



Doctoral Research Handbook 2022 UCL Anthropology

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PhD Writing Retreat, Autumn 2019.



Introduction

This brief handbook is intended to help give an overview of what your PhD in Anthropology may look like. It is set out into several different stages of a typical doctoral journey. For each stage, there are some brief comments, tips, and anticipations of common difficulties. In places, the handbook directs you to the UCL website which can advise you on that particular aspect of your work.

The handbook is not going to tell you everything you need to know. It's an entry point into the issues you may face, and give you an idea of where you may go to address them. For some issues, you will find the answers online, for others from your supervisor, for others from your research peers, and for many issues you will provide the answers yourself. Every doctoral research undertaking is different, and the journey you take depends most of all upon you and your project, and to a certain

extent your supervisors. This handbook is written to broadly help anthropology doctoral researchers, but it is a broad discipline, and the different sections may apply more to some researchers than others. Large parts of the handbook talk about ethnographic fieldwork, but many anthropologists do not undertake ethnographic fieldwork at all. You may be doing laboratory work, working in archives, or spreading your fieldwork into phases.

There are plenty of sources on UCL's websites where you can find the formal rules and regulations about PhDs, especially the website of the UCL Doctoral School, the UCL Academic Manual, and the UCL Anthropology Department. Those will provide you with the most up-to-date and specific guidance on what is officially expected. There are also other documents which are associated with this one. We are writing a set of notes for

supervisors about different stages, and also compiling some selected quotations of past PhDs' advice into a Little Purple Book.

What it Means to be a Doctoral Researcher

A PhD is a part of the journey from being a student who learns, to a professional who both learns and produces new knowledge through research and teaching. During your PhD programme, you should develop various core skills:

- The skill of overviewing a field of research and identifying the opportunities for new knowledge and critique: this will be developed in your upgrading document at the end of the MPhil year.
- The production of new data: this will be during your fieldwork or research phase, and will be a very personal phase of the PhD.
- Academic argument: you will develop the skill of a cogent academic argument by developing written pieces to be discussed with your supervisor(s). You will also present some of this work in writing seminars and groups.
- Constructive criticism: you will learn this skill by engaging with other peoples' works in the departmental research seminars and writing seminars. An anthropologist does not only help produce their own new ideas, but helps to catalyse their peers' work. New knowledge does not only come from individual research, but from mutual learning.
- Scholarship: good scholarship is developed by a thorough understanding of the history of ideas and intellectual background of a subject. You will develop this in your library and archival research, and discussing the implications with staff.
- Wellbeing: during the PhD, you are also responsible for maintaining your own health, wellbeing and happiness. You will learn a sense of independence as a researcher, and develop ways of working and relationships which help you to thrive.
- Fulfilment of regulations: UCL sets out a range of milestones and requirements to help it keep track of good doctoral work and progress, mostly involving digital paperwork. Fulfilling regulations is not the same thing as your research progress and thinking, but nonetheless, as in any role, it is your responsibility to make sure you do fulfil all official requirements.
- Vocational development: you should during your doctorate develop an understanding of what you wish to do as a doctor of anthropology. This can mean experience in teaching, presenting, collaborating, and getting to know about the wide range of areas where anthropologists work. You can develop this through assisting in teaching, conferences, and through professional seminars. You should also draw on the courses and training offered by UCL's Arena Centre.
- Research dissemination: people should know about your work. This is undertaken through attending conferences, working on minor publications and (later) on peer-reviewed publications.

Proposing a PhD Project (Year -1)

The doctoral research journey actually begins before your official start at UCL. We have therefore included an entire section on what you can do in advance of actually being at UCL. If you have already started your programme, then feel free to congratulate yourself on all you have already achieved, and turn to the next section!

To apply for a PhD in anthropology at UCL, you need to think of a few specific things.

Aims

- You need to develop a proposal for research which will demonstrate a contribution to knowledge. This is different from previous dissertations at Bachelors and Masters level, which were more about using existing theories to account for research; a PhD proposal generally indicates a new area of work or a gap in existing understanding.
- The scope of the project should equate to approximately 3-4 years of work, and indicate that you have a realistic idea of how it is possible to address the area during this timeframe.
- You should ideally have a good idea of why UCL is a good place to host your work, and why it is the right academic environment for your project. Most good PhD proposals show an awareness of the expertise of the department, its research, publications, events and staff.
- You should ideally approach possible supervisors, both at UCL and other departments, and checking that they are the kind of person who is able to support and help you develop your specific area of research. Knowing the kinds of work and research that your supervisors do, and that it is an approach which strikes chords with you, is a good sign.
- You should clarify the relationship with potential supervisors. Many academics will meet and advise you, because they wish to help any anthropologist researching in their area, but this does not always mean they can commit to supervising for four years. At UCL Anthropology, starting in 2022, we are instituting a system where supervisors can register when they are just "mentoring" - only advising - and when they have moved to "supporting" your work - which means they can commit to supervising it.
- You need to be confident you have an academic background to do this sort of project, and can put in place any skills or expertise you do not yet have.

Regulations and Requirements

Most applications include:

- A project proposal (this can vary from 2 to a dozen pages). A good project proposal shows the need for new knowledge, and that the project is speaking to existing anthropological work, and that UCL is a good home for the work.
- Your CV. Your CV is an indication that you have academically prepared yourself for this kind of research. You do not need to have done everything, but the CV often makes sense as a journey towards this topic. Most CVs will show that any skills which you do not yet have, you will be able to put together or learn during your first year.
- A clear and realistic plan for funding. You should show you are able to fund your research and fees for three or four years. The three main sources are: from an award-granting body or research council; by working (and

usually researching part-time); and through private resources. In general, having funding for only one year and planning to apply for funding during that year is not considered a realistic plan, but a risk.

- Two referees. Ideally, at least one of these should be an academic reference, since this is testament to your capacities as a researcher, analyst, and thinker.
- We pay attention to past academic record. We look for at least 2:1 degrees, ideally firsts, and a first or very high 2:1 in a past dissertation.

The applications process pays attention to potential supervisors' impressions of the proposal. This way, the department ensures each project will be properly supported by experts in that area.

It is possible to apply without nominating a potential supervisor. In this instance, the application is forwarded to one of the sub-sections or research groups in the department. However, this does indicate that an applicant may not have looked into the range of research at UCL, the sorts of things our researchers and PhDs are currently doing, and the ideas and arguments they are working with.

If you are not offered a place, it is not always because you or the PhD proposal is not good enough. Often, we find that some staff or research groups are over-subscribed with supervisees, and we cannot support a project. At other times we recognise its anthropological value but think it might be better in a different university, and could be better supported somewhere else in the wider anthropological community. We may also feel that you need to develop academically in certain areas first in order to prepare yourself for a PhD (for example, by

spending a year on a particular Masters programme to develop your broad knowledge of the field you are proposing working in).

It can take some weeks to process and check your application, consult potential supervisors, and come back to you with an offer. If in doubt about what is happening, you can check with the Postgraduate Research Administrator in the anthropology department.

Common Issues

As with developing any worthwhile new research, there can be moments which feel like 'Catch 22', when it is sometimes not clear what to do next. Specifically, some applicants ask whether to first write a proposal, or to find out about supervisors and existing anthropological work, or to fill in the application form or to look for funding. The answer is that all of these things can develop in parallel. There is a common sequence, but in practice the different parts overlap:

Developing project
 => Linking with supervisor(s)
 => Applying for a place
 => Applying for funding
 => Starting research

Which comes first, funding or PhD place? In the UK, getting an offer of a PhD place, and receiving funding, are separate issues, unlike in some universities. You should ideally first get an offer of a place at one or more universities, and then you seek funding for that place. However, because there is so much to do, and the documents for funding and applying can be similar, sometimes people only manage to put together their research proposal

properly when the funding deadline is imminent, and so the application for a UCL place arrives at pretty much the same time as the funding application goes in. Administratively, this is not ideal for UCL because we then find ourselves under pressure to evaluate and process your application in time to confirm to the funding body that you have an official offer, and we cannot rush that process. For this reason, UCL runs its main internal funding scheme (the GRS/ORS) with a deadline a little earlier than the main Government schemes, around Christmas. If you meet that deadline for the UCL scheme, then your application for a place will already be underway by the time of the main funding schemes' deadlines, which are later in January or February. When deadlines are tight, there are no guarantees but the anthropology office does what it can to support supervisors and applicants.

Supervisor(s)? The right supervisor is at least as important as the department you are in. Most of your project is primarily driven forwards by you yourself, but a supervisor can especially make a difference at bottlenecks or moments of crisis; they can also help give your project structure. Finding a supervisor is therefore more about someone who is intellectually on the same page as you, and who you can relate to; not necessarily someone who is the "top person in the field". You are after all going to make yourself a global expert on your own unique area of research. To find a supervisor, you can consider the literature - what books, papers and work has inspired you? Read what someone writes - would you write in the same vein, would you draw on similar literature and a similar canon of ideas? You do not necessarily need someone who is an expert on every angle of your project,

for example you may need someone who knows the theory, but has no knowledge of the region of the world where you are working; or, you may need a regional expert, and you yourself will develop your own theoretical approaches. Sometimes a project needs a 'team' - one supervisor who knows your fieldsite, another who knows about, for example, film, or religious ritual.

Funding? It is important that you have some confidence in your ability to support yourself during the PhD. Anthropology PhDs receive funding from a range of sources, depending on the specific area of research, and nearly half of our PhDs do have funding. The other half combine personal



funding, and people working and studying part-time. There are also a number of people who obtain PhD offers, but are unable to take them up because they do not manage to find funding, and may defer their offer for one or two years. It is possible to start your PhD and apply for funding again during your first year, before you upgrade from MPhil to PhD, but there is a risk of not winning funding.

PhD Proposal? Your PhD proposal may emerge very quickly, fully-formed in your mind with the different elements working together; or you may find yourself working on it for months or even years. A typical proposal working document comprises 2-12 pages, which are often condensed for the purposes of application forms. The proposal does not deliver answers or a formed argument, rather it outlines a space of possibility where you can see research needs to be conducted. It demonstrates your relative familiarity

with the literature of the field you are working in and the issues other

Anthropology Day, the British Museum, 2019

anthropologists have raised, but does not attempt a complete literature review. Potential supervisors will pay attention to the ideas and some of the references, to be certain that they are familiar with the train of thought.

A good PhD proposal is also anthropological, in the sense that it shows a contribution to anthropological knowledge specifically, and it shows that you are aware of why and how your work may make a contribution. While a social anthropology proposal might observe that a cultural phenomenon needs to be observed, that is something which could also simply be a piece of journalism. A better proposal might identify a phenomenon or field site, and also specify an argument, concept, or set of

anthropological interpretations which will be examined during the work. For example "I will research identity in community X" is an ethnographic proposal, but "I will research Y's theory of identity through working with people in X" is more a social anthropological one.

Mentoring and Supporting a Proposal

As mentioned above, from 2022 we have a system to help clarify your conversations with prospective supervisors. If an academic say they will help "mentor" your work, it means they can advise, meeting once or twice or more; if they say they are "supporting" it, that means they feel it has arrived at a stage where they would be able to supervise your work and advise on it, and will support making an offer of a place on the programme.

Funding

Your PhD will need three or four years of funding, and you need to be able to show when you apply that you have a reliable source of funding. The three main ways in which the work is supported are by a funding award (such as a UK research council), by part-time work, or by private resources.

Funding Sources

Anthropology is broad, and we draw on a wide range of sources. Some disciplines have all of their PhDs funded by one Government Research Council, but we often have small numbers of people each funded by a different body.

Make sure you start your funding application in very good time, and check early all the paperwork, references, statements of support,

degree transcripts, and other elements required.

