

# Owning a Successful DPhil

## Wed 6<sup>th</sup> wk MT

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JCCG Reps

“I don’t know anyone whose DPhil went completely smoothly.”

“A D.Phil. is a qualification in independent research.”

# Workshop Outline

1. Introduction & Motivation,
2. Working Hours,
3. Deadlines & Finishing On-time,
4. Expectations,
  - “What does my supervisor expect from me?”
  - “What do you want from your supervisor?”
  - The truth
5. Organising a long project,
6. Summary,
7. Internal & External Resources.

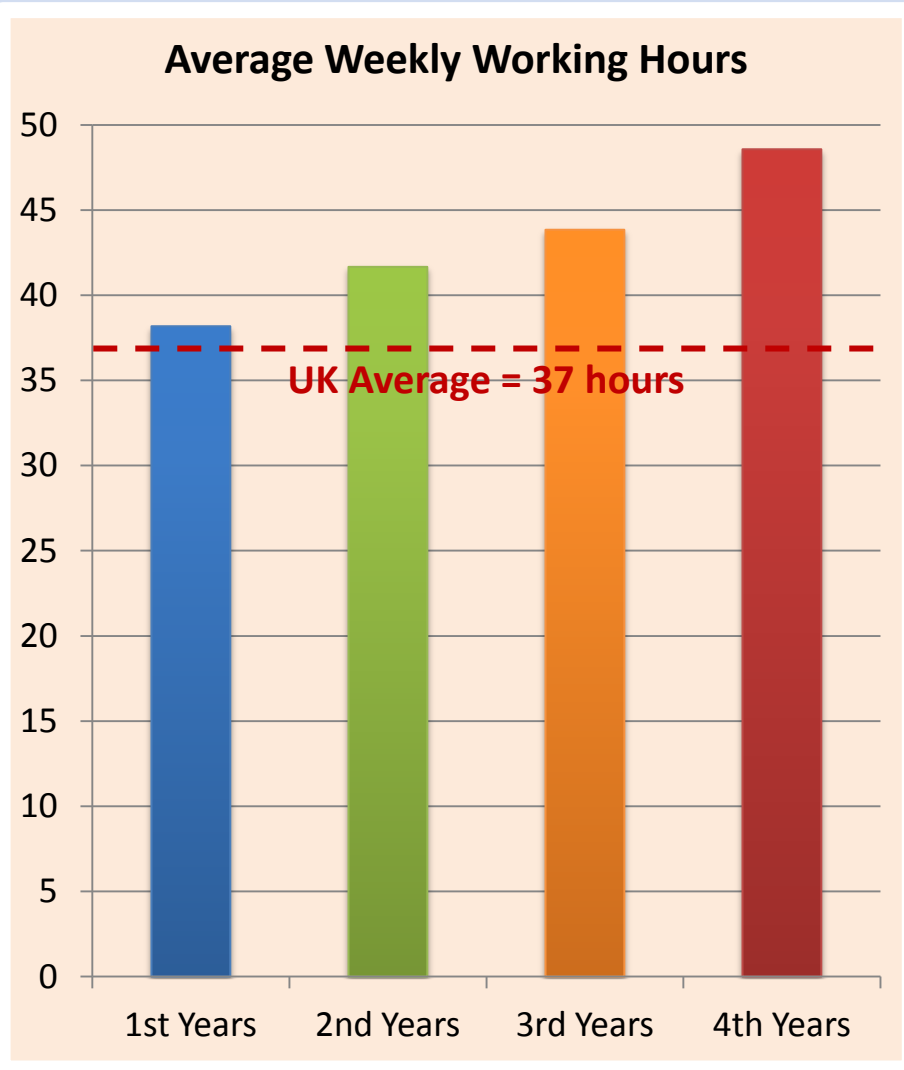
# Introduction & Motivation (1)

- Department offers uses compulsory **Project Management** workshops and forms (PMFs).
- Today is about **Project Ownership** and **Supervisor Relationship Management**.

