

# PhD Essentials

## Crucial scholarly skills for a good start on your PhD

### Course description

Starting in a PhD program can be as intimidating as it is exciting. While some students come directly from a masters' degree, others have accumulated practical experience before returning to academia. In both cases, and regardless of specific disciplines, students must shift from being a consumer of knowledge to being the ones who produce it. In this process, they need to become well versed in their literature, proficient in their methods and masters of their data, all at the same time. What is more, underlying all of these are the essential scholarly skills doctoral students need to develop, in order to successfully carry on research that makes a contribution to their field. While doctoral schools support PhD students in this endeavor, the university library can offer additional resources and guidance in developing the kinds of soft skills that cut across fields.

The objective of this course is to introduce PhD students to fundamental aspects of academic life and equip them with essential skills for a successful research career. The course also seeks to provide an arena in which PhD students from different fields can meet and develop fruitful peer relationships that support them throughout their PhD journeys.

### Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students:

- Knowledge:
  - Have good understanding of what is involved in the academic craft, crucial values of academic integrity, how academic publishing works, and how to be productive writers.
  - Have acquired knowledge of different approaches for searching, assessing and managing literature and secondary research data.
  - Have an overview of best practices for managing research data and writing a data management plan.
  - Have good understanding of the importance of other types of research dissemination and societal engagement from scholars.
- Skills:
  - Are able to critically interpret a range of bibliometric indicators in academic sources, and identify signs of predatory publishing.
  - Can differentiate different purposes of literature reviews, match these purposes with different types of reviews, undertake searches in databases, and use reference management software.
  - Can identify different characteristics in research data (personal data, sensitive data, data that is protected by intellectual property rights, FAIR and open data) and are able to adequately plan the data management approaches for their own projects.

- Can structure productive writing routines and employ tools to support academic writing.
- Are able adjust their communication approach according to target groups and situations (in academic conferences, industry conferences, presentations to the general public).
- General competences:
  - Can confidently navigate the academic environment, and know how and where to find additional information/support they might need through the doctoral program.
  - Can carry on with their research projects under rigorous academic standards and with academic integrity.
  - Are able to reflect on current themes relevant to the academic craft, such as open science, data management regulations, science dissemination and others.

## Course schedule

Date	Theme	Room
18 <sup>th</sup> September - 9:00-15:30	Finding, assessing and managing literature	E144
19 <sup>th</sup> September - 9:00-15:00	Managing your research data	Library – basement
20 <sup>th</sup> September - 9:00-15:00	Getting words down on paper	E141
21 <sup>st</sup> September - 9:00-15:00	Presenting and publishing your research	E144

## Course responsible

This course is offered by the university library at Nord University, and it is coordinated by senior research librarian [Dr. Leticia Antunes Nogueira](#).

Dr. Nogueira has a PhD in innovation economics from Aalborg University in Denmark (2018). She has experience from the institute sector in Norway, where she participated in several international research projects, from grant writing to execution. Dr. Nogueira has published a range of academic outputs, including high-impact journals, book chapters, and research reports. She has also been active in research dissemination to popular audiences, from high-school students to business actors.

If you would like to know more about her research experience, check [Cristin](#), [ORCID](#), or [Research Gate](#).

## Formalities

This is an elective course that does not include examination. A certificate of participation will be provided for students who take part in at least 75% of the course. The target audience refers to first-year PhD students from any discipline. The course is free of charge for PhD students enrolled at Nord university. Master students who would like to take part in the course must ask their supervisors for a referral.

The language of instruction is English, and the course consists of in-person seminar and workshop sessions. An evaluation survey will be distributed to participants at the end of the course.

## Course plan

### Day 1: Finding, assessing and managing literature

#### Pre-lecture assignment:

- Read Gusenbauer & Haddaway (2021), Martin (2013) and The guidelines for Research Ethics relevant to your discipline (see reading list below for full references).

#### Morning program (9:00–11:45)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	1. Premises and goals of the course + About UB	5 min - 9:00 - 9:05
Leticia	Academic integrity	15 min - 9:05 - 9:20
Leticia	2. How academic publishing works	40 min - 9:20 - 10:00
Break		10:00 - 10:15
Wiebke and Leticia	3. Online profiles Cristin, ORCID, social media	30 min - 10:15 - 10:45
Leticia	4. Searching for literature	60 min - 10:45 - 11:45
Lunch		11:45 – 12:45

#### Afternoon program (12:45–15:30)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	Mechanics of searching	30 min - 12:45 - 13:15
Leticia and Marit	Choosing and using databases	45 min - 13:15 - 14:00
Break		14:00 – 14:15
Wiebke	5. Understanding bibliometric indicators	30 min - 14:15 - 14:45
Tor Henning	6. Organizing and managing your references	45 min - 14:45 - 15:30

### Day 2: Managing your research data

#### Pre-lecture assignment:

- Consider what type of empirical data you will collect and/or analyse in your doctoral research, what characteristics these data presents, and what kinds of precaution is required in their handling.
- Read Nord university's guidelines for research data

#### Morning program (9:00–11:45)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	Recap from day before and introduction for the day	15 min - 9:00 - 9:15
Tadeu	Data management plan: Overview of what you need to consider in your PhD project in terms of data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Data description and collection or re-use of existing data</li><li>- Documentation and data quality</li></ul>	45 min - 9:15 - 10:00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storage and backup during the research process</li> <li>- Legal and ethical requirements, codes of conduct</li> <li>- Data sharing and long-term preservation</li> <li>- Data management responsibilities and resources</li> </ul>	
Break		10:00 - 10:15
Tadeu	Searching for existing data & data archiving	45 min - 10:15 – 11:00
Lunch		11:00 – 11:45

#### Afternoon program (12:45–15:00)

Responsible	Content	Time
Toril	Data privacy & information security	45min - 11:45 – 12:30
Tadeu and Toril	Break and Hands-on work / Doing own DMP + Sikt	75 min - 12:30 – 13:45
Tadeu	Presentation and discussion in plenum	75 min - 13:45 - 15:00

#### Day 3: Getting words down on paper

##### Pre-lecture assignment:

- Reflect upon your experience going from a consumer to a producer of knowledge. How do you feel about becoming an active part of a scholarly conversation?
- Think of your attitudes towards writing.

#### Morning program (9:00–11:45)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	Recap from day before and introduction	15 min - 9:00 - 9:15
Leticia	From consumer to producer of knowledge	30 min - 9:15 - 10:00
Break		10:00 - 10:15
Leticia	Why is writing so hard? —or is it really? Good writing habits and strategies	30 min - 10:15 – 10:45
Leticia	What can we learn about writing from reading?	30 min - 10:45 - 11:15
Leticia	Crafting a thesis statement	30 min - 10:45 - 11:15
Lunch		11:45 – 12:45

#### Afternoon program (12:45–15:00)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	In-class writing exercise	60 min - 12:45 - 13:45
Break		13:45 - 14:00
Leticia	Picking an outlet for your paper	15 min - 14:00 – 14:15
Vidar	Open Access: Why, how and when	45 min - 14:15 – 15:00

## Day 4: Presenting and publishing your research

### Pre-lecture assignment:

- Read Duke et al. (2019, chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5) and Nogueira et al (2021).
- Reflect upon your experiences with public speaking and networking.
- Consider the role of scientists in society and how you think research can make an impact outside academia.
- Write an “elevator pitch” statement of what your research is about.

### Morning program (9:00–11:45)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	Recap from day before and introduction for the day	15 min - 9:00 - 9:15
Leticia	Academic networking	40 min - 9:15 - 9:55
Leticia	Exercise	10+10 min - 9:55 - 10:15
Break		10:15 - 10:30
Lisbeth	Networking with practitioners and industry	30 min - 10:30 – 11:00
Leticia	Scientists’ role in society and research impact	30 min - 11:00 - 11:30
Lunch		11:30 – 12:30

### Afternoon program (12:30–15:00)

Responsible	Content	Time
Leticia	Research dissemination	30 min - 12:30 - 13:00
Leticia	Your publication strategy	45 min - 13:00 – 13:45
Break		13:45 - 14:00
Leticia	Hands on work – publication strategy	45 min - 14:00 – 14:45
Final considerations and questions		15 min - 14:45 - 15:00

## Reading list

Duke, D., Denicolo, P., & Henslee, E. (2019). *Publishing for impact*. SAGE Publications. [we will focus on chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5]

Gusenbauer, M., & Haddaway, N. R. (2021). What every researcher should know about searching – clarified concepts, search advice, and an agenda to improve finding in academia. *Research Synthesis Methods*, 12(2), 136–147. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1457>

Martin, B. R. (2013). Whither research integrity? Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and coercive citation in an age of research assessment. *Research Policy*, 42(5), 1005–1014. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2013.03.011>

Nogueira, L. A., Bjørkan, M., & Dale, B. (2021). Conducting Research in a Post-normal Paradigm: Practical Guidance for Applying Co-production of Knowledge. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fenvs.2021.699397>

Nord University (2023). *Research Data*. [nord.no/en/research/researchers/research-data](http://nord.no/en/research/researchers/research-data)

The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees. Guidelines for Research Ethics [check the relevant document to your discipline]. <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/>.

### Recommended reading:

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2020). The problematizing review: A counterpoint to Elsbach and vanKnippenberg's argument for integrative reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12582>

CESSDA Training Team (2017 - 2022). CESSDA Data Management Expert Guide. <https://dmeg.cessda.eu/>

Davis, M. S. (1971). That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1(2), 309–344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004839317100100211>

Elsbach, K. D., & Knippenberg, D. van. (2020). Creating high-impact literature reviews: An argument for 'integrative reviews.' *Journal of Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12581>

Jensen, J. (2017). *Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics*. University of Chicago Press.

Nygaard, L. P. (2015). *Writing for scholars: A practical guide to making sense & being heard* (2nd edition). Sage Publications Inc. [especially chapters 5 and 6]

Shore, Z. (2016). *Grad school essentials: A crash course in scholarly skills*. University of California Press.

Tihanyi, L. (2020). From "That's Interesting" to "That's Important". *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(2), 329–331. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2020.4002>

Wilkinson, M. D., Dumontier, M., Aalbersberg, Ij. J., ... Mons, B. (2016). The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship. *Scientific Data*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>