

PhD Vlog Week 3: Katherine MacKenzie Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
0:00:01		[MUSIC/TITLES].
0:00:05	Katherine Mackenzie	Hey, welcome to Week 3 of my PhD blog. Today, I thought I'd focus a little more on PhD research in general, here, compared to the UK. And what can you expect from the PhD process of getting from the beginning of your PhD to the end, and the thesis process, and publishing, and stuff. So, I already said, that here, the PhD process is seen as more of a career. So you've got a PhD position, and you're a researcher for the hospital.
0:00:35		And so, although you get some benefits from that system, you know, there's a salary, it's not a stipend, you've got, kind of, the benefits of having employment, so that kind of thing. It also kind of increase the pressure a little bit, in terms of getting publications, and what's expected workload wise, from the hospital, and your supervisor, of you.
0:01:05		So, in the UK system, as I understand the UK system, it's not a necessary, not a requirement of you, in your PhD, to have publications. You have to do a certain amount of work, but if you have negative results, and those kind of things, it's not necessarily detrimental to your thesis. So you can still write a thesis based on negative results.
0:01:35		The Dutch system is a little different. You are expected to get a certain number of publications. So, for a lot of publications, especially in the higher end, or the higher impact factor journals, you need to have positive results, like a lot of journals don't publish negative results. So in that aspect, for Erasmus, for example, I think you need one first author paper in a high-ish impact factor journal. And you need another, a second
0:02:05		author paper, as well. And each paper has to contribute to a chapter of your thesis. So, the British thesis, kind of, it's like huge, it's, you're writing a textbook, pretty much, and it's a long thesis, you're expected to pour a lot into that. Here, theses are made up of the papers that you've published, and you write a kind of introduction

		rounding them all up, and introducing them all.
0:02:35		And then, a conclusion that rounds them all, and draws, kind of, one main conclusion from all of your different publications. So, as an example, here are two Dutch theses. They're about this thick, they're A5, they're not huge. And inside, they're made up scientific papers, an acknowledgement section, you know,
0:03:05		all of the bits you would expect from a thesis in the UK, but the chapters are your papers that you've published. Which means that they're not that thick. So, in contrast to the A4, pretty thick, UK thesis, this is quite small. What's slightly different, as well, is that you can print out about a hundred or more of the copies of your thesis, and you give them to all your
0:03:35		friends, and your family, and everyone that you want to come to your defence, as well as everyone in different departments of the university that you know, other PhD students. It isn't just you and the examiners, it's an audience full of your family and friends, and everyone that you want to be there. And it's, kind of, more of a celebratory day - celebratory, celebratory, whatever. It's a day where you're just gonna get your PhD.
0:04:05		So, you give a 15 minute presentation, summing up your thesis, what's in that, and your experiments, and your conclusions. And then, you have your examiners, or your panel of people, that are professors from various departments, and your supervisors, generally, and your two promoters. And they will all have a certain number of questions that they ask you. So you give your 15 minute presentation, and you have pretty much 45 minutes of questions.
0:04:35		And then, after you've finished that, and you answer all the questions, it's over, and you get presented with your PhD. In the UK, I know that the viva process is really stressful, and you have, like, either one on one, or two on one interview, for however long it takes for them to be supervised that you know your thesis. So, it's quite different, here, a lot

		less - well, a lot less pressure at the thesis part.
0:05:05		But, I think, a little more pressure throughout your PhD, to get publishable results. So, I think that's all I wanted to tell you about that. Overall, I think the PhD process sounds a little nicer here - I haven't gone through the whole thing, so I don't know. And I haven't gone through what it would be in the UK, so I don't know. But while I was in my Masters, I know that the PhD students were working really hard in the UK towards their thesis.
0:05:35		And there were, there is still publication pressure. Everyone knows that in science, you have to publish, or you'll perish, it's that environment. But here, I see it a little more as, you need a certain number of publications to be able to get your PhD thesis, in the end, anyway. So, if anyone has any questions about that, I don't know all of the process yet,
0:06:05		because I haven't got there. So, I'm picking it up as some of my different friends, in other areas, get promoