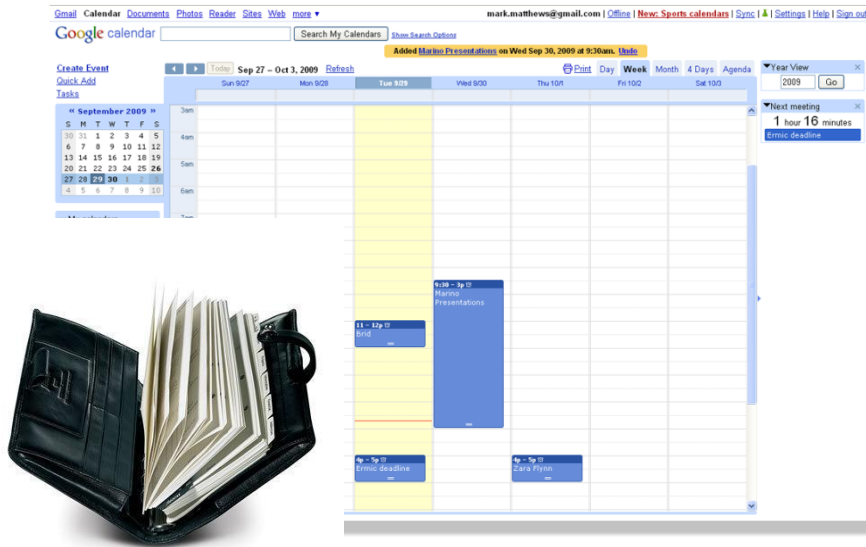


Self-Management

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.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red
Lunch	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red
	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red
	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow
	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green

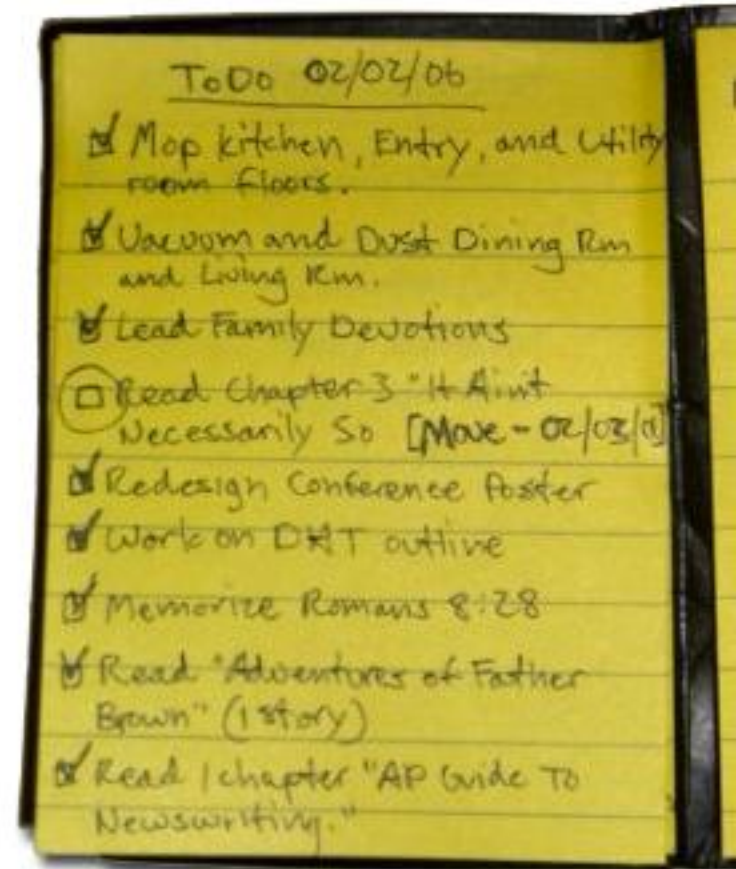


Red = Busy
Yellow = Study
Green = Free



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

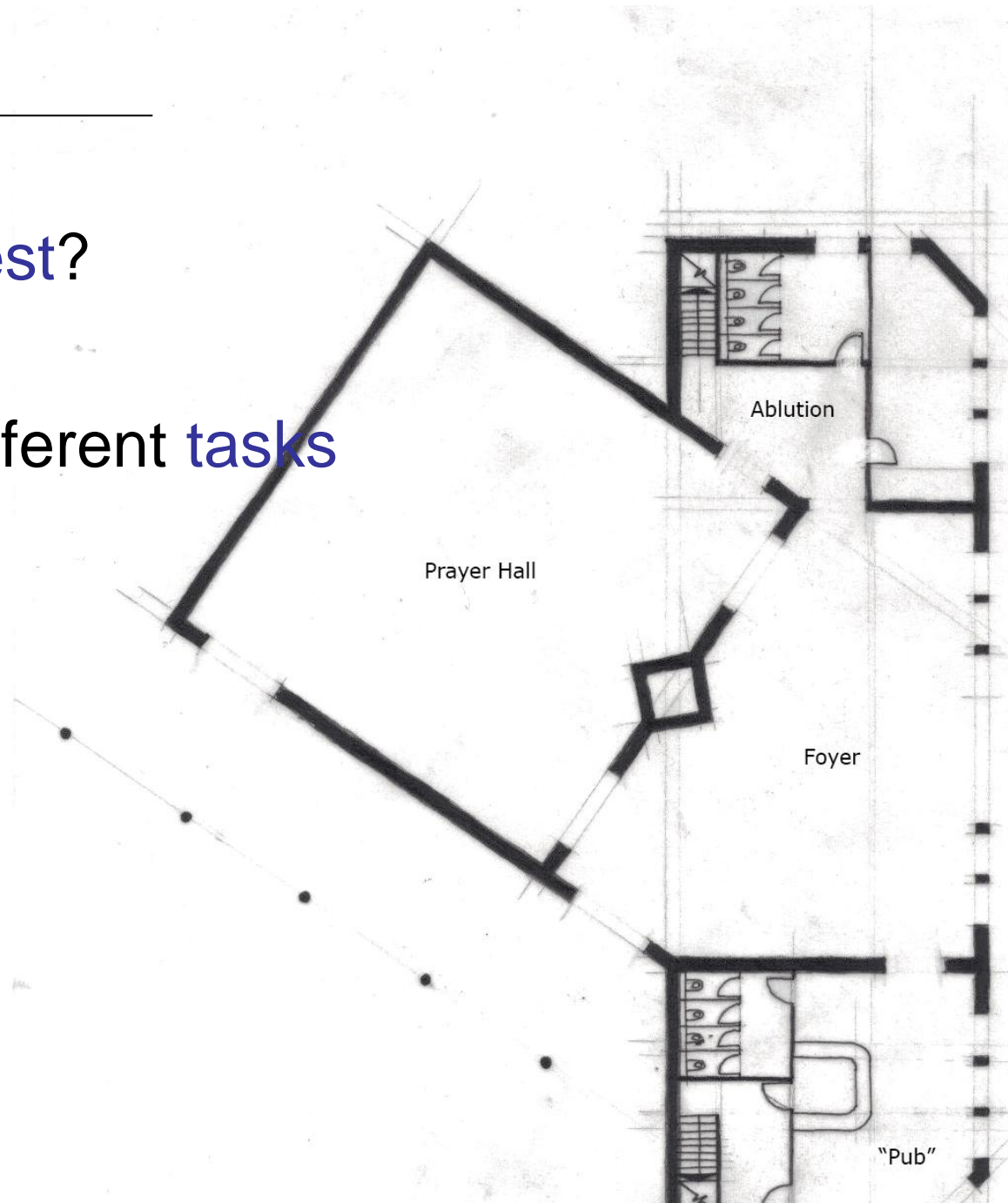


Find your space

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



Subject-Skills

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**

Traditional Simple	Topic Based
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction2. Literature Review3. Materials and Methods4. Results5. Discussion6. Conclusions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction2. Topic 13. Topic 24. Topic 35. Conclusions
Traditional Complex	Compilation Based
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction2. Literature Review3. (Background Theory)4. (General Methods)5. Study 1<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Methodso Resultso Discussion6. Study 2<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Methodso Resultso Discussion7. Study 3+<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Methodso Resultso Discussion8. Discussion9. Conclusions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction2. Background to the Study3. Research Article 1<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Literature Reviewo Materials and Methodso Resultso Discussiono Conclusions4. Research Article 2<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Literature Reviewo Materials and Methodso Resultso Discussiono Conclusions5. Research Article 3<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introductiono Literature Reviewo Materials and Methodso Resultso Discussiono Conclusions6. Conclusions



