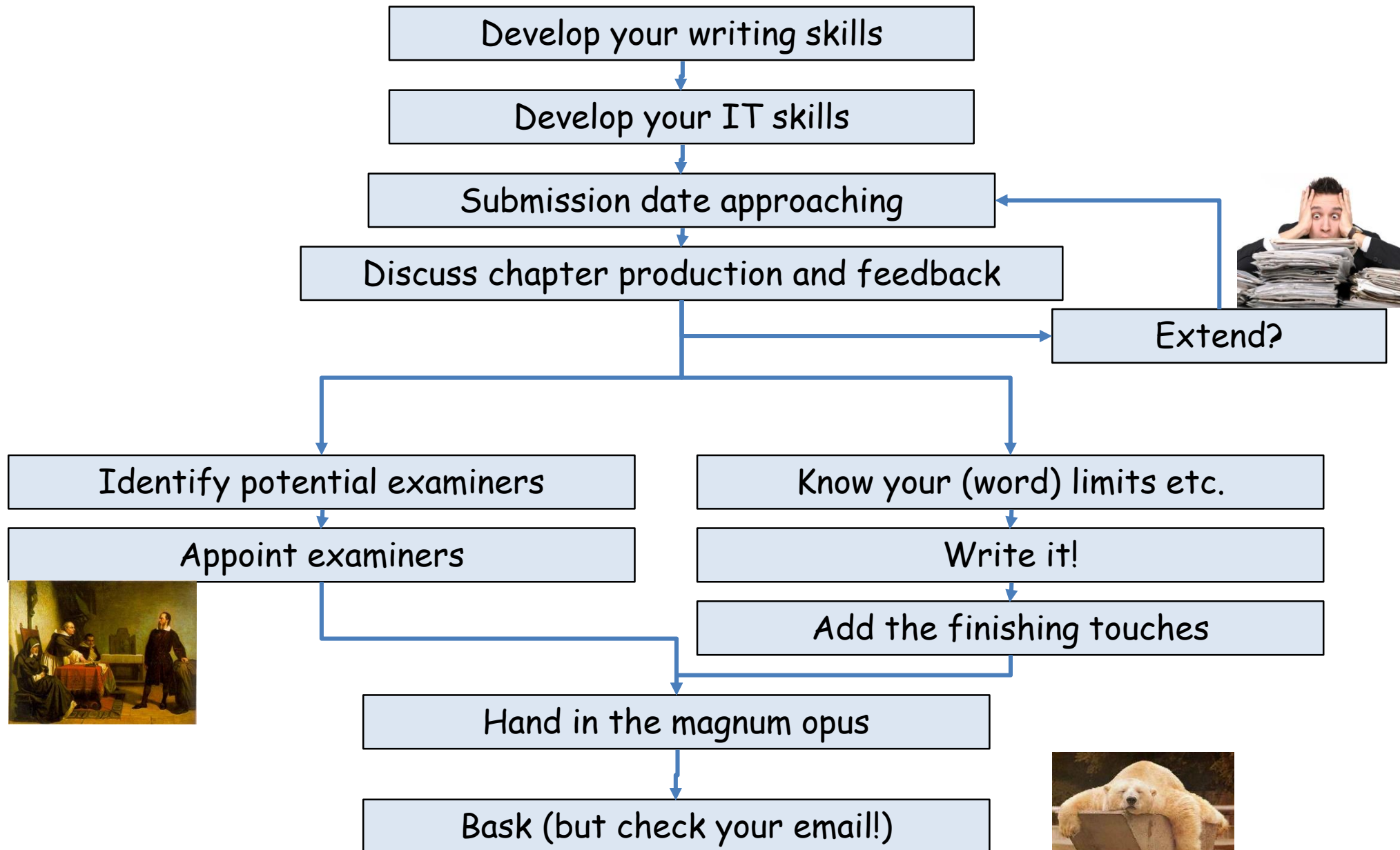


Final thesis production and examination procedures

[Information checked May 2017 – please see SSCM PGR webpage for updates.]