The best ways to find out about funding are by talking with prospective supervisors, through the anthropology department website, and through UCL's central pages for funding. You will find there a range of resources, some general, some with specific criteria such as citizenship or topic:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/scholarships/funding-students-postgraduate-research-courses>

Common sources of funding:

- GRS/ ORS: UCL's own doctoral research awards, which generally have the earliest research deadline. In 2022, the part-funded ORS is being phased out, and the money diverted to more fully-funded GRS places.
- ESRC/ UBEL Doctoral Partnership (DTP): the UK's funding body for normal social science work.
- AHRC/ LAHP DTP: Funding for Arts and Humanities, projects submitted here often have an artistic, design or material culture angle.
- London NERC DTP: Funding for Environmental Science and related areas, for more scientific and environmental projects.
- BBSRC: Biological Sciences funding, worth considering for Biological Anthropology work.
- Soc-B CDT: a UCL Centre of Doctoral Training, relevant for some BioSocial projects.
- Wellcome Trust: A charitable trust which funds medical-related research, worth considering for medical anthropology and related areas. Most Wellcome funding is for three years not four. Unfortunately in 2022, we believe the Wellcome is withdrawing from PhD funding, but it is always worth checking.

- Leverhulme Trust: a charitable scheme funding annual Doctoral Research Scholarships.
- Wolfson Awards: A UCL scholarship scheme for work relating to History, Literature or Languages.
- Mary Douglas Scholarships: a scholarship scheme specific to our department, which may not run each year, depending on the benefactor. If it is running, the deadline is typically in the Spring, after key Government schemes have closed.
- Collaborative Awards: if your research envisages a collaboration between the university and another institution, check for collaborative awards. Eg. a collaborative student may have one supervisor at UCL, and another in a company or Government body. Both ESRC and AHRC have collaborative schemes. Deadlines are typically earlier than standard schemes, and applications take some organisation because all the institutions involved have to liaise and sign off on the applications.
- The ESRC also has specific awards for Quantitative Projects (AQM awards, which may be of interest to some Biological Anthropology or Digital projects using quantitative data); and Interdisciplinary Awards (ie. genuinely cross-disciplinary work, supervised by people in different departments).
- National Scholarship Schemes: we often have students from across the world funded by their own Governments on national schemes.

As well as these large funding schemes for individual projects, some PhDs are funded through larger research projects. If a member of staff wins a large grant, it may include one or more PhD places, and these are generally advertised on our website and

elsewhere as funding for specific kinds of research work.

There are also at times awards available from Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) at UCL. So whereas a DTP (above) means a large scheme which will fund individual PhDs, a CDT is a collaborative research centre across different departments, which funds a specific area of research:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/research-degrees/centres-doctoral-training-cdts>

Broadening Participation at UCL

We are committed as a department to broadening participation and diversity, and aware that structural and internal difficulties exist which present barriers to this and which we as an institution have to address. For example, London is approximately 40% Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME), and the UK is approximately 15% BAME, but our department does not yet reflect this. We have had initiatives to broaden diversity and representation for many years at Staff, Postgraduate, and Undergraduate levels. These include specific funding sources, outreach, and compulsory anti-bias training. However, they have not yet been what we would regard as successful. This is clearly a journey, and to quote the advice of one of our BAME graduates, we should “be the change we want to see”; until thankfully it is no longer necessary.

Structural inequalities often manifest themselves in multiple small issues. One well-established PhD candidate may navigate the system easily, while another less familiar with the system may find it more difficult. For example, if an offer is not forthcoming from one supervisor, a candidate from a prestigious university may have more

confidence to approach other supervisors, whereas a candidate who is less familiar with the university may not know how to do that. A candidate with private funding may be able to keep their proposal going for longer until they obtain funding, whereas a candidate who is working to support their own family will not be able to do that. For these reasons, good candidates and projects can be held back because of many small obstacles rather than one major one. These issues can be experienced as personal stress.

If it is not clear how to proceed with getting a project off the ground, then we do try to help people navigate around the potential obstacles. If we feel that this is a good candidate academically, a good project, and one which we can supervise well, then we do try to assist and advise you on whatever possibilities we are aware of to bring your research forwards. People whom you can consult include your (prospective) supervisor in the first instance, but also the Graduate Tutor, the PGR Administrator, the UCL Doctoral School, and existing

anthropology PhDs. At the present time,

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there are good projects by good candidates which are not getting underway, and we are doing what we can to support anthropological work.

The MPhil Year (Y1)

Although you might be just officially starting your PhD, you have already done a great deal of work in shaping, honing and proposing your research. A PhD is a journey, and you have already passed the first milestone. Congratulations!

During year one, you are registered as an MPhil until you upgrade with your full proposal and become a full PhD.

Aims

During your first year:

- You will set out a much more developed research proposal in your upgrading document (covered in more detail in the following section).
- You will develop a much more extensive knowledge of the academic background to your grasp of the relevant literature and existing work.
- You will build a much more defined, practical proposal for how you are going to go about the research.
- You will develop a wider awareness of broad approaches, tools and ways of gathering, building and structuring data.
- You will think more specifically about the intellectual thread of your work: how existing work connects to your research questions, how those questions can be addressed by research data, how data can be produced, how that data can lead to a specific thesis structure (eg. chapters), and how that document's structure may advance a coherent argument which speaks to the questions.
- Your main supervisor and yourself will put in place a proper supervisory 'team', including a second supervisor



research topic, and a comprehensive

if you do not already have one.

- You will develop peer-connections, among other researchers in the department, who are going through PhDs and research themselves alongside you.
- You will develop an initial awareness of the people who know about your field and area of research, both inside UCL and in the wider anthropological community.

Your first meetings with your supervisor are important for setting the tone in terms of how your work will be supported through the four years. You should develop an idea of a schedule to meet regularly, and talk about what you will need for the research and how you are going to put it in place. UCL guidelines specify that researchers should meet with their supervisors at least monthly. Some supervisors meet more often, and some less. Often, meetings are more frequent during the MPhil year, less during data collection, more again during early writing, and less frequent once writing the thesis is underway.

Your UCL Research Log Book can be a good resource to use to talk through what you need to put in place: for example, language skills, research methods, analytical resources, and organisational, writing or presentational skills.

The first year is supported by a dedicated seminar which runs weekly during Term Time, the **Research, Design and Presentation Seminar (Res Des Pres)**. The first term of this seminar will bring you through various research skills (eg. fieldwork). For Biological Anthropology students, there may be a dedicated work-in-progress seminar instead of ResDesPres, organised by their particular research group (ie. The Human Evolutionary Ecology Group

HEEG, or the Human Ecology Research Group HERG). It is important, if you are not attending the seminar, that you find ways to build connections with your peers. You can talk with your Supervisor (in the first instance), the Graduate Tutor, or the Head of the Biological Anthropology section if you feel you need to build better peer connections.

The **Research Methods seminar** runs for postgraduates, PhDs and Masters students, through the first term. Each week covers a different area, and you should identify which kinds of skills are relevant to your work. You should also find ways to build other skills necessary for your fieldwork (eg. language learning, specific statistical methods), and look at the 'Arena' courses available to you.

You should identify any taught courses or modules and seminars which may be of interest to you. MPhils are able to "audit" lectures and courses, with the permission of the lecturer: in other words, they can attend a lecture course without having to sit the assessment.

You should attend at least one of the **Departmental Seminar Series**. The series include the Social Anthropology Seminar; Material, Visual and Digital Culture Seminar; Medical Anthropology Seminar; Biological Anthropology Seminar (evolutionary, primate and paleo anthropology) and/or HERG (Human Ecology Research Group).

If you do not already have a second supervisor, you should talk with your primary supervisor about this and may need to approach one. Often, supervisors' skills complement one another (for example, a first supervisor may know the theory of your area, while the second may know about the region

or area of research data). Some doctoral researchers may depend on only one supervisor, while others draw on advice from several people, but a second supervisor is an important advisor or back-up. Second supervisors can become particularly important later on, when you produce thesis chapters and a complete draft, because there is a lot of material for one supervisor to go through. Second supervisors are important at 'bottleneck' moments, since they can read drafts, sign forms, or advise at crucial moments if your first supervisor is particularly busy or unavailable.

Regulations and Requirements

- Log Book
- Je-S Record (for UK-funded students)

Every PhD has an online Log Book. You should keep this up to date with short notes about your progress, for example meetings with supervisors and presentations. The log book is one of the ways in which UCL knows your academic progress, and can keep a measure of your PhD work. It is useful earlier in the research for purposes of planning what you need to do and setting out goals; and it is useful later on as an official record of what has happened. If you keep a record of any achievements as well as difficulties, then your overall track and experience is clear. (For example, during Covid-19, the research log was the place where the need to suspend fieldwork was recorded, providing evidence for extensions for some researchers).

If you have UK Government funding, you will also have an online record of your work and the stages of your progress on their system, which is called Je-S. Some international funding bodies may also have similar systems. If you

have one, you can update your Je-S record with the assistance of the Departmental PGR Administrator.

Common Issues

- Skills learning & Language Learning.
- Expectations and Capacities.
- Work Space and Routines.
- Funding.

Because every doctoral project is different, your project may require specific skills which you will need to put in place yourself. You need to check out the range of courses available across UCL to you early, in case you need to register on courses.

Learning a specific language is a common issue. UCL does have language laboratories with a range of standard recorded courses. There are some courses and resources available at SOAS for African and Asian languages, and at SSEES for central and eastern European languages. Some researchers also make arrangements for private meetings or language-learning through conversations; London is a polyglot city. A common course of action is for a researcher to find a way to put in place a combination of some kind of formal learning (eg. using books, language lab, or a course), which will get you to a certain level, and combine this with more informal connections or personal meetings. The department does not have funds available for skills-learning. This of course means that



**Postgraduate
Ethnographic Film
Course, 2019**

some researchers find they can learn a language almost for free (eg. Spanish), while others will have to fund it themselves (eg. Amazonian languages). The ESRC doctoral fellowships do include funds for languages, and if you are funded by a different body, you should check if they provide funding.

Your first year is likely to involve experience of a tension between expectations and capacities. In some circles and situations, you may feel there is an expectation that you are already to a certain degree an expert in your field, the literature, the issues, and the communities involved. At other times, you will feel unable to fulfil this expectation, because you are still in the process of building your project as you go along. This tension is a normal part of the first year.

Some elements of the first year are quite open and exploratory, while others are

more focussed and defined. Commonly, a researcher may spend a part of their year reading and researching quite widely, with an open mind about what their research could be about and what interests them most. At the same time, especially as the upgrading approaches, a researcher builds particular hypotheses, questions, and an in-depth knowledge of concepts and issues specific to their work. You should feel comfortable and that your work is legitimate and productive in both of these ways, when exploring anthropology, and when focussing.

The department does not yet have adequate space for all PhD researchers to have a desk each. It is important to develop a work routine, to set aside time and space where you can devote yourself to your work. When it comes to individual desks, we also must prioritise the post-fieldwork thesis-writing students, which means that the desks

for MPhils are hot-desks and must be shared. The longer-term aim of the department is to have three writing rooms, one for each of the doctoral cohorts (equivalent of Year 1 pre-fieldwork, Year 3 Writing up Fieldwork, and Year 4 Pre-submission).

At the time of writing (August 2020) the department has been unusually successful in winning research funding for major projects, and each such project stipulates as a condition of the funding that it should have research space. This has meant we have lost one PhD room to research projects. In 2020-21 we are also severely limited by social distancing due to Covid-19, so rooms which previously housed 17 desks for doctoral researchers can now only accommodate approximately 4 safely-distanced desk spaces each.

You should explore possibilities for writing spaces: the departmental PhD rooms, the UCL doctoral school's spaces (which can be booked in advance), and local libraries. As well as UCL's libraries, there is the University of London Library in Senate House, the RAL Library at the back of the British Museum, and the British Library.