# Introduction & Motivation (2)

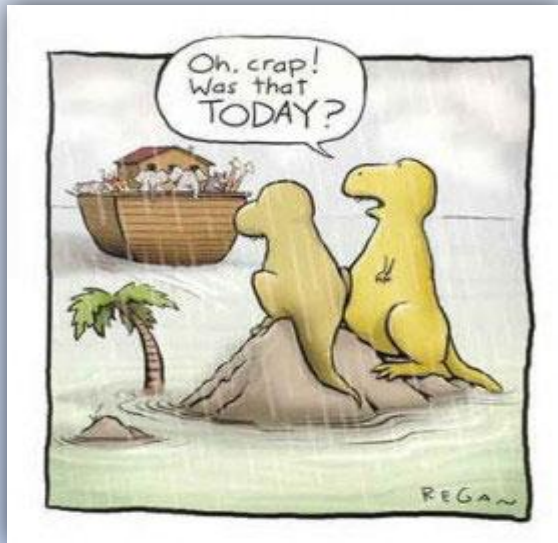
- JCCG represents students. We want to help each other.
- Students with good supervisor relations have **fewer delays** and **finish sooner**.
- Students with **unhappy supervisor relationships**, had **infrequent** and **unproductive** meetings.

# Working Hours

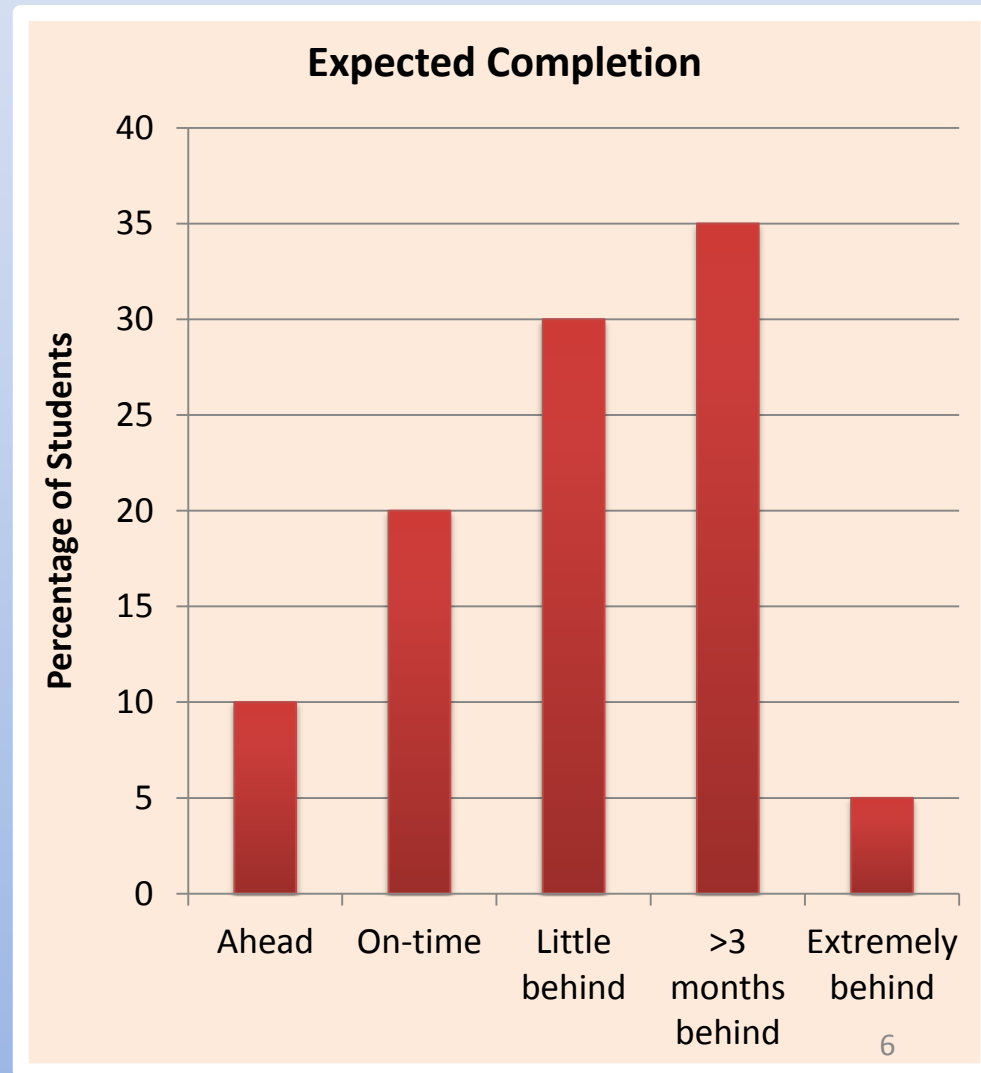


- 4<sup>th</sup> years work **10 hours more** than 1<sup>st</sup> years per week.
- Work **consistently** and don't put things off till the final years.
- Delivering independently early on builds trust with supervisors.
- A proper work-life balance is important (≈8 wk per year holiday).

# Deadlines & Finishing On-time



- Managing a long project takes special skills.
- **You are responsible** for identifying goals, setting deadlines, and assessing progress.
- **Nobody will chase you** if you miss your deadlines.



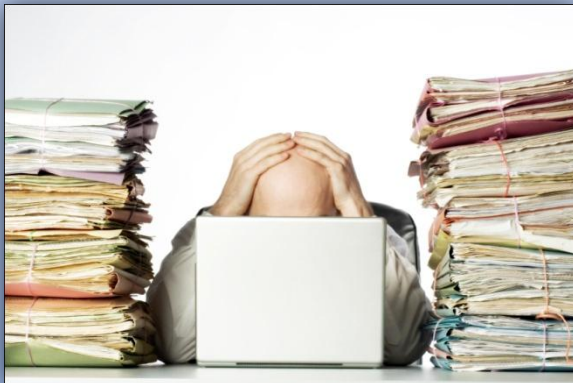
# Group Exercise (10 mins max.)

**“What does my supervisor expect from me?”**

**“What do you want from your supervisor?”**



**3 Equal Groups**



# “What does my supervisor expect from me?”

“to make a transition from strong guidance by the supervisor to **independent creativity and judgement**”

“**Your** job is to keep **your** project moving”

“**taking responsibility** for the progress of **your** own work”

“**independence** in practical problem-solving, especially in experimental work”

“expect some **input of ideas**, particularly as a result of a thorough literature search”

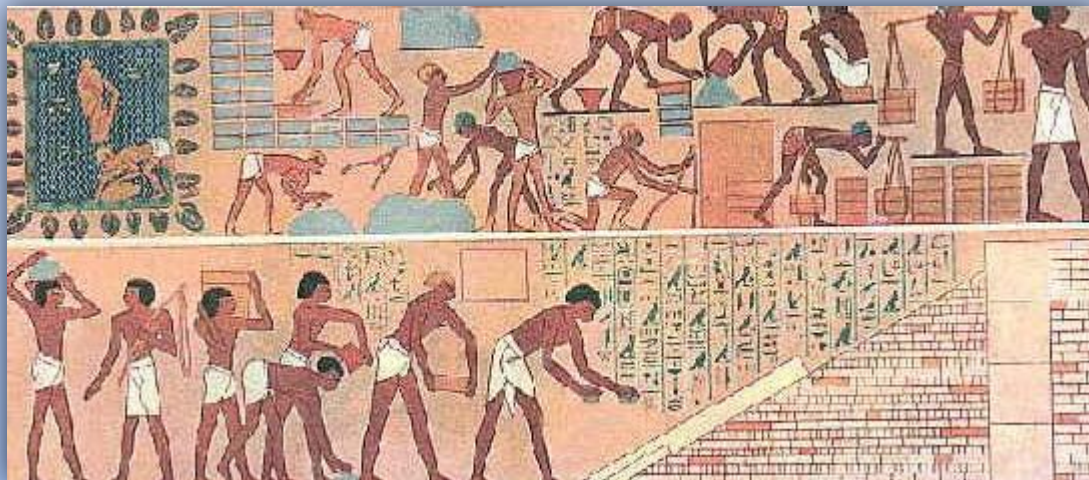


# **“What do you want from your supervisor?”**

- Frequency of meetings (weekly, termly?),
- Personal involvement (more or less?),
- Availability of resources,
- Trips / Conferences?
- Presentation practice?

# Organising a Long Project

- What's your longest project so far?
- Have you got an **outline plan**?
- Have you **negotiated expectations** with your supervisor?



# Former Students

“The major thing I'd say is don't be afraid to talk to your supervisor as often as you can. They find nearly everything else they do more boring than your results”

“Know what's a reasonable amount of time for things to take”

“Don't ignore problems. If it's broken then tell supervisors”

“Don't just go to your supervisor with problems and no solutions”

“The key is to plan to complete and submit within the duration of the initial funding, to work consistently”

An ingredient for success is to write and submit one or more substantial papers before half-way through the funding.

“My work always went better when I was talking regularly to them”

“If you get to a point in your work where you can't make any progress due to one serious bottleneck, you need to start developing alternative strands of research”

# Summary

- You must **take ownership** of your project for it to succeed.



- You must find your **work-life balance**.

# Internal Resources

- Current students – they've done it before!
- **JCCG Coffee**  
every Wednesday  
11am,
- **JCCG Year Reps,**
- The Materials Handbook,
- Marion Beckett and Adrian Taylor.



# External Resources

- Oxford Learning Institute:
  - <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/supervision/>
- Vitae:
  - <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/>
- MPLS division skills website:
  - <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/skills>