"There are two types of PhD thesis: perfect and submitted" Anon.

Flow chart for final thesis production



Develop your writing skills

BDC resources on project management / thesis writing / avoiding plagiarism

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/whats-available/catalogue/>

SSCM writing a qualitative paper and journal article short courses

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/social-community-medicine/shortcourse>

CELF programmes on academic English for PGR students

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/english-language/study/current-students/>

Develop your IT skills

BDC resources on

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/whats-available/catalogue/>

- EndNote
- Word for theses
- Etc. etc.

Know your submission date

- PhD by research
 - Full-time: min. 33 mths, max. 4 years
 - PT: pro rata up to max of 7 years
- PhD by publication
 - Full time: max. 1 year
 - PT: pro rata
- MD
 - Full-time: min 2 years, max 5 years
 - PT: pro rata

Discuss chapter structure, production and feedback with supervisors



- Q: How long does it take to write a thesis?
 - [ESRC advice] This may take considerably longer than expected!
 - Approximately 24 weeks should be allowed [if the student is well organised].
- Q: How long does it take a supervisor to comment on a chapter of a thesis?
 - Less time if it is well written and proof read
 - Less time if you agree with them on timelines and politely remind them if they are not meeting their side of the bargain

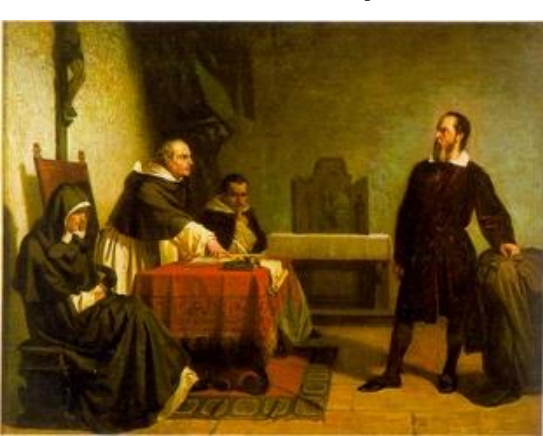
Extension / Suspension



- Extensions (**4 months** prior to end of period of study)
 - Extend study period (by max of 12 months usually)
 - “compelling reasons” with documentation
 - support from supervisor, school, graduate education director, funder
 - Stipend / salary implications?
 - fee implications?
 - immigration implications?
- Suspensions
 - Stop clock ticking (maternity, illness, job - max of 12 mths usually)
 - Documentation (e.g. Medical evidence)
 - Support from supervisor, school, graduate education director, funder
 - Stipend / salary implications?
 - immigration implications?

Identify potential examiners

- Discuss examiners with advisers
 - Senior academics in relevant areas
 - ***Normally*** 1 internal [UoB] and 1 external [except staff]
 - ***No connection*** with student, project, or supervisor that compromises impartiality
 - ≥ 4 previous PhD exams between them [rule of thumb]
 - Supervisor contacts them to check willingness



Appoint examiners

- Supervisor must complete 'Appointment of Research Degree Examiners' form
 - <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/exams/forms-notes/forms/>
 - Complete minimum 28 days before submission for approval / revision
 - Needs to be approved by Faculty
 - Must be sent to Postgrad Exam Office at least 7 days before submission
- No further contact with examiners except for logistics

Know your [word] limits etc.

Degree	Max word count guidance*	Extras	Preliminary pages	Style
PhD by research	80,000		Title Page, Abstract, Dedication and Acknowledgements, Author's Declaration and Table of Contents	Double sided A4, page numbers, 1.5 or double spaced
PhD by publication	small number high quality publications	CV, Substantial commentary		
MD	60,000			

* excluding references, appendices and lists of contents

See annex 4 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgrcode/>

Choose your style

- SSCM PhD Word templates (arts or sciences)

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/social-community-medicine/courses/postgraduate/currentstudents/>

- Or create your own based on previous theses in your field -
don't use annoying fonts.

What does a PhD look like?

