

Handout 2 - the 'Speed PhD'

'The Speed PhD' is a 2-day training course for first year research students, which was originally designed and implemented at Manchester University, but is now used at various institutions across the UK (see <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/dop/76.html>). This interactive, introductory course is based on the principles of experiential learning. It combines short skills training sessions (for example, on research ethics, university review processes, and the supervisory relationship) with a research degree simulation exercise in which students work together in small groups to plan a project, produce a short thesis-style document, and undergo a viva. Throughout the process, the course tutors act as supervisors to provide advice and guidance to the groups. Although students need to invest a relatively large amount of time to attend the course, participants not only acquire a better understanding of the research degree process, but they also develop key skills in areas such as information retrieval, project management, team-working, communication, and career-management.