PhD in a Week

PGR Development Activities for New Computer Science PhDs

PhD in a Week is an intensive five-day programme which will be highly interactive and centred around a variety of problem-based learning activities for scenarios of doing a PhD: from problem identification to library research to thesis submission. The overall focus of the programme is to encourage the practice of reflective professional development throughout a research career. This is an extended version of the compulsory PhD workshop Introduction to Research Essentials.

You will also learn about the principles of Dynamic Development, a new approach to Researcher Development which tries to move away from a “pick-a-skill-off-a-list” approach towards a reflective approach requiring you to compare your ‘situational awareness’ (understanding what is expected of PhD researchers in common situations, like conferences and vivas) with your ‘dispositional awareness’ (an understanding of current motivations and skills through self-reflection and personality tests like DISC, Meyers-Briggs or Belbin). Different people require different strategies to be successful in common PhD scenarios. For example, ‘introverts’ may have different development goals than ‘extroverts’ in presenting in front of 100 people. A full awareness of the situations of life as a PhD coupled with self-awareness of your personal strengths and challenges allows you to design a more personalised professional development plan.

PhD in a Week centres around teams of 6-8 researchers assigned a project topic on Day One. Topics will be developed around common themes in current Computer Science research. Teams will be required to research a topic, conduct online searches, write a two page proposal/literature review, meet with a (mock) Supervisor, submit results to a conference, publish a ‘journal’ paper, write a thesis and answer typical viva questions to ‘pass’. Our goal is to set up ‘typical’ scenarios and then de-brief reactions to them to help plan ‘real-world’ development throughout your PhD.

We will also focus on the full range of University expectations of PhD researchers, from eProg quarterly planning to options for thesis submission. We will also highlight the wide range of support for PhDs across the University, including the critical focus on Wellbeing, which will be embedded throughout the programme.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES
Through this programme, you will gain experience of:

- Practical aspects of a PhD degree through the experience of a simulation exercise;
- Time management and project management within a research project;
- Defining research objectives and delivering maximum impact and originality in a PhD thesis;
- Working with a supervisor: establishing roles and responsibilities and planning good meetings
- The range of development opportunities available at Manchester for PhDs;
- The ethical requirements for research and developing research integrity.
- Conducting a literature search and reviewing literature critically and effectively
- Better understand the writing process and the ways to make the task easier;
- The importance of publishing: peer review, editors, and journals;
- Goals of a good scientific research poster, including poster design and layout
- Preparing for a conference and tips for networking.
- How to define the content of the scientific research presentations
- How to increase the impact of your presentation with visual aids
- Developing a lifelong practice of reflective professional development;

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