Look at other theses in your field
(<http://ethos.bl.uk/Home.do>). Think about your readers.
There are few rules!

Should include (not necessarily in this order):

1. Introduction (what is the purpose of the thesis?)
2. Subject area background information (context)
3. Theoretical background (competing schools of thought?)
4. Critical review of others' work (what is already known?)
5. The thesis research approach & methods
(objectives/hypotheses)
6. Presentation of evidence/findings

What does a PhD look like?

7. Discussion

- Main results (What are the novel/original findings)
- Strengths & weaknesses (Novel methods?)
- Comparison with other studies
- Implications / recommendations (What is the wider significance?)
- Future research

8. Appendices

- Useful for full understanding (not padding), but too distracting for main thesis

References [No chapter number]

Witcher. 'What should a PhD look like'. Grad Manag Res 5 (1). 1990 29-36.

Write it!

"Begin at the beginning,' the King said gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop.'

Lewis Carroll



Dunleavy P. Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation (Palgrave Study Guides), 2003.

Phillips EM, Pugh DS. How to get a PhD. OUP, Buckingham, 2010.

Murray R. How to Write a Thesis. OUP, 2011.

Write it!

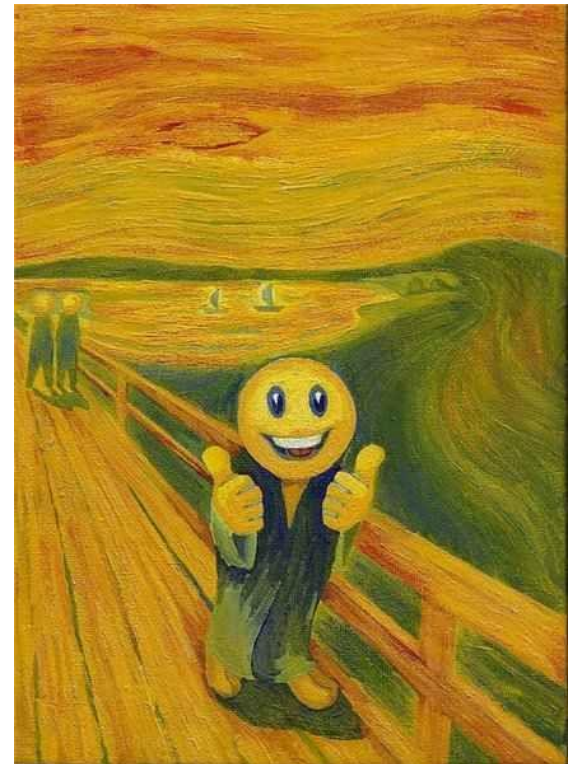
Bristol Doctoral College

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/whats-available/catalogue/>

- Writers retreat

How to finish a PhD:

1. Block out time
2. Avoid distractions
3. Set achievable targets



Add the finishing touches

- Find a proof-reader (not your supervisor!)
- Check your examiners' publications
- Check copyright, quotes and citations
- Link chapters together and recap
- Importance of the abstract and introductory and summary chapters
- Check table/figure numbers, cross-references
- **Check supervisors are happy for submission**

Hand in the magnum opus

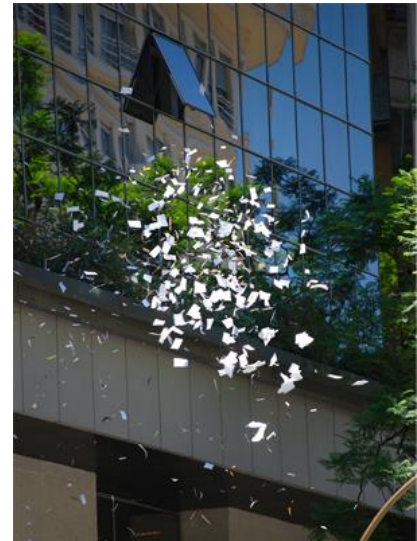
- Submit an electronic copy of thesis via Blackboard

