

## PGR Tips on finishing your doctorate

The end of your doctorate is a balancing act of finishing off your research, [writing your thesis](#), [preparing for your viva](#), writing to [publish your findings](#) and probably looking for employment. How do you juggle these aspects and what do you prioritise? There are no right answers to these questions as they will depend on your discipline of research and your and your supervisors' working styles. Here are some tips to consider:

### Plan the end of your doctorate

If you have a deadline to submit by or start a new job by, work backwards filling in the time you still have left. If you haven't, consider setting yourself a deadline as tasks tend to fill time allocated to them. What needs arranging in advance? How long will writing each chapter roughly take you? How long will review by your supervisors take?

### Liase with your supervisors

How do your supervisors like to work? Will they want to review your outputs regularly or do they want to see drafts that are very close to the finished product? Much as you will have a good idea of their preferences, it is probably advisable to discuss how you will work together in this important final phase and what you each expect from each other.

### Avoid perfectionism

This goes for deciding when your research is considered ready for writing up and as you are writing. Research is never finished: there are always more questions to answer. Writing can always be polished and improved on. You need to ask yourself (and your supervisors); 'is this good enough to pass?'

### Take time to consider your next career step

In this move busy time it can be tempting to keep your head down and not think about your next move. You may already have a career path in mind and determined what your next step will be. Alternatively, you may end up going down the path of least resistance which may not necessarily be the one you would have chosen if you had spent time thinking about what you want out of your career and what your strengths are.

### Prioritise

How you prioritise different aspects of this final phase depends to some extent on your next career step. If you are staying in academia your published output will be of more importance than for most other career paths. This may lead you to carry on with your research until it is at a publishable standard, rather than fit-for-submission. The balance will also be influenced by your research discipline and your supervisors' guidance.

### Make sure you do finish!

It can be very tempting to put off finishing your thesis if you have started new employment or life leads you down a different path such as having children. This is especially true if obtaining your doctorate does not seem hugely pertinent to your current situation. However, consider that you have got this far and you may well regret it if you don't see it through now.