If you plan to work at home, you should create a structure of regular anthropological contacts to support your work through the weeks. Create an academic environment for yourself. For example, this can include the seminars, supervisor meetings, online meetings for coffee with other PhDs, and Research & Reading Groups (see the section at the end of the Handbook on Being a Member of the Department).

Funding issues have been covered in the first section. Some students apply for official funding during their MPhil. It is important however that you have a

reliable Plan B, and do not depend on winning an award, because while we do win several such awards every year, the competition is very stiff.

Suggestions

- Build peer groups
- Attend a conference
- Attend seminar series
- Gain a sense of your wider academic environment

The people you meet and build connections with in your first year are going to be valuable later on. These are the people whose work will progress in parallel with your own. It is important to support peers, engage in dialogue about work, and address common issues. Peer groups become particularly important later on during thesis writing, and also can be people with whom you maintain connections after completing the PhD in the wider anthropological community.

Attend a conference. You will witness the kinds of work which doctoral researchers are writing and presenting after their fieldwork, and get a sense of what fieldwork is going to produce for you. You will meet with people working in similar areas and on similar themes.

By regularly attending at least one of the seminar series in the department, you will build connections in UCL's academic environment, and build links with lecturers and researchers beyond your supervisors.

You are not only doing your own individual piece of research, supported by your supervisors. You are now also a part of a bigger intellectual

environment, an environment which you are helping to form. This includes other anthropologists at UCL, in London, the UK and internationally. Your work is going to make a difference within this wider environment. Remember you are both 'fitting in' to anthropology, and



creating the discipline afresh.

*Making Workshops, 2018:
Basket-weaving
and Woodcarving.*

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Upgrading and Preparing for Fieldwork (End of Y1)

The main output of your first year's work is your Upgrading, a full proposal for your research project. The upgrading is examined by a departmental panel organised by your supervisor, and normally chaired by your second supervisor. The upgrading panel will try to test your proposal for the PhD from several angles (academic preparedness, feasibility, etc).

In anthropology, the upgrading is about particular questions:

- Does it look as if this research project will result in a good quality PhD thesis within the four years, and that this candidate can deliver that as things stand?
- Is the project, and candidate, ready and prepared to proceed to fieldwork (or their data-gathering stage)?
- Are there areas or issues which the panel can help the candidate address, which will improve the work? Are there things the panel thinks the candidate could do now, before fieldwork, which will significantly help their work when they return from data-gathering in Year 3?

Aims

- By upgrading, you will show that you can **frame a research problem**, outlining an issue in existing anthropological knowledge which should be explored.
- You will show that you have developed a **breadth of knowledge** about the intellectual territory you are working in: the history of ideas, relevant debates, thinkers, and important studies.
- You will develop a better **idea of how to gather data** which can address the issue or issues in hand.

- You will show that you have some **flexibility and adaptability**, and are able to think on the spot and adjust to the unpredictabilities of data-gathering and/or ethnography.
- You will experience an **upgrading panel**, which can resemble what your final viva will be like. You will gain experience of having your work and proposals evaluated by a panel of experts.

Regulations and Requirements

- Before proceeding to fieldwork, you need to have submitted and achieved: **a UCL Data Protection Registration and Number; Ethical Approval and a Risk Assessment**. All UCL research goes through these processes. They are handled by the Department's Ethics & Risk Committee. All details, paperwork, and ways of submitting forms can be found on the relevant Moodle Page, which is called **ETHRISK**.
- The official UCL regulations about upgradings can be found by reading UCL's Upgrading Guidelines <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/file/1419>>, on the doctoral school site <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/upgrade>>, and in the Academic Manual Chapter 5 Page 9 <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-5-research-degrees-framework>>. In practice, the Anthropology Department has some jurisdiction over the constitution of the upgrading panel and its outcomes.
- There are three specified official outcomes of the upgrading: 1. Pass, 2. Not passed, with a new date for a second viva, or 3. Not passed yet, more work is required but not a second viva.

- UCL specifies that an upgrading can happen between 9 and 18 months after the beginning of your research as a full-time MPhil (or, 15-30 months for part-time). In practice, there is some flexibility around this window for certain projects, but the official decisions are made and forms registered within this time frame.
- The upgrading format is largely organised by subsections in the department (eg. Biological Anthropology, Medical Anthropology etc.). Most upgradings comprise of three members of staff and are chaired by the second supervisor. Occasionally, the panel comprises of two members of staff.
- For fieldwork abroad, UCL's ethics requires that researchers have some kind of **local access or connection point**. For some projects (eg. some tightly-bounded communities), this may mean explicit local approval to do research. For others, it may only mean making contact with a university or academic in the region.
- Projects with vulnerable communities, such as in health environments, need extra attention to ethics, and ethical approval for these should be started very early, as soon as your PhD begins.
- Ethnographers should attend the **Pre-fieldwork Workshop**, which happens around the end of the Spring Term or beginning of the Summer Term, and is organised by post-fieldwork doctoral researchers for you.

What Does an Anthropology Upgrading Look Like?

There is some helpful information in UCL's Upgrading Guidelines <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/file/1419>>, but also each upgrading document can vary according to the kind of field you are working in. You should read one or two good

upgradings (you should do this as a part of the Res Des Pres Bootcamp Seminar), to familiarise yourself with everything you should include.

A Soc Anth, Med Anth, or Material Visual Digital culture upgrading might include, for example:

- A section which introduces the scope and significance of your work.
- Literature review.
- Anthropological issue or issues, phrased as hypotheses, questions or problem statements. (this is evidently a key focus; it can also comprise in threads which run through the document, but does need to be clearly-expressed)
- A methods section including proposed field site(s), timetable, personal identity in the field, gatekeepers and entry points, risk and wellbeing, ethnographic questions (which are different from anthropological questions)
- Consideration of ethics and GDPR
- A consideration of the corpus of data you plan to produce through fieldwork, eg. numbers, topic guides, use of video, recording. Your outline of data may anticipate an idea of a possible structure for your thesis, chapter by chapter, and show how your data will lead to anthropological thinking and argument relevant to your key issue(s).
- A correctly set-out bibliography of all references mentioned.

In practice, these kinds of elements may not be discrete sections, but may be contained under different headings or may overlap. For example, your literature review may be a part of the section outlining your research question, or could be separate.

Here is an alternative brief outline suggested by a Biological Anthropology Lecturer of what might be included in an upgrading in her field:

- Literature review
- Identify Research Issue, formulate specific Research Questions
- Set out methodology and justify how the methods will collect the data required to answer those

minimum set that will deliver the PhD and how that minimum set will be achieved

- Health & Safety; Ethics; Data Protection etc
- Provisional/ highly preliminary potential thesis chapter plan
- Often, Bio Anth PhDs involve a pilot study. For example, a field visit and a report showing the necessary study site/ logistics/ networks / permissions etc have



*The PhD Pre-Fieldwork Event, 2019.
Post-fieldwork PhD ethnographers brief MPhils about their experiences in the field.*

RQs

- Study site; sample
- Schedule
- Contingency plans – if everything that can go wrong does go wrong, what's the

been established, data collection methods trialled, initial methods of analysis trialled.

Common Issues

Upgrading is a significant milestone in the PhD. It should give you a lot of confidence and achievement, a clear sense of the progress you have made, as well as a clearer viewpoint on what progress you are about to achieve in fieldwork.

Pass, Develop, or Rewrite? While over half of upgradings pass on the first attempt, many require extra work or a second attempt.

Coherent Questions vs Coherent Argument? An upgrading is not a shaped argument, although it can involve hypothesising and does need to show clarity of thought. Writing the upgrading is itself a thinking and exploratory process.

There are a number of kinds of advice which people receive about their proposals:

- That the proposal is excellent and needs no further work.
- Suggestions for beefing up the breadth or depth of anthropological scholarship in the relevant area.
- Suggestions for how to make the methodology more practical or realistic. This is especially the case for ethnographic work, and for everyday life in the field.
- Specific ideas or requests as regards gathering and building data. Anthropological information does not just happen, nor necessarily automatically speak for itself, or connect to theory. A good fieldworker shows they are capable of spending an entire year, week by week, day by day, producing useful and potentially relevant information.
- Ways to be more explicit and open about the problems. A good anthropological researcher is theoretically and methodologically flexible, listens, is open to change,

anticipates potential shortcomings, and grows from constructive criticism.

- Ways to make the thread of the proposal more clear: how the research can proceed from an area for research, through realistic data-gathering, to shaping a set of data which is capable of addressing the issue or issues.

The upgrading document exists in tension, and often can strike a fine balance. On the one hand, you will feel a need to develop your expertise in the area, and show yourself committed to profound ideas and to a specific and certain course of action. On the other hand, this is an exploration of possibility and about an area which is not yet known, and therefore the upgrading needs to demonstrate an openness about a range of ideas. You may experience a sense of the radical contrast between these, pulling in opposite directions. That is a part of the process, and the art of the upgrading is often finding a sense of balance between them through the work of reading, writing, presenting and discussing.

Some research projects are not upgraded to PhD status, but remain as MPhils. Although it is not common, this does happen. If you are referred for a second viva, it means that you need, even more than most researchers, to take on board the specific recommendations of the panel, and this may require significant extra work or a personal re-orientation as to how you are going about your research.

At this stage of the work, people can become very invested in their projects. You may learn the art of maintaining a distance between yourself and the work. If the upgrading process leads you to conclude you need to change

field site, work in different ways, or develop unexpected fields of study, then this can be a sign of research which is genuinely exploratory and innovative. You may develop skills in how a researcher changes to adapt to a new research reality.

Suggestions

- Treat the upgrading panel as an advisory panel, whose business is

- Discuss the upgrading document repeatedly with your primary supervisor, and expect to draft and re-draft it. Gear your work throughout your first year towards the upgrading document.
- Ensure your upgrading document does justice to both the academic side of your project, and also to your methods and approaches.

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helping you to achieve excellence and to make your research world-class. Listen to their advice, but also, if they miss something, explain it carefully to them.

Fieldwork (Year 2)

Fieldwork and data collection is one of the most exciting parts of doctoral research. It can be tremendous fun and enjoyable, while many researchers also experience significant difficulties at some point.

Fieldwork and data collection methods obviously vary project by project, as does the timing. The traditional timetable for an anthropology PhD is a phase of twelve or more months of field-based data collection or ethnography, with many people also working in laboratories or with archives and collections. Increasingly, however, PhDs are structured into more phases of data collection. For many areas of research, there is also increasingly a sharing of findings with a target group to get their feedback. Do feel free to be creative and pragmatic with your proposals for data collection.

Some of this section of the handbook is written with **ethnography** in mind, since so many anthropology PhDs use ethnographic methods, so don't worry if not everything here applies to you.

Aims

- After fieldwork or data collection, you will have built a unique, world-class body of knowledge specific to yourself. This will take a tangible and material form (eg. field notes, images, recordings, data).
- Having this unique knowledge and set of perspectives will provide you with significant sense of achievement and confidence, as an academic and an anthropologist.
- You will have built a substantial amount of information sufficient and robust enough to write a book-length work on the topic. You will have

learned about all of the different aspects of human life which may be required for your thesis.

- Since this phase of an anthropology PhD often involves lone working, you will ensure you look after yourself and take measures to ensure your own wellbeing through the process.