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.
- V . Appendix A – User's Manual.
- 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
 - 2.3.2.2 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

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)



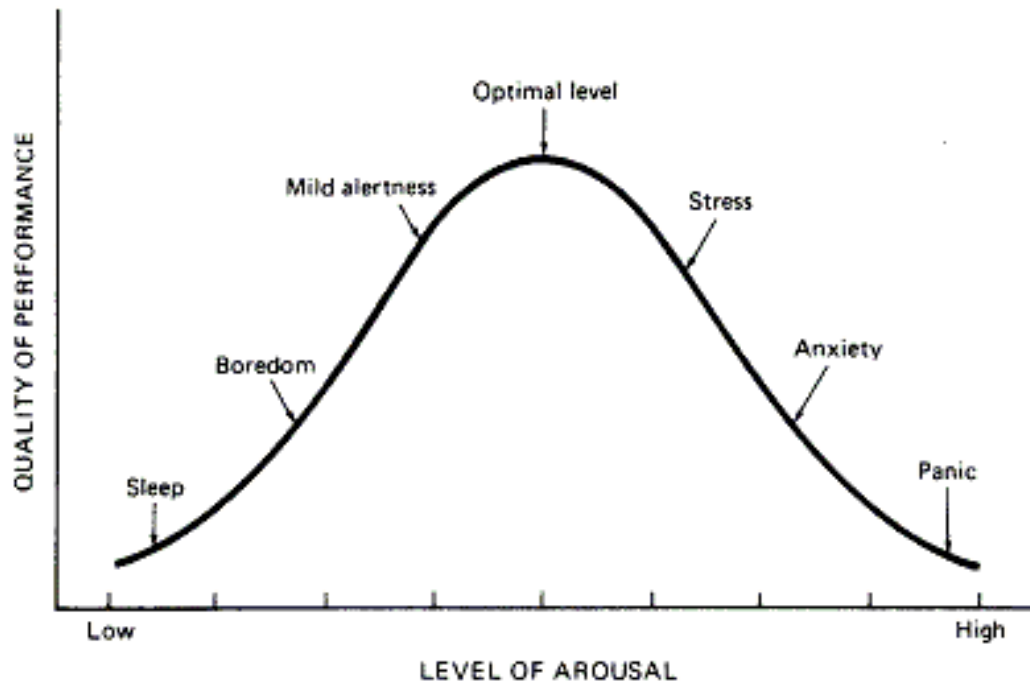
Get Involved

Volunteer <http://www.tcd.ie/Community/>

Get involved in **social events**:

- Get involved in a society | <http://www.trinitysocieties.ie/>
- Join the gym | <http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/>
- Join one of the 50 sports clubs | <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

web: <http://student-learning.tcd.ie> | **email:** student.learning@tcd.ie

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**



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**?

Student Learning Development



Thank you for your time

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



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Student Learning Development (SLD) website. The header features the SLD logo and a navigation menu with links to Home, Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Staff, and About. Below the header, a large banner image of an open book is accompanied by the text: "Student Learning Development offers advice, resources, individual consultations, workshops and much more to help you improve your academic performance and reach your potential." To the right of the banner is a section for "Upcoming Events" listing events for Monday, February 22 (4:00pm Presentation Skills), Thursday, February 25 (1:00pm Critical Writing (Repe), and Thursday, March 4 (4:00pm Thesis Writing). Below the banner, there are three columns for Undergraduates, Postgraduates, and Staff, each with a list of links to various resources. On the right side, there is a "What do you most need help with?" section with checkboxes for Writing, Exams, Self-Management, and Presentations, and a "Vote" button. At the bottom, there are four small boxes: "Getting Published" (Try our podcast on getting papers published), "Exams" (Try our online workshop), "Exams" (Try our interactive video on Exam Stress), and "Get Organised" (Improve your self-management skills). The footer includes a "Sitemap" link, a "Student Learning Development (Email)" link, and a note that the page was last updated on 22 January 2010.

SLD 
Student Learning Development

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Upcoming Events

Monday, February 22
4:00pm [Presentation Skills](#)

Thursday, February 25
1:00pm [Critical Writing \(Repe](#)

Thursday, March 4
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[Google Calendar](#)

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