

DETAILED TIMETABLE FOR DOING PHD

(Revised draft, in principle agreed with supervisor)

Background

In the postgraduate training session on starting a research degree by Dr. John Wakeford (30/10/2000) it was suggested that, for planning purposes, a minimum of 500 effective working days are needed to do a PhD. However, unless carefully planned, more time will be needed. In my particular case careful planning is even more necessary because I am self-financing the PhD and want to keep the loss of income by not working to a minimum¹.

Leeds University assumes that a part time PhD will normally take 5 years, but allows 2 years for “overflow”. However, with special permission, 4 years will be allowed to complete the part time PhD.

For planning purposes I am assuming that I can do the part time PhD in only 4 years and 350 working days, that is from September 2000 – August 2004. The main reasons for assuming that I can do the PhD in less time needed are:

1. On two of the four PhD outcomes (research/work environment and personal effectiveness) I am ahead of most research students²;
2. For the last decade I have been working in water resource management, and plan to do so in future as well. This will allow time spent on “work” to be relevant to the PhD and reduce the need for PhD-only related time.

Detailed work plan

I will be doing the PhD part time, most likely alongside a part time (75%) job in Bangladesh. Depending on the requirements of the job time allocation may be shifted between quarters. Every attempt will be made however to stick to the overall framework. I plan to be at Leeds 4 weeks a year.

Work plan in working days per quarter

Year	2000				2001				2002				2003				2004			T.
Activity / Quarter	4 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	%			
Training courses	20				5				5				5				10			
Literature review	35	5	5	5	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17			
Theor. FW/method.	5	5	5	5	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9			
Pilot case study		5	10	5													6			
Upgrading papers				10													3			
Field work (incl. pl.)		5			10	20	20	20	20	10							30			
Analysis				5			5	5	5	5	5	5					10			
Writing up					5			5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	14			
Viva																5	1			
Total working days	60	20	20	30	22	22	25	32	35	22	12	12	12	7	7	12	^{350/} ₁₀₀			

N.B. Assuming upgrading in September 2001 and viva in December 2004.

N.B. A “working day” may be done in two evenings and I plan to do 25% of the study that way.

¹ Assuming that I do the PhD in 4 years and that I spend on average 1.5 months a year at Leeds, all “direct costs” including tickets and field work come to appr. £ 23,000. The “indirect cost”, that is loss of income is roughly £ 290 per working day. All in all 500 working days, 5 year of study and cost of fieldwork, printing etc. would add up to £ 168,000. I hope to do about 25% of the study in spare time (no loss of income). With that and doing the PhD in 350 days, the total cost would be around £ 100,000. It should be noted however that other ways of calculating the cost of doing a PhD are also possible. For budget purposes I have opted for the maximum-cost calculation so as to engender a sense of urgency.

² See my *Learning Timetable PhD Outcomes*, dated 3 October 2000.