Regulations and Requirements

- If you are working away from UCL for a substantial period, you need to register for **Study Leave** in order to pay half fees. Details are available here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/studying-away>
- You also need to **inform the Postgraduate Research Administrator** (Chiara) that you are going on fieldwork, and perhaps study leave. This applies whether or not you are going abroad.
- The main Anthropological Associations give detailed guidance on ethical behaviour. The ASA Ethical Guidelines can be found here: https://www.theasa.org/downloads/ethics/Ethical_guidelines.pdf. For American anthropologists, the AAA Code of Ethics can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/ethicscode.pdf>. The European Association (EASA) does not have a set of guidelines, which it leaves to individual national associations such as the ASA, but it does have an Ethics Network.
- So long as you have gone through UCL's Risk, Ethics and GDPR procedures, you are insured during your fieldwork. Some details can be found here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/go-abroad/study-abroad-and-erasmus/preparing-go-abroad/insurance/insurance>

- During any fieldwork away from UCL, you need to keep regular contact with your supervisor, to let them know you are OK, for example monthly.
- You should keep your supervisor and/or the PGR Administrator in the Department informed of your location if you are spending significant periods in a particular place (for example, if you head to a different field site for more than a couple of weeks - it is not necessary for brief trips). This has become important since Coronavirus, so that we know the location of most UCL researchers and can get in touch if you need assistance or advice.

Common Issues

- Gatekeeper and Entry Issues.
- Personal Risk During Ethnographic Fieldwork.
- Ethical Issues.
- Wellbeing and Mental Health.
- Interruptions to Fieldwork.
- Changes of Topic.

For by far the majority of ethnographers, fieldwork and data collection is a rich, exciting and fulfilling time. Yet at some point many ethnographers encounter issues they need to overcome.

The move into ethnographic fieldwork is a significant moment of change, when a small number of PhD researchers experience significant difficulties. This is because progressing to fieldwork can, for some projects, mean having to bring together a number of different requirements which all happen at the same time. This is, in other words, a moment of potential bottleneck in a research project. For example, such requirements may include finances, local permissions and gatekeepers, visas, personal circumstances and family commitments, accommodation, language, etc. You may need to

adapt, relinquish some ideas, be flexible, and also keep communication channels open with your supervisors and peers because these problems are often familiar to other people.

Be aware that some ethnographic fieldwork can often involve early stage delays in access or getting established. For example, some projects may need community approval to reside in a village or community, or a project may envisage working in a company. Very often these take time, or may not happen at all. It is a good idea to frame your project in a broad way to give you flexibility. You should also not assume that all your data will emerge from one site or location; you may later need to move to other avenues to produce enough information.

Risk to ethnographers while in the field is something which is always changing. Some risks increase while others decrease over time. Notable risks include State regulation and monitoring, outbreaks of conflict, the threat of violence (especially gendered), pandemics, and environmental hazards. While these issues relatively rarely affect fieldworkers directly, they are very present in many field sites and should be considered realistically.

At the present time (2020), many Governments around the world are becoming more active in monitoring and tracking researchers within their national spaces, than at any time since the Cold War. Such monitoring is particularly happening in non-democratic countries, but also happens in many democratic countries. Conduct during fieldwork must respect national laws, requirements and norms. It is advisable to talk to and listen to any

anthropologists who have worked in comparable circumstances or a similar field site to your own.

Ethnographers can feel under pressure to live in circumstances exactly the same as their informants, even when this may not be conducive to data collection. For example, it can be difficult to keep field notes or data in shared spaces. A change of diet, water, and not being proficient with local ways of doing things can affect fieldwork (eg. being unable to cook or clean well). Some ethnographers find that an environment is simply somewhere they feel impossible to live (for example, ethnographers studying open-cast mining or pollution). Talk with your supervisor as to what your living circumstances are likely to be, what is necessary to balance participation and ethnographic data collection, and for how long.

There is unfortunately a risk of violence in some field sites, and ethnography can involve working alone. Again, this is not an issue of specific parts of the world, or poverty, but can be an issue within very wealthy, stable or institutional settings (for example, even in certain companies). Your priority is to keep yourself safe, and that is more important than data collection. Do not put yourself in a situation you feel uncomfortable about for the sake of data collection (if, for example, you are not OK with going to somebody's home). You may obtain advice from other ethnographers on how they have dealt with these kinds of issues. One common approach, used by all sorts of social researchers worldwide, women and men, is to keep somebody informed about where you are and when you are meeting somebody. We encourage you to develop 'buddy's of this kind for fieldwork, people who for

example you may text before and after going to an interview as a precaution. At UCL, a small number of fieldworkers have had difficulties in recent years. Violence has not been an issue for by far the majority. By assessing and being aware of the risks, we hope to keep it this way.

You will not be permitted to work within a site of conflict. Your risk assessment process and your upgrading panel will address any such considerations relevant to your work.

Ethnography can also involve a range of mental health issues, which people may describe as culture shock, loneliness, isolation, etc. There is a pressure to see every connection as utilitarian, as a source of data. It is important to be able to build a social life, and also it is a good thing to maintain connections with your peers and other members of your cohort, who can offer support and share experiences. In some rare instances, ethnographers do experience events which they find excessively traumatic. This has happened for example on occasions when an ethnographer has been working near to a site of conflict or forced migration in which they have witnessed suffering of informants and friends. UCL does have some mental health support and counselling services, which we can direct you to in events such as this.

It is possible that your fieldwork may be interrupted. This has happened to researchers during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Fieldworkers have had to return home, laboratory researchers have been unable to access their labs, and people working on archives and collections have been unable to access them. In events such as this, it is not always possible to plan ahead, but

it is clear that some PhDs may change, and that some will take longer. In the event that your fieldwork is interrupted, the first step is as always to talk with your supervisor(s), and try to re-plan your work. What data do you have, what is possible to write up now and what requires more time? In the light of changes, what does your final thesis plan look like, and what packages of data are required? What research can be done remotely (for example, historical archives, online interviews with institutions, or digital work), and what requires you to be on the spot? See if you can produce a new plan, and then work out the implications for submission and fulfilling regulations. There are things which you can do to adapt your work to unexpected events. Significant changes of topic do happen, and can even be a sign that your work is uncovering what is happening now, rather than what was expected. As well as talking issues through with your supervisor, if you are a funded student, you will need to notify your funder of significant shifts of topic, and gain their approval for continued funding. If you are funded, you also need to notify the PGR Administrator in the department of approval of any shifts.

Suggestions

- Set out one or more possible draft outlines of what your eventual thesis may look like, chapter by chapter. Start this process with your upgrading, and revise and revisit your plans. Organise your fieldwork to ensure that you will have data about the range of aspects of social life and social phenomena which you think may be relevant, so your data speaks to each chapter.
- Maintain contact with peer groups and friends.

- For risk, develop 'buddies' who can support you.
- Develop a wide range of approaches to produce your data, so that you are constantly building your data set in any way you can. Make use of all the time you have to do research, do not wait for certain access points.
- If you are working with a structured data set, experiment with entering your data as you collect it, into the form in which you will need it for analysis. Try out your intended modes of analysis on your dataset as it emerges.
- Review your data after a couple of months of fieldwork, when beginning to settle, to examine what is emerging and plan the data sets you need.
- Review your data a few months before finishing, with a view to your emerging thesis chapters. During the later part of fieldwork, make sure you have data sufficient for the range of chapters you anticipate writing.
- Set yourself a clear timeline for data collection, a period of time, call a halt to fieldwork after that date, and write your thesis on what you have collected.
- If you are an ethnographer, begin to write up descriptive pieces while you are **still in the field**, in anticipation of putting them together into chapters as soon as you return. Write at least two. Do not necessarily think that you will leave writing until the following year at UCL, anticipate it, and 'break the ice' on writing sooner rather than later.

- For many Bio Anth PhDs, it may be theses they will represent discrete

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easiest to start writing your study methods/ materials/study site sections first, as these will crystallise early on, and for many Bio Anth

introductory chapters.

Returning from the Field and Finishing Data Collection (Start of Y3)

The end of data collection, and often the return to UCL, can be exhilarating as it ushers in a new phase of your PhD. At the same time, there can be difficulties. Many ethnographers are leaving behind the lives, routines and friends they have built in the field, experiencing a culture shock. You may experience a change in language, religious belief, body language, dress, and sense of what is important. There may be a radical change in finances and what your money is worth, as well as the normal stress of finding accommodation in London. It is important to think about how you are going to draw a line under your data collection, realise how much data is sufficient, and get your thesis properly

The return from fieldwork, and calling a halt to data collection, is a significant moment and a milestone. Yet it is not always recognised as such because there is no 'upgrading' or 'induction'. Nobody physically sounds a trumpet fanfare to herald your achievement, but it is an achievement. At this stage, you have acquired a unique and individual knowledge and expertise, and this should give you confidence. The very same achievements can be isolating, because people around you have not experienced what you have, and do not know what you do. Finding ways to deploy and share your knowledge within this university culture is important.

Aims

- You need to **manage the transition** back into the academic



underway.

environment and life in ways which work for you.

- A successful transition enables you to get work on your thesis underway more quickly. Often, the thesis remains unclear at first, and the first chapters and writings can be more disorganised. Yet the more you write, the more clear it becomes, and so it is better to produce a quantity of material early.
- You should have a **substantial meeting with your supervisor(s)**, and set out an early timetable for meetings and writing. Often at this stage, more structured and frequent supervisor contact and conversation can be beneficial to help you get your thesis well underway.

Regulations and Requirements

- You should **inform the Postgraduate Administrator** (Chiara) that you are ending data collection or fieldwork.
- You should form a **writing routine**. Check on whether there is a **desk** available, and/or locker in the department. Because the PhD writing spaces are also the responsibility of the doctoral researchers themselves, and some desks are shared, this may involve asking both the PGR Admin and also the PGR Reps or Committee.
- You should be attending the **PhD Thesis Writing Seminar**, or equivalent writing group (for Biological Anthropologists).
- You should attend at least one of the Departmental Seminar Series. The series include the Social Anthropology Seminar; Material, Visual and Digital Culture Seminar; Medical Anthropology Seminar; Biological Anthropology Seminar (Human Evolution, Primates and Paleo); and HERG Seminar (Human Ecology Research Group).

Common Issues

- Culture Shock for ethnographers.
- Moving from Information to Data
- Not knowing where to start.

Where is the field? The end of ethnographic fieldwork can be a moment where you have a foot in two places at once, and still feel as if you are in the field. It is important to manage relationships with your fieldsite, but also to build a new social life which will support your new work and work routines of thesis-writing.

What is the line between field notes, thick description, and thesis chapters? Organising your data, field notes, photographs, media clips, etc. takes time and can become an additional phase of work. Do not let it delay writing. The purpose of data organisation is to enable writing, so organise data while in the field, or while writing your first pieces.

What is my thesis about now? At this stage, very often your previous plans for your thesis seem redundant in the light of what you have learned, and you may need to plan a new outline. This is normal for innovative research.

What comes first? You will have a large quantity of information and data, which you perhaps wish to put down all at once, and so it is not clear where to start. Some people simply try to write as much as possible, descriptively, and then organise it. Others identify a part of the data which is relatively self-contained, and can be written up as a chapter which makes sense in itself (eg. a set of interviews, a history, or a key case study).

As mentioned in the previous section, there are researchers who have had

difficult experiences during fieldwork, which emerge on return as trauma. There are some counselling services available through UCL. If you are having difficulties, it should not be ignored or swept aside as “the ethnographic experience”, it is unusual and should be addressed.

Quantity or Quality? You may feel a pressure to write high-quality anthropology very early. For most PhDs, quality emerges from a quantity of writing, rather like building a pyramid. Early writing often has a very valuable feel of being fresh and in-touch, but does not yet always convey a sense of its own significance. Later writing is more measured and considered but aware of what is actually valuable in the work.

Suggestions

- 6-9 months after returning from the field, students who have drafted **two or three rough chapters** are generally on track to submit on time (even if those chapters are very rough or untheorised). Researchers who have only produced one are likely to be behind schedule, and you should consult with the Graduate Tutor or other staff to find ways to stimulate your writing.
- As mentioned in the previous section, you should begin to write one or more descriptive pieces (for ethnographic PhDs) while still in the field. These can then form the basis for early draft chapters.
- Make sure to attend the **Autumn Writing Retreat**, normally organised by fourth-year doctoral researchers, mainly for the third-years. This event has been found very helpful by many to stimulate their writing.
- For Bio Anthros, if you feel uncertain as to where to start writing, begin with your study site, study materials and methods chapters. Alongside this, as you analyse sections of your data, write up the analysis briefly together with a brief statement of what you see as the main finding of that analysis. In discussion with your supervisor, identify potential papers which may help you structure both your writing and your overall thesis.
- You do not have to write the entire thesis all at once, or know its final argument and contribution. At this stage of the work, you only need to know where to start writing. When you have a large project, break it down into smaller, more manageable elements. You can for example think about it as writing chapters, more than as writing a thesis.
- Remember your pre-fieldwork writing, your upgrading and your literature reviews. See if you can make use of these as elements in your thesis. Writing the thesis is not starting from zero - you already have two years of research and writing under your belt, are more than halfway there, and so remember you are building on those foundations.

Demystifying Writing (Y3)

Your third year is a period of sustained ongoing work which lays solid foundations for your thesis.

Aims

- You will get into the habit and routine of academic work, writing, reading, presenting and providing constructive criticism to peers.
- You will develop the skills of evaluating and debating anthropological ideas, gaining a sense of what anthropological work is significant.
- You will build the skills of connecting observation and data to anthropological analyses and interpretations.
- You should aim to **enter CRS (Completing Research Status)**. This happens when you have been enrolled for at least three years, and when you can show you are well on track for submission within a year. Your Section may have a **pre-CRS Review**, where you will show two or three pieces of work to your upgrading panel, who will confirm you are ready for CRS.

Regulations and Requirements

- You have to write. **Writing is a requirement** of a doctorate, and is done largely in Year 3. You should produce regular pieces of writing to discuss with your supervisor.
- You should be attending the **Thesis Writing Seminar** regularly, and contributing.
- You should check out the **Research & Reading Groups**. If they do not fit your interests, consider setting one up. This is one step in the transformation into somebody involved in leading anthropology's research agendas.

- The third year cohort have the responsibility of organising the **Pre-fieldwork Seminar** for the MPhils. This is normally discussed and developed at the writing retreat in the Autumn, and happens in March-May.
- Third years are permitted to apply to be Teaching Assistants (PGTAs), but the department encourages people to do this in their fourth year. Supervisors are consulted before appointing PGTAs, and they may think you need instead to focus on your writing.

Common Issues

- Regular supervision.
- Building your academic networks in the department.
- Focussing on the thesis rather than other projects.

How regular should supervision be? You may need to manage your relationship with your supervisor. Most researchers appreciate the focus and individual attention which the supervisory relationship gives them. Some researchers find they have too little contact; others feel they have too much; some find their supervisors simply say their writing is good, and talk about ideas, but give very little feedback on specifics; others have the feeling their supervisor is too specific. The nature of the supervisor relationship also changes over time. Often people need contact at specific moments during their doctorate to get over blockages or puzzle through a particular issue, but need less contact when they are working productively. A common pattern is that regular contact is necessary in early writing, then a researcher gets into the swing and immerses themselves in writing. As previously noted, UCL suggests monthly meetings as a common norm.



What academic environment do you need in addition to your supervisor? You need input and commentary during writing, which can feel very individual, comfortably personal but also potentially isolating. This is where your peer-group, the thesis-writing seminar, other writing and research groups come in. Reading and constructively commenting on **other peoples' work** is a good way to gain some perspective on your own writing.

Worries about what comes next? Third year researchers often feel under pressure to fulfil several different projects at once, because of concern to prepare for their future. Specifically, there is pressure to 1. write the thesis, 2. to train for future jobs, 3. to publish, 4. to gain experience teaching, and 5. to apply for future funding. This is normal. You cannot do everything at once. The thesis is clearly your first priority. Think

clearly before undertaking additional projects, talk them through with your supervisor, and prioritise your work. The department believes that the fourth year is more suitable for broadening your projects, but year three is more about the thesis. We have also introduced the postgraduate affiliation (see Year 5) in order to enable people to defer some or all of these parallel projects to after their submission, and take the pressure off you during your third year.

How can my writing be enough? For ethnographers, there are many pressures on ethnographic styles of writing. One is the feeling that it is impossible to do justice to the worlds of your informants. The texts you are writing may feel reductive, the language inadequate, and it may be hard to express fully what is actually important to them. Remember that for people reading your texts, the opposite

often applies. The text brings readers on a journey into other worlds which is gradual and staged, opening up new perspectives as it goes.

You may find different chapters take different amounts of time. A common approach is to set aside one or two months per chapter over time, but writing often progresses unevenly. It is common that the first two chapters take longer, or their form is less defined. After two chapters, most researchers have a much more clear idea of their own style of writing and of what sort of chapter structure suits them. Because of this, your writing may tend to accelerate and become faster over time.

Suggestions

- Writing is a habit. Think about it as cultivating a good habit, rather than the outputs.
- As mentioned in the previous section, as a rough guide, researchers who have produced 2+ chapters after 6-9 months can feel fairly confident, while people who have not should find

ways and routines to stimulate their production.

- A thesis is normally 80-100,000 words long. Aim to produce 80,000 words and at this stage call it your first draft.
- Broaden your academic networks. Your supervisor's advice is generally the best (they will nominate your viva examiners) but research benefits from multiple kinds of commentary addressing different levels of the work.
- You can find accounts from well-known anthropologists of how they write from this resource in Durham: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/writingacrossboundaries/writingonwriting/>
- Make every use you can of ways to celebrate writing, such as group 'shut up and write' sessions, enforced silence, wifi-free zones, retreats, and group writing events.

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Assembling Your Thesis (Year 4)

Aims

- During your fourth year, your thesis will emerge as a **complete document**.
- You will gain a better sense of the **key contributions** of your work to anthropological knowledge.
- You will gain a better sense of perspective on **other anthropologists' work**, and gain skills in evaluating and critiquing it.
- In some respects, in fourth year you will also develop a number of parallel skills as well as your thesis, as a part of **becoming a rounded professional anthropologist**. You should consider your priorities, including Teaching, Publication, Conferences, and Funding.
- In your fourth year, you are able to be a Teaching Assistant on one or more courses. Details are usually publicised in the previous Summer Term (June), and a decision made from the applications which come in over the Summer (June-August).

Regulations and Requirements

- When your supervisor believes you to be approximately one year from submission, they can notify UCL that you enter into **CRS (completing Research Status)**, during which you do not pay fees. From 2022, some sections are introducing a **pre-CRS Review** of a couple of samples of your work.
- You should therefore develop an honest sense of your progress. You should also check on any experiences over the course of the PhD which have significantly delayed you, which may include very normal life experiences. Health, bereavement and financial

difficulties may all be legitimate grounds for extensions to a submission date, and you should **make a note of these experiences in your Research Log**.

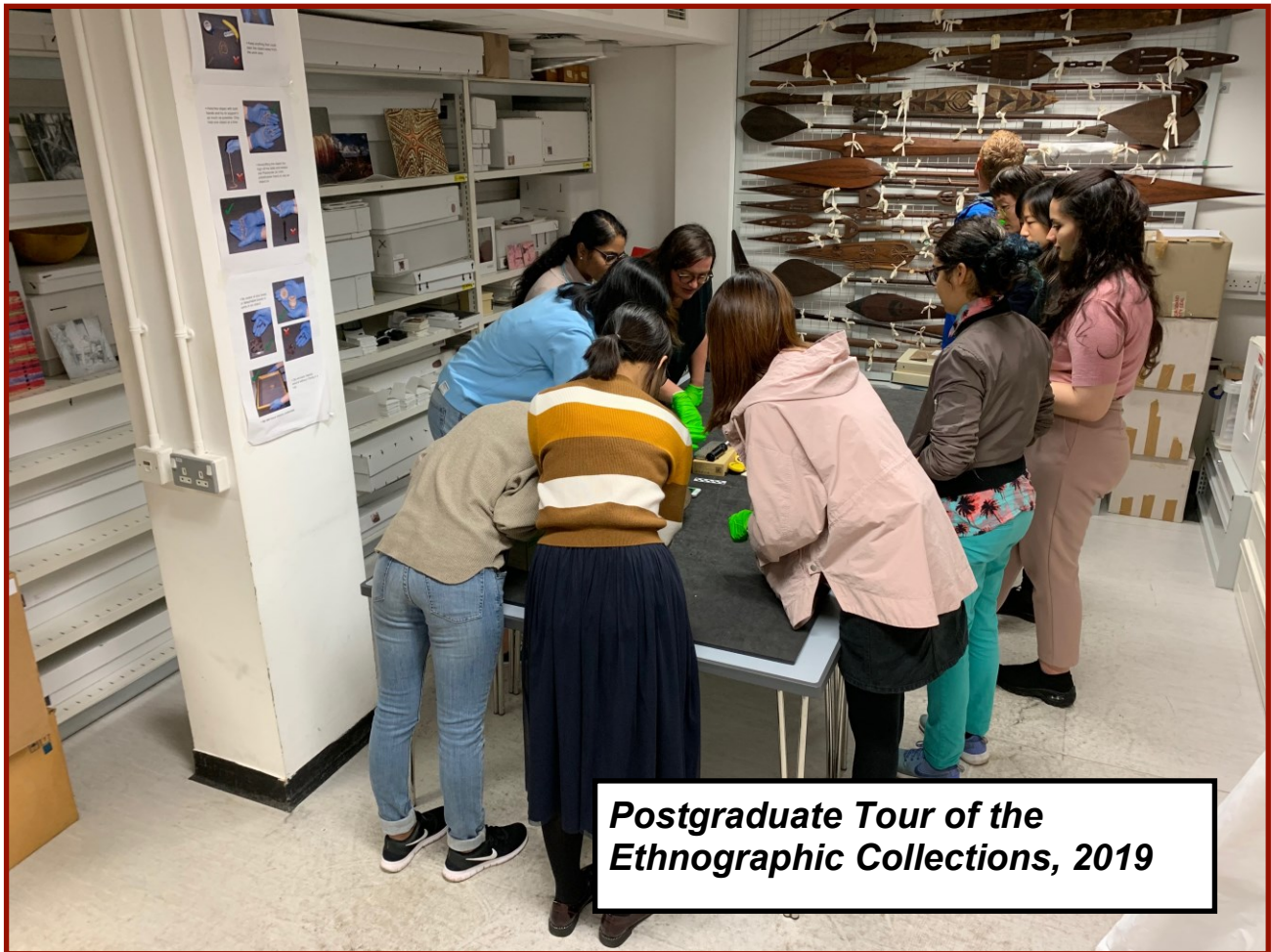
- You should attend or at least check the **Anthropology in the Professional World** Seminar. The seminar runs a few times a term, and is where anthropologists outside academia talk about their practice and work. The seminar is one of the best ways for you to find out about how your discipline has influence in the world beyond the department, and to reflect on what sort of a professional you are becoming.

Common Issues

- Significant feedback on your draft.
- Editing.
- How to develop professionally.
- Building your Academic Profile in the Department.

The first complete draft of your thesis is a significant moment and achievement. Some researchers experience moments of revelation about what their work is "actually" about. This can happen several times, but having a complete first draft where you can hold a thesis-size document is one such moment. It may be that at this stage you substantially re-organise the thesis, or re-write the introduction and conclusion. As with all academic work, a lot depends on a self-aware and coherent document, with a scholarly tone. In other words, the introduction and conclusion do matter a lot because they frame your own sense of what your work is about.

At this stage, it is very useful to get significant feedback on the complete



draft from your supervisors. Reading an entire book-length work is a substantial commitment of time and energy. It is a commitment which your supervisor is expected to make, even at times when they are very busy. Nonetheless, you do need to realise that this is a moment in the process which you may need to actively manage your supervisor, depending on the specifics: for example, notifying them in advance; holding them to deadlines; and telling them what you specifically think you need.