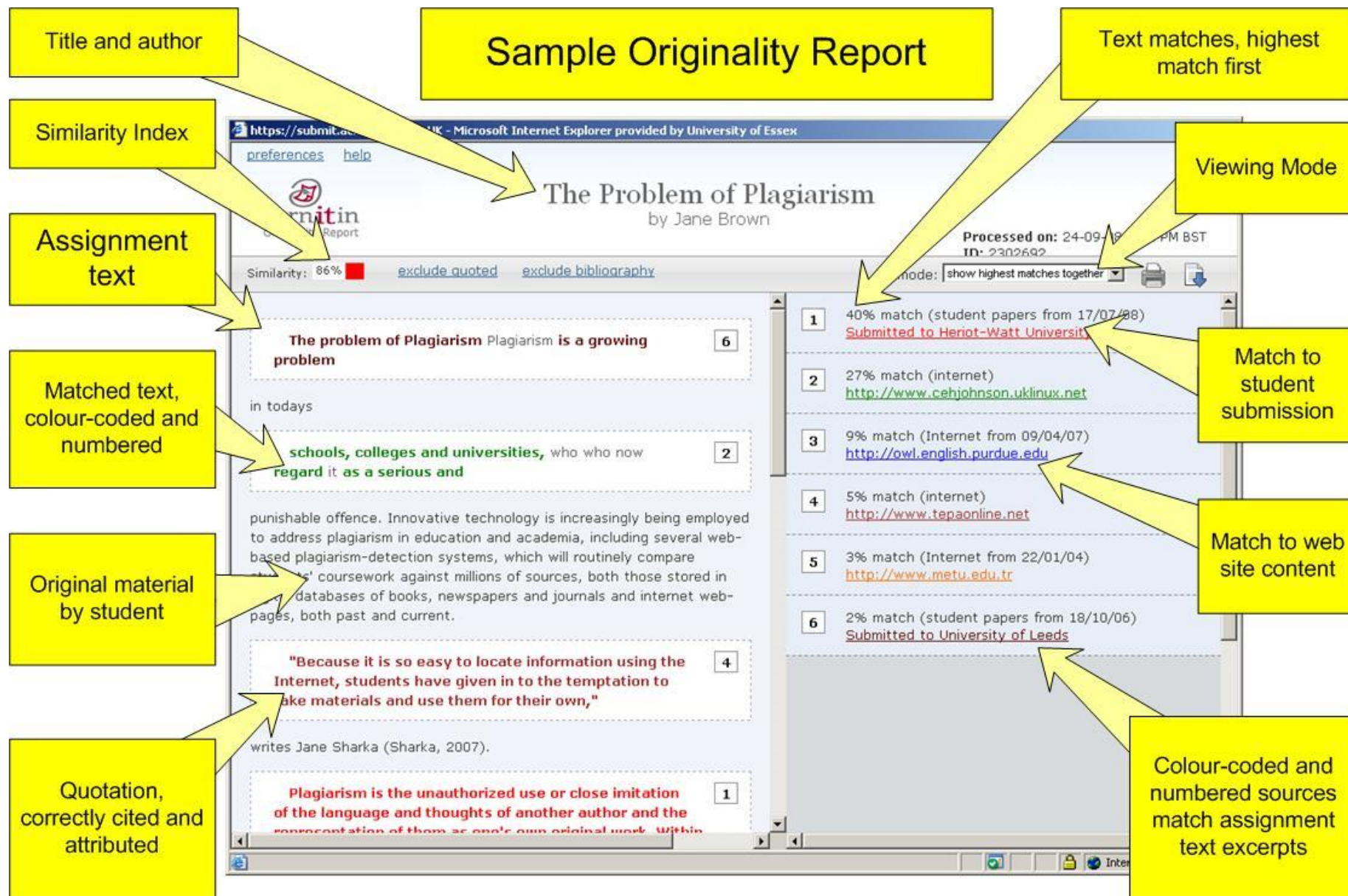
<http://www.bris.ac.uk/social-community-medicine/media/phd/fmdpolicyplagiarism.pdf>

- **Email School**

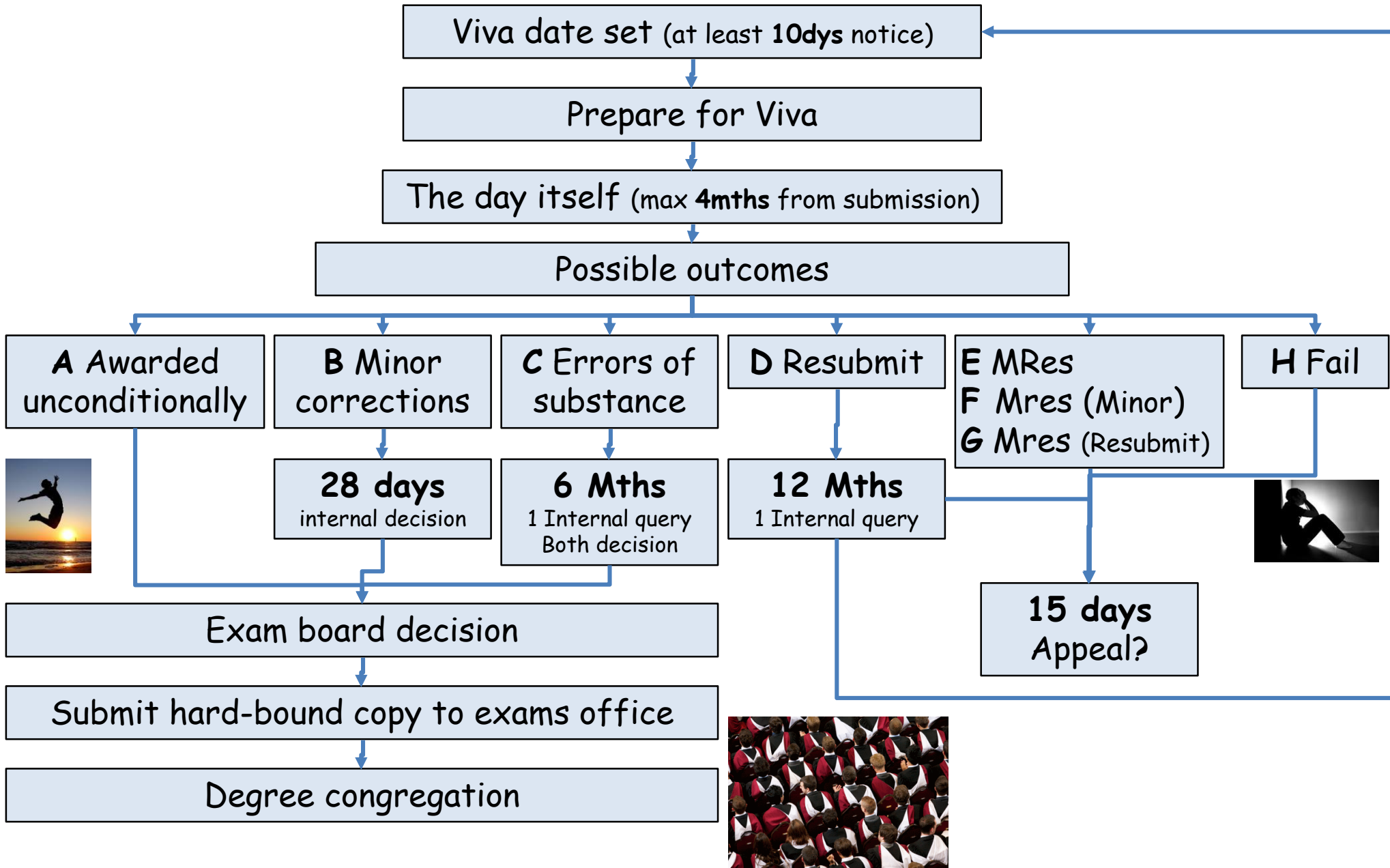
sscm-pgr-e-submission@sympa.bristol.ac.uk

- 2 copies of soft-bound thesis to Postgraduate Examinations Office (for examiners)
- Keep Postgraduate Examinations Office informed of any change of address





Flow chart for the viva and beyond



Prepare for viva

- Take a break from your thesis
- Then, re-read thesis (spot all the typos)
- Re-read key references (and examiners')
- Discuss likely questions with advisers – prepare answers
- Have a mock viva



Prepare answers to likely viva questions

- What is the thesis about?
- What literature/theory informed you the most? What alternative theories are there?
- Why did you do the work in the way you did? Could you have done it differently?
- What are the major findings / contribution to knowledge?
- What are the key limitations?
- What would you have done differently?
- What are the policy implications?
- What are the key questions for future research?

Prepare for viva

- BDC e-learning module 'Preparing for your viva'

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/ppd/whats-available/catalogue/>

- Vitae checklist

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/completing-your-doctorate/your-viva>

The day itself

- **In the room**

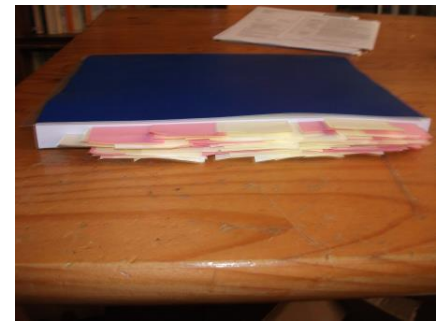
- External: normally leads discussion
- Internal: contributes to questioning, coordinates reports & corrections if needed
- You
 - Your thesis
 - Additional materials (e.g. new publications)
 - Pen, paper, calculator?
 - Your phone (switched off)
- Internal Chair **[Sometimes]**
- Your supervisor? (default is no)



The day itself

- **What happens?**

- Can last between 1 and 4 hours (breaks allowed!) (approx. 2 hours is average)
- Discussion of the thesis and research
 - To confirm you carried out the research
 - For you to justify how you conducted the research
 - To discuss aspects of interest to all parties
- Usually you leave the room while the examiners reach decision



Examiner's preliminary & final reports include...

- Ability to present and defend intellectual arguments in writing
- Suitability for publication
- Purpose of the research
- General knowledge of the subject
- Review of literature
- Application of research methods
- Ability to present and defend intellectual arguments verbally
- Contribution to advancement of knowledge
- Extent of collaboration

Answering the questions!

- Remember:
 - You know more about many aspects than the examiners
 - Most examiners really don't want major corrections or resubmit
- Take your time / refer to your thesis
- Be prepared to defend your approach and acknowledge limitations / alternatives
- Learn when to say “I don't know”
 - Don't launch in; ask for clarification
 - OK to give a tentative, reasoned answer – but don't bluff
 - OK to say ‘I don't know’ or ‘can I come back to that’



After viva

- **A:** Celebrate; check exam board & degree congregation dates; submit hard copy (**28 days** of board)
- **B:** Celebrate; check exam board & degree congregation dates; make minor corrections to internal (**28 days** of board); submit hard copy (**28 days** of board)
- **C:** Celebrate; make corrections (**6 mths** of board) to both; provided all happy submit hard copy (**28 days** of board).
- **Others:** Appeal? (**15 days** of board); Resubmit (**12 mths** of board); new Viva...

Final version of thesis

- Hard bound copies
 - Examinations office (including declarations)
 - School
 - Personal?, Supervisor?, Sponsor?
- Title page for British Library
- Agreeing to storage in UK Database of Theses (EThOS, managed by British Library).

Useful links

- SSCM FAQs
- SSCM Handbook

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/social-community-medicine/courses/postgraduate/currentstudents/>

- UoB code of Practice
 - See section 9 (assessment) & annexes

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/pg/cop-research-degrees.html>

- UoB FAQs, Exam board dates, & forms
- <http://www.bris.ac.uk/exams/research/>

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR FEEDBACK SHEETS

QUESTIONS?

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