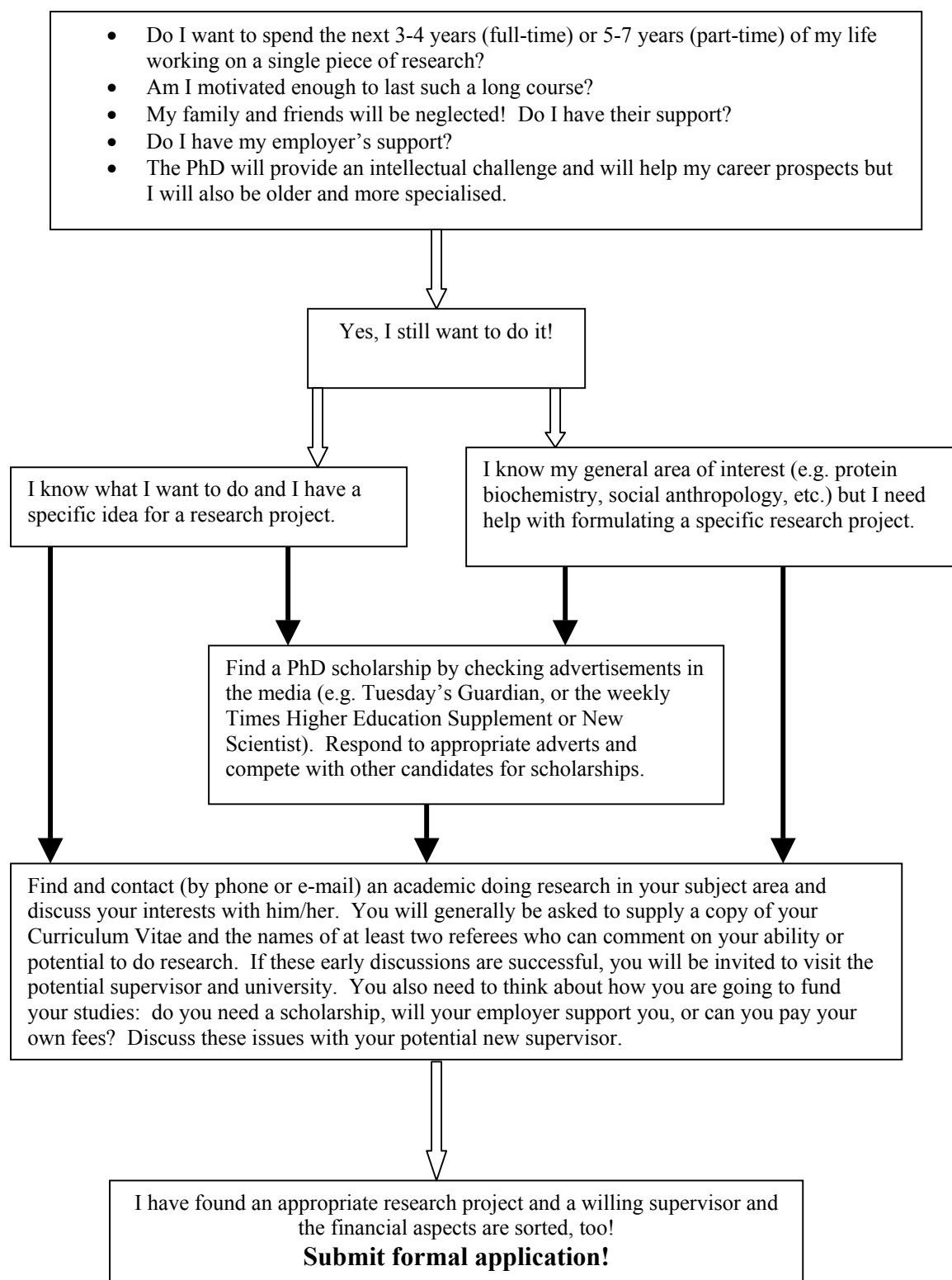


Before you start a PhD course: The thought process



The Milestones of a PhD

Minimum registration periods: 33 months full-time, 45 months part-time*

Note: Most UK universities require students to re-enrol at the start of every academic year and submit an Annual Report (on a 2-page proforma) at the end of every academic year.

Year 1

- Months 1-6: Undertake extensive reading, decide with supervisor on a detailed research programme, prepare a research proposal and begin data collection and/or experimental work
- You may be advised by your supervisor to enrol for specialised modules in research methods
- Month 6-9: Registration of research project with the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC). Most students register initially for an MPhil with a possibility of transferring to PhD at 9-12 months after registration.
- Months 6-12: Continue with data collection and/or experimental work, continue reading.

Year 2

- Throughout: Lots of data collection and/or experimental work!
- Writing drafts for thesis chapters or literature review
- Months 3-9 (9-15 months after registration): Write and submit MPhil/PhD Transfer Report (*circa* 3,000-6,000 words) to RDC for approval. Transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD.

Year 3 (Years 3-5 for p/t students)*

- Throughout: Lots of data collection and/or experimental work! And more writing!
- End of Year 3 (f/t) or Years 4-5 (p/t):
 - Complete data collection and/or experimental work and write up PhD thesis
 - Supervisor will suggest and discuss choice of an External Examiner
 - Exam arrangements submitted for approval by the RDC

***Note:** it is extremely rare for a student (even a full-timer!) to complete all data collection and/or experimental work and thesis writing within 3 years. More often, full-time students complete experimental work/fieldwork in 3 years and the writing up is done in the 4th year.

Year 4 (Years 5-7 for p/t students)

- Writing up. **Note:** If you take on a full-time job before you have written up your thesis, chances are that it will take you a very long time indeed to submit your dissertation. On the other hand, if you write full-time (i.e. most of your waking hours), it can be done in less than 3 months for science and performance subjects, six for humanities and social sciences.
- Submit thesis and defend it in a Viva Voce (oral examination)