Make use of all your contacts at this stage for feedback: first supervisor; second, third or other supervisors; peer researchers; other staff who belong to your subsection and may read individual chapters; anthropologists in

other departments; and members of reading groups.

A thesis draft benefits from different kinds of commentary. You need academic commentary and critique, but also may benefit from editing. That is, many drafts improve from editing the modes of expression, spelling, grammar and paragraph structure. Your supervisor may or may not provide this. If you have alternative contacts, including peers, friends, and family, you may ask somebody to look at the document specifically for editing purposes.

As a researcher builds their thesis, they become much closer to being a professional anthropologist. This implies a rounded figure who combines many skills, including the capacity to

explicate their ideas, to teach, to review and comment on others work. to publish, and to undertake fieldwork. Undertaking an additional project or two (eg. Teaching assistant, a Conference presentation, or Journal paper submission, Reviewing a submission for a journal) will enable you to broaden your perspective on anthropological work. These kinds of work will help shift your perspective as an anthropologist, so that you are better able to see your own work objectively, more as your viva examiners will eventually see it when they critically evaluate its merits.

In your fourth year, you should in many ways feel like a fully rounded academic, but you do not yet have the qualification or proof. You may at this time be very aware of how anthropology should develop as a discipline and how the department can be better, and how your own doctoral journey has progressed. Consider getting involved in organising in the department somehow, for example an **RRG (Research & Reading Group)**, seminar or workshop. Use the Postgraduate Reps, and the PGR Committee to feed back to the Graduate Tutor and the Head of

Suggestions

- Consider building a '**buddy system**' with another researcher, where they agree to edit your thesis if you edit theirs. when they submit.
- Anticipate how you are going to do your **bibliography**. Many people use software to build their bibliographic database as they go along. Otherwise, it can take days or even weeks to finalise the referencing correctly.
- Do remember that writing gets faster. By the time of submission, many people are chapters several times as fast as when they began their thesis writing.
- Make contact with the third years, returning from the field, and help them to get writing.
- Consider what you feel the future holds for your discipline and your department. Consider getting involved in organising an RRG (Research & Reading Group), an event or seminar, being a PG Rep, or undertaking one of the postgraduate roles (eg. social events organiser etc).

NOTES

Department what might be done.

Submission and Your Viva (Y4)

Aims

- Your viva will be the culminating event of your research, a challenge and a test. To manage to submit a complete and correct thesis document indicates that you have successfully brought together and synthesised a tremendous range of work: literary research, original data, argument and scholarship.
- The viva is a process as much as an event, and for most people it lasts longer than the actual meeting, because most people do receive corrections and more time. Your aim is to bring yourself through this process.
- The viva is also an opportunity to think about what comes next, in terms of work, research, jobs and publications.

Regulations and Requirements

- Guidance on vivas can be found on the UCL Doctoral School site: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/viva>
- The **viva panel is nominated** by your first supervisor, not by yourself. Your supervisor however should consult you. Their nominations are researched and approved by the exams office at UCL, who often question nominations if they do not seem appropriate.
- You yourself need to complete an **Exam Entry Form** (the form can be downloaded from the website giving guidance on vivas, link above). The exams office require this form **Four Months** in advance of the viva.
- The thesis must be of a **standard format**. The regulations can be found at: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/format-bind-and-submit-your-thesis-general-guidance)

[assessments/format-bind-and-submit-your-thesis-general-guidance](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/format-bind-and-submit-your-thesis-general-guidance)

- During Coronavirus, it has been possible to **submit your thesis** online, and this is likely to continue, but do check for the latest requirements. There are printers and binders in the vicinity of UCL who are always binding UCL PhDs, and are familiar with the standard way they should be bound even if you are not.
- There are **specified possible outcomes** to the viva, and the examiners must tick a specific box on the exam form to indicate their decision. The three most common outcomes are: 1. Pass with no corrections, 2. Minor corrections (3 months) or 3. Major revision (can be up to 18 months, but typically 6 or 12 months). Major revisions requires re-submission, ie. a new exam entry form.

Common Issues

Who examines my work? Consult carefully with your supervisor about the two examiners. They will work to evaluate your thesis in a fair way, to see its merits and also to view it critically. You do not necessarily need both of them to be the most prominent global experts on your topic. An ideal viva panel has a prominent external expert on the field, but also an internal examiner who can be challenging about the details and development of the work. If you appoint two very similar experts, you will actually have three experts in the room, including yourself. The viva should be a challenging conversation with you about different aspects of your ideas and work, not a three-way conversation.

It is generally a better idea to have an internal examiner from UCL, who knows



the processes of the university's viva and can administer it well; rather than having two externals who are less familiar with the process.

How complete is a thesis? Obviously, a submitted thesis should be fully-formed and finished, absolutely something you can stand by. At the same time, most examiners ask for additional work, amendments or re-writes of sections. Be prepared for this. You may have invested a huge amount of effort in a piece of writing which you believe to be fully-finished, but you may need to revisit and change that text. It may be better to think of the thesis you submit as perfect in its presentation, but in its academic content a 99% finished draft.

If you have had the experience of the thesis-writing seminar, and perhaps of reviewing a journal paper or two, you will be familiar with the notion of peer review. The viva is a peer review

process. Anthropological work submitted for publication as a book or journal may be published as it is, but is more often recommended for amendments. This is very similar to how your examiners will be treating your thesis, probing its value from many angles and making definite recommendations.

How do I prepare for the viva? Your supervisor should have some concrete advice about how to handle the actual viva itself. For example, some supervisors have suggestions of lists of the kinds of questions to prepare for. For example, one lecturer has suggested some very general questions to prepare for:

- Opening question about why you chose to research what you have researched (examiners often start with something general like this – there are many variations on this

theme – it's supposed to be a warm up question for everybody in the room)

- What was your initial research question when you began your PhD, and how did it alter as your project developed?
- Methodologies questions; what methods did you use; how did you maintain your critical distance/ensure academic rigour while using these methods (think about the writing up process as a critical part of maintaining distance)
- Theory questions – you draw on multiple theoretical positions/disciplines. Can you make sense of this/can you explain why/can you summarise/can you explain which are the most crucial for you?
- Key Terms: how did you arrive at this key term, what might be meant by it, what do you mean by it, what are the problems and advantages of that, how does it illuminate your field site, and what are the implications for anthropology?

A good viva can involve a lively discussion which actually gets to grips with the issues, and helps to decide the key contribution of your work (because most PhDs have several possible directions they can go in). Most examiners are engaged in a process of trying to achieve excellent anthropological work, and helping you do do this if you have not already done it.

Suggestions

- Stay open to debate during the viva. State and explain your position clearly, but do not let discussion become argument.
- Be confident that it's OK to not know the answer sometimes or for there to be areas that need further resolution in your work. You cannot do everything, you just need to show adequate awareness of the limits of your work. Be clear about the areas of your thesis that you want to defend, but be aware that some questions may be an invitation for you to think with the examiners in an expansive way, rather than a defensive way.
- Read a guide to surviving a viva.
- Remember that the examiners have the job of testing the thesis and the student, but they will want to help you to shine in the viva. The chair's role is partly to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to shine also.
- Check out the writing and backgrounds of your examiners.
- Celebrate. The viva for some is exhausting but also can be an anti-climax. The department and/or your supervisor may be able to organise drinks and a **celebration** after the event, and notify other doctoral researchers when it finishes.
- Take every opportunity to talk to other researchers about what their viva was like.



Departmental Book Launch, 2019

After your Viva (Y5)

Proposals, Conferences, and Teaching Experience.

Aims

- Achieving your PhD is not the end of anthropological work, it is of course a beginning.
- You should **plan ahead** beyond the viva so that you can envisage what comes next, and so that you realise you do not have to achieve everything within the four years. Some projects may happen before your viva, while others can happen afterwards. In the same way, runners in a race are advised to focus on a location on the far side of the finishing line, and to run through the line, not to stop on it.
- Consider specific, achievable projects. These may include: Publications, Jobs, Research

Regulations and Requirements

- After your viva you ask about an **Honorary Research Fellow** status. We cannot guarantee this, as the departmental practice of offering these to all PhDs has been questioned, and at the time of writing (October 2022) we are re-negotiating what is possible, and the number of affiliations we can reliably secure.
- We want to know about, and learn from, your experience of doctoral research. We plan to set out a small book of short selected comments and advice from past PhDs to future ones. If you wish to contribute to this after your viva, then you can contact

the Graduate Tutor and/or PGR Administrator.

Common Issues

The issues which can emerge in the period after you become a doctor are many and various, and there is little point in providing advice on all of them. It is at this point up to you.

Many people find the timing of their submission, and of their future plans, does not exactly coincide. For some, a post comes up too soon, and they have to finish the thesis earlier than expected, for others there can be a gap. Very often, there are phases of temporary positions before a full-time position comes up.

There are nowadays a very wide range of institutions and areas where anthropologists work. 'Anthropologist' over the past twenty years has become more recognised as a vocation and a professional practice, not only as an academic discipline. It is just as important to **rule out** areas where you do not want to work, as **rule in** the areas you do. Anthropologists from UCL work in many areas. They include for example:

Postdoctoral Fellow (on another academic's project)	Diplomatic Service (Foreign Office/ Civil Service)
Museum Curator	Development Officer
Publisher or Editor	Journalist

Suggestions

- Make **concrete plans** about how you wish to use the period after your submission (for example, teaching, publication, research funding applications).
- Having plans for after your viva is one motivating factor to finish your PhD, and people who have a longer-term plan find it easier to submit.
- Consider the breadth of areas where anthropologists work, so that you are more certain of which course you wish to take. These include many kinds of research positions in many public, private and third sector institutions, as well as universities.
- Do not only develop your awareness of 'where' anthropologists work, but also 'how' they work, and an awareness of your own preferred work process. You are now at a level where many potential employers will expect you to tell them what to do, and what you can do.

Lecturer (Anthropology department)	Market Researcher	Digital/High-Tech Multinationals
Lecturer (non-anthropology, sociology, medicine, geography, biology, media studies, etc)	Design Researcher/ Consultant	Environmental (eg. Wildlife Reserve Manager)
Postdoctoral Fellow (won own funding)	Civil Service (Home Office)	Marketing

Your Department

The Academic Environment

Becoming a doctor in anthropology generally requires more than just your own research work and the advice of your supervisor. There are a number of dimensions which a good academic environment provides, and which we hope to deliver to you:

- *Supervision*: provides focus and regular, extended conversations focussed exclusively on your work and ideas.
- *Peer groups*: contact with other PhDs working in parallel on different projects provides a good sense of the way in which anthropological work develops, and helps you with a sense of your own process.
- *Subdisciplinary groups*: the department is organised into various subsections. At the time of writing the four key groups are Biological Anthropology, Social Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, and Material, Visual and Digital Culture. In addition, there are a range of more specific research groups, for example Environment and Sustainability, Biosocial Work, Primatology, Human Evolution, Political Anthropology, as well as a number of major funded research groups. These groups and the seminars and talk series they run can keep you in touch with up-to-date debates and issues relevant to your area. You should make sure that staff members and researchers in areas close to yours know about your work, as they can provide good commentaries and feedback on your project. While a supervisor may have a close-up viewpoint on your project, colleagues can have a viewpoint on it from more of a distance, and give interesting perspectives.

- *National and International Anthropology*: it is important to keep in touch with the international anthropological scene, and this can be done in conferences. It is also possible to check out seminar series and events at other universities within reach of UCL: SOAS, LSE, Goldsmiths, Cambridge and Oxford.

These different elements provide a broader environment for your work, and you should cultivate them to develop a range of kinds of input on your work.

The academic year for a PhD unfolds as well in particular ways. There are a number of recurring events. These include:

- The Autumn Writing Workshop (intended for post-fieldwork PhDs)
- The various seminar series, running in term time October-December and January-March.
- The Pre-fieldwork Workshop, in April or May.
- Early Summer conferences at UCL in June typically include the London Anthropology Day (which we usually host) and the Open City Film Festival.
- The PhDs may convene a half-day Summer Convention where all the PhD Anthropologists discuss ways they can build postgrad research at UCL.
- Many of the main conferences run over the Summer in July-September: for example, EASA, the ASA, and RAI.

Doctoral Structures

The Department has two Graduate Tutors. The **Director of Graduate Studies** (Adam Drazin in 2022, Kimberly Chong from 2023) mainly oversees the progress of individual projects, meaning the stages in your journey such as upgrading, entering CRS, your submission and your viva. The **Research**

Student Tutor (Hannah Knox; and Danny Miller in Spring 2023) mainly oversees the research environment and facilities which all PhDs have as a group, and the annual cycle of seminars and events, no matter what stage an individual project is at. There is a part-time **Administrator for PhD issues** (Chiara Francesconi), who works Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. There is a **Postgraduate Research Consultative Committee**, which meets each term and is where the **Postgraduate Representatives** can communicate issues to the Graduate Tutors. The Graduate Tutors also participate in a wider series of committees, and communicates regularly with the Head of Department, the Teaching Committee, and the various subsections of the department who also meet regularly (ie. Biological Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, Material Visual & Digital Culture, and Social Anthropology).

At a higher level of UCL, there is also a **Faculty Graduate Tutor** for Social & Historical Sciences, and termly meetings with the Faculty Dean. Many doctoral issues are also handled by central UCL departments, who each follow defined processes and regulations and keep an eye on what is happening in departmental processes: these include Admissions, Examinations, and the Registry. If you have any issues which you do not wish to take up with the department, you always have the options of approaching the Faculty Tutor or the Doctoral School.

Postgraduate Reps are volunteers, and each year we invite people to join them. Ideally, we need at least one representative from each year's cohort (sometimes excluding those on fieldwork), plus at least one MRes. Their role is to try to attend the committee

which meets at least once a term, sometimes twice. Ideally, they consult other PhDs for information to feed into the committee (eg. by circulating a Whatsapp). They are able to put items on the meeting agenda.

Residency Requirements

Both full-time and part-time students are required to be in residence at college for a minimum of 9 months. They must be in residence for a minimum of 3 months before taking study leave (and going into the field) and must also be in residence for a minimum of 3 months after returning from study leave.

Being a Member of the Department

What does it mean to be a member of the department, but not staff?

Doctoral researchers are anthropologists, but not yet fully qualified. At a late stage of the PhD, many researchers are as capable as any member of staff: experts in their area, good teachers, good researchers, perhaps with publications. Doctoral researchers are one of the driving engines of departmental production, undertaking some of the best work consistently, and delivering more work every year. They are also the future of the discipline. Some of the work being undertaken now is going to help shape the issues, questions and ways of thinking among anthropologists during the next 5-15 years. They are the people who deliver a lot of departmental teaching as Teaching assistants, and literally communicate between staff and students. Yet doctoral researchers do not yet have the qualification which will enable their skills to be more widely recognised and used. You are during your PhD a

member of the department, but not a member of staff.

In this situation, especially during your fourth year, it is important to consider how you can feed into anthropology and anthropological work.

The **Reading and Research groups (RRGs)** can be proposed and organised by postgrads or staff at any stage. Normally a call goes out at the beginning of the year and groups are advertised, but you can set up such a group at any time. You may meet weekly or bi-weekly. In the Spring, it is possible to bid for funding for running an event which may arise from the work of the RRG, for example convening a small workshop or proposing a publication.

It is Recommended that the PG Reps and doctoral researchers in general convene an occasional **PhD committee**, based in the writing space, and that people volunteer for the various roles, responsibilities and activities which make for a better department. Consider, for example:

- Social Events Organiser
- Workspace Rep (improving postgraduate workspace and convening discussion on how to use it)
- Writing Events Organiser (eg.convening shut up & write events)
- Decolonising and Anti-racism Rep
- QueerAnth network
- Environmentalism Rep
- Organising the Autumn Writing Retreat (usually several people)
- Organising the Pre- Fieldwork Event (usually several people)
- Organising the September PGTA Training Day (this event emerged from PhD initiatives, but is sometimes organised by the Graduate Tutor)

- Wine & Pub Rep
- Coffee & Tea Rep
- Health Rep
- etc etc

There is a track record of anthropology PhDs making positive change in the department. For example, a UCL Changemakers Grant was won by Rosalie Allain, Tess Altman and Pauline Destree, who initiated the pre-fieldwork event and a much more substantial writing retreat, as well as producing a report recommending various departmental changes. We have also had active involvement from PHDs in anti-racism and decolonising initiatives.

If you wish to get involved in diversifying the anthropology department, then

During the UK-wide Universities Strike, 2018

you should contact the chair of the Anti-Racism Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, currently Antonia Walford <antonia.walford@ucl.ac.uk>.

Facilities and Resources

The PhD Workspace

Our dedicated **work rooms** for graduate research students (MPhil and PhD) are located on the ground, first and third floors of the Anthropology building. These include:

- A Student **Common Room** (ground floor).
- **Desk Space** for MPhil/PhD research students on the third in Rooms 325 and 326. The Right-hand room comprises of Shared Desks, which anyone can use on a first-come first-served basis, but you need to clear your desk at the



end of the day. The Left-hand room contains eighteen personal desks, which are offered to the eighteen people closest to their submission date (but not past it); part-time students close to submission are asked to share.

- Those who use hot desks are welcome to use a **locker**. Please contact the PhD Administrator to get a key. There is a £10 deposit that will be returned when the padlock is returned. Lockers must be cleared out prior to fieldwork, and you may be asked to change locker each September, when we re-organise. We try to accommodate all research students' needs, but unfortunately if material is left in lockers for long periods while you are absent, we may need to cut open padlocks and re-use the locker.

These are your spaces and rooms. Please take care of them and keep them clean and tidy. The rooms are intended for quiet writing so please be considerate of others. Your PhD Representatives may convene meetings or committees to decide on how the spaces are used and cared for, so do try to participate in these meetings. Please also note that smoking is not allowed in the common room or anywhere else in the building, or in the internal courtyard. Once per year, we will have a Spring Clean (usually in the Spring, but not always, just to keep you on your toes), and at this stage it is possible that bulky or redundant items may be disposed of. For this reason, please do not assume you can leave large items for long periods.

The Department at 14 Taviton Street is normally accessible using ID cards, 0800-2300 hours during weekdays, and 0800-2100 at weekends. No students or staff are allowed to stay in the building beyond 2300 weekdays and 2100 at weekends. UCL Security checks rooms each night and locks the main entrance after 2300 on weekdays and 2100 on weekends.

Apart from our own departmental facilities there are more than 20 public computer clusters around the university. Make sure you check out the Doctoral School, the University of London spaces in Senate House, and the various libraries (RAI library in the British Museum, the British Library, the University of London Library, and UCL's Library).

A Presence on the Web

You can have a UCL Web Page as a part of the IRIS system, which is the system where staff and researchers list their CVs, publications and achievements. Your name will be listed on the departmental website as a UCL PhD, and we are able to link that to another page, administered by yourself. So please do set up a page or a blog, or use sites such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate or [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu). There are also a number of resources for blogging and social networking provided by UCL. We encourage you to do this. It is a useful resource for networking and for research, since people are likely to google you at some point and check your formal connection to UCL.

Doctoral Researchers do not have individual UCL web pages on the Department's website. Unfortunately we do not have the resources to ensure such pages will always be up to date

because we have over a hundred doctoral researchers at any one time, whose work is often changing fast.

The Conference Fund

There is a dedicated conference fund for the MPhils and PhDs.

Priority is given to those who do not have research council or other grants that provide conference funding. These should be submitted electronically to PGR Administrator.

See **Appendix C** for the specific Guidelines for the fund. In general, the deadlines are on the final day of each term. A minimum pot of £2,000 is available at each deadline. Money which is unspent at one deadline will roll over into the next funding period. Students will normally receive a maximum of £400 per application. We are not always able to fully support some applications, and sometimes we divide the amount between applications of equal merit so as to provide some support to each. (We are seeking to increase the fund available, but have been unsuccessful so far)

Importantly, you must book travel and accommodation through approved UCL channels (ie. Clarity Travel).

If You Have Difficulties

Students suffering serious academic problems, or experiencing personal problems affecting their academic performance, should talk about it with their supervisors. If you do not feel comfortable talking with your first supervisor, your second supervisor should also be available. Another point of call is the Department Graduate Tutor (DGT). Rarely, the DGT may refer

students to the Faculty Tutor for Graduate Students.

There are excellent counselling facilities available in college and advice for certain problems may also be sought through Student Psychological Services and the UCL Students' Union. You also should consult the college prospectus for Graduate Studies for information on health care and student welfare. Every researcher needs different support, and for most people these sources of support are unnecessary, but UCL is working to support everybody as they need in their work.

A full list of the range of resources available to you can also be found in the Doctoral School Graduate Handbook:

<https://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/codes/>

The college has a committee to oversee Equal Opportunities policy and issues. The Departmental Equal Opportunities Liaison Officer is Rikke Osterlund (r.osterlund@ucl.ac.uk). Please feel free to consult them in total confidence if problems arise.

A Note on Plagiarism

Students should take note that University College and the Department of Anthropology have strict rules regarding plagiarism. This is outlined in the following statement from the UCL's General Regulations:

"Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's work, thoughts, or words, or artefacts, or software as though they were the student's own. Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must therefore be clearly identified as such by being placed in quotation marks, and students should

identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible. A series of short quotations from several sources, if not clearly identified, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally if a student summarises another person's ideas or judgements, figures, diagrams, or software a reference to that person in the text must be made and the work referred to must be included in the bibliography".

You should note that UCL scans work for evidence of plagiarism, using the Turnitin system. This system gives access to millions of sources worldwide, including journals, books, websites, and student work submitted at UCL and other universities.

UCL policy states that recourse to the services of "ghost-writing" agencies, for example in the preparation of essays or reports, or of outside word-processing agencies which offer "correction/improvement of English" is strictly forbidden, and students who make use of the services of such agencies render themselves liable for an academic penalty which may involve expulsion.

NOTES

Appendix A: Recommendations of the 2018 Changemakers Report

In 2016-2018, a team of Anthropology PhDs, Tess Altman, Pauline Destrée, and Rosalie Allain, won a couple of small grants to implement their initiatives to improve the PhD programme, and especially fieldwork, in Anthropology. In 2018 they undertook a consultation exercise among the PhDs and produced a report with four main recommendations. This Appendix reproduces the Executive Summary and Key Recommendations of their report, simply as a record of the initiatives, proposals, and of changes.

Executive Summary

This report outlines the aims, outputs, findings and recommendations of the UCL Changemakers project on pre-fieldwork preparation and post-fieldwork re-integration. In June 2016, Anthropology PhD students Rosalie Allain, Tess Altman and Pauline Destrée were granted UCL Changemakers funding for a project entitled "Promoting a Strengths-Based Approach: The Anthropology PhD Cohort as Post-fieldwork Reintegration Tool." Dr Allen Abramson was the Team's Staff Partner. In October 2017, a Continuation Grant was awarded to enable the Team to further embed the project into the Anthropology Department. This allowed the Team to evaluate the project and present this Recommendations Report to the Department.

The objective of the project was to pilot a **new fieldwork curriculum** to strengthen the Anthropology PhD cohort as a key tool for addressing challenges specific to the anthropological research process, and to use this as a pilot study for the future development of an institutional support framework.

To fulfill these aims, the project proposed the following outputs:

1. Fieldwork Preparation Panel.
2. PhD Reintegration Retreat.
3. Writing Workshop.

The inaugural Fieldwork Preparation Panel was held in January 2018, the Reintegration Retreat in May 2017, and weekly student-run Writing Workshops for post-field students have been held since May 2017. Each of these outputs has been evaluated through a combination of "action-focused" minute-taking and evaluation surveys. The evaluation mechanisms hence present the views of all students who participated in the outputs (35 participants in the Fieldwork Preparation Panel, eight post-field students in the Retreat, four to ten students in the Writing Cooperative).

The findings and recommendations are intended to provide the UCL Anthropology Department with a range of actionable changes to be made to the fieldwork curriculum, with a view of improving fieldwork practice. The report suggests a "book-end" model to the fieldwork curriculum, providing both pre- and post- fieldwork preparation, support, and training. Ultimately, it is hoped that making fieldwork safer and more efficient will ensure a higher quality scholarship and educational experience.

Recommendations of the report

- 1. Institutionalise a new "Book-end" fieldwork curriculum**
- 2. Embed fieldwork training**
- 3. Create fieldwork resources**
- 4. Change the culture around fieldwork**

Recommendations

Based on the results of the pilot study and evaluation surveys, the Changemakers Team makes the following recommendations to the UCL Anthropology Department:

1. Institutionalise a new “Book-end” fieldwork curriculum

Put in place an institutional framework and resourcing (funding and personnel) for a new fieldwork curriculum that “book-ends” the fieldwork period for each cohort with:

- Pre-fieldwork preparation in the form of an **annual full-day Fieldwork Preparation Panel** run by post-field students and staff, preferably at the start of Term 2 (once students have integrated into the Department and established their fieldsites but with enough time left to integrate the panel insights into their fieldwork preparation). In future years, and to make this more sustainable to the Department, the aims and scope of the Panel could be progressively integrated into Boot Camp or 1st-year training as a whole.
- Post-fieldwork cohort support in the form of an **annual post-field student Reintegration Retreat**, preferably in Term 3 or summer (when the majority of students have returned from fieldwork). We recommend that each should be based around a single cohort.
- **A formalised, dedicated staff member** (e.g. Fieldwork Officer) as first port-of-call during fieldwork (not the supervisor).
- Weekly student-run **Thesis Writing Cooperative** to allow ongoing peer-to-peer support throughout the writing-up process.

Based on the pilot, the **proposed budget** for the Fieldwork Preparation Panel is 570 pounds. The proposed budget for the Retreat is 170 pounds per student. The proposed budget for the Writing Cooperative is 6 pounds per week.

2. Embed fieldwork training

Introduce more formalised fieldwork training for pre-field students. Survey results indicate interest in training such as:

- 1) Practical training, including: Sexual harassment/self-defense training, vicarious trauma workshops, first aid training;
- 2) Language training;
- 3) Online training modules;
- 4) Peer-to-peer training (information sharing).

3. Create fieldwork resources

Centralise existing resources, build networks, employ personnel and encourage opportunities for inter-cohort information sharing:

- Create an **online hub** such as a Moodle page. Use the Oxford Risk Officer's resources as a starting point.
- Employ a dedicated and impartial trained **Fieldwork Officer** to provide support and debriefing on mental health issues etc.
- Liaise with and take advantage of **other UCL resources/staff** - I.e.: UCL Psychological services and UCL Occupational Health Services - for the dedicated Fieldwork Officer or training/support on Mental Health.
- **Build networks** between existing safety officers and anthropology.
- Create a list of tips, advice, resources, referrals in the form of a **handout or guide**.
- Support first year students to compile their own **fieldwork handbook** and review this with their supervisor. Pre-fieldwork handbooks could become part of the upgrade, and valuable resources for sharing and developing fieldwork preparation in future years, cross-cohorts.
- Support post-field students to create a **fieldwork guide** and create other opportunities for information sharing between cohorts.

4. Change the culture around fieldwork

Demystify fieldwork while still supporting its worth and value. Actively promote the unique qualities of fieldwork, including its inherent challenges (embedded, unpredictable/organic, long-term) to funding bodies, ethics committees, department staff, and consider how to best 'teach' fieldwork to students:

- Consider **classifying research students as taught students** to bring research students under the teaching curriculum in an active learning model, as recommended by Dr Garaway:
 - Advantages: Teaching curriculum gets reviews periodically, students' opinions are reviewed and acted upon, staff get recognised in their teaching. Research students and their needs are considered collectively.
 - Models: Facilitating critical reflection - e.g. discussion groups and activities.
- **Build awareness and relationships with funding bodies** about the specific needs and difficulties of anthropological fieldwork: appreciative enquiry, bringing together academics, professional facilitators, PhD students.

Appendix B: Recommendations of the 2021 PAPER Report

In 2021, a series of workshops and consultations was organised by the PAPER Team, supported by the successful award of a Changemakers grant. The team included Alice Riddell, Chloe Dominique, Emilie Glazer, Ioanna Manoussaki-Adamopoulou and Victoria Tecca. The full report is detailed and extensive, and being posted on the departmental PhD moodle. A concluding summary of some of the recommendations, taken from the report appendix, is pasted below. Note that at time of posting, some of these points are being implemented already, while others remain to be addressed in future.

PAPER Report - Summary Outline

Our report draws together a series of conversations which took place in 2021 under the umbrella project the Power and Politics in/of Ethnographic Research (PAPER), which addresses the intersectional questions of decoloniality (anti-racism, anti-colonialism, class, ableism and gender/sexuality discrimination) in the ethics which underpin ethnographic fieldwork, from research design through to its dissemination. This project involved a seminar series and two workshops with doctoral students from UCL Anthropology. In these discussions it was clear that the foundations for this work span the institution, discipline, and department. We summarise here the principles and suggestions for pedagogical change from this project.

A. Departmental Care

General Principles

Underpinning so much of what can help to decolonise our department, and allow conversations about ethics which truly interrogate and challenge, is a community defined by mutual care. This involves addressing a need for connection across the department.

Suggestions

1. Spaces of exchange: Creating more spaces of exchange in which students, doctoral researchers, and staff gather as peers rather than as divided by academic hierarchies. For example: more informal gatherings, a mentorship programme, personal tutors for PhD students.
2. Work ethics: Research projects which take place in our department to address the inequalities that the department and institution perpetuate. For example: a project in collaboration with outsourced zero-hour contract workers and the IWGB.
3. Care during fieldwork: A dedicated support network and programme while conducting research to help guide, advise, and to help (dis)engage with the field when appropriate. For example: a referral system, allocated funds for psychological and specialised support. In addition: co-writing a Fieldwork Code of Conduct as a cohort at the start of the first year.

B. Developing a Research Project

General Principles

Ethical considerations begin at the very start of developing a research project, entwined with methods. They should go beyond bureaucratic positioning within the institution, to become far more of a continual, engaged, discursive and reflexive exercise. Projects should be designed against colonialism, rejecting any presentism biases.

Suggestions

1. Spaces for conversations about ethics: Enabling discussions about ethics across peers and with staff. For example: as part of cohort training programmes, as a cohort retreat, through ethics drop-in clinics, reading groups, dedicated departmental seminars, integrated course with methods, and guided supervisor conversations.
2. Provoke and guide wide-ranging open ethics conversations: Facilitate humbling conversations, for example through a series of starting questions for researchers to build on, to make their own, and draw from as they design, conduct, and write their research.
3. Enable the collection of peer advice and knowledge: Host a living archive and resource with conversations about research design, gaining ethics approval, navigating the field.
4. Practical support for safeguarding / safety training: Practical safety support to prepare for fieldwork, for example through the UCL Doctoral Programme Development Skills, to add specific tailored safeguarding and safety training. For example: self-defence, gender based safety.
5. Consider what reciprocating relations with research interlocutors mean: More formal support to address reciprocating relations with research interlocutors, including normalising certain practices such as monetary compensation.

C. Training Structure

General Principles

Reframing the focus and structure of first year doctoral training programmes to help foster a cohort community, with a focus on the ethics, practice, and theory of anthropological work, rather than the bureaucratic process of completing a PhD at UCL.

Suggestions

1. Reframe 'Bootcamp': More directly acknowledge MPhil anxieties and hopes for their research projects through open conversations, changing the term 'bootcamp', including more post-fieldwork PhD's and different staff members, inviting active reflections on individual projects.
2. Interactive workshops: Redesign Term 1 module to include workshop-like elements, for example imagining a fieldwork situation that entails a particular ethical issue to generate a conversation about the ambiguity of ethical issues.
3. Teaching the institution: To understand the university and academy as a site, interrogating its purpose.
4. Reading lists: Create a standalone reading list which deals with and/or refers to the range of issues raised in this report.

D. Methods Teaching

Introducing non-normative epistemologies in teaching to help to critically rethink research methods.

Suggestions

1. Develop methods training and experimentation: This could include elements of training which include theory and methods in visual anthropology, digital ethnography, embodied research, sensory ethnography, and encouraging early experimentations and conversations.
2. Shifting language and registers to encompass a more just representation of sensory ethnography: It is important to shift and diversify our language choices when talking about methodology and knowledge creation.
3. Relationships with participants: Encourage studying the locus of violence and power (e.g., "studying-up") rather than just those who are harmed, shift the focus to counteract extractivist formats in fieldwork.

4. Collaborative and co-creative research: While collaboration may not always be appropriate, more support could be offered to PhD researchers about how best to approach them in the context of long-term ethnographic research and academic careers.

E. Writing and Representation

Writing and other forms of representation are aligned with ethical challenges which should be reflected upon early during the phase of research design, and revisited throughout. For example: questions of responsibility and accountability, moving away from the idea of the 'ideal' participant, recognising systems of representation outside of academia, writing against romanticisation.

Suggestions

1. Training session: We propose the introduction of training sessions before and after fieldwork (e.g., in Research & Design, ResDesPres, Thesis Writing Seminar, or elsewhere), dedicated to critically engaging with representation, by focusing on the themes such as the politics of anonymisation and co-shaping research.

Appendix C: PGR Student Conference Fund – application guidelines 2022/23

The Anthropology Department sets aside £6,000 per year to support travel and accommodation costs to conferences and conference registration fees for our MPhil/PhD students. The fund is intended to support students who are self-funded or who are not funded for conferences.

Students should apply for funding by completing the form which can be downloaded at the following link
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/sites/anthropology/files/pgr-student-conference-fund-application-form.docx>

The following points should be noted:

1. There are three annual deadlines for applications. These should be submitted electronically to the Research Programme Officer, Chiara Francesconi at c.francesconi@ucl.ac.uk
2. Students will receive email notification of funding decisions soon after each deadline. The deadlines in 2021/22 are:
 - Fri 9th December 2022
 - Fri 17th March 2023
 - Fri 9th June 2023
3. A minimum pot of £2,000 is available at each deadline. Money which is unspent at one deadline will roll over into the next funding period.
4. Students will normally receive a maximum of £600 per application.
5. Students in all years of the degree are invited to apply for conference funding. This includes students in Years One and Two (the fieldwork year) where it is advisable but not essential to have a paper or poster. Where students are not presenting, they should choose conferences and workshops where they can valuably network and learn about their fieldwork regions and which do not involve significant travel.
6. Students who are funded for conferences by their regular research council (or similar) will not normally be eligible for funding. The chief exception will be when Research Councils refuse to fund the 4th year of the degree, or 7th year in case of part-time students.
7. Funding will not be available after four full years of registration, or seven years of part-time study (Allowing for authorised interruptions and extensions).
8. Funding from this source covers travel (the cheapest possible usually), conference registration and accommodation (budget). Subsistence is not covered by the fund, except one conference dinner.
9. Allocated funding is transferred to students upon return of original receipts. No payments can be granted in advance. Receipts should be submitted to the Research Programme Officer Chiara Francesconi.
10. PLEASE NOTE that Travel and Accommodation must be booked through Clarity Travel Management, the UCL travel provider, unless spoken to the department in advance (so that they will be covered by the insurance).

NOTES



*This Draft: 12 September 2022
Text: Adam Drazin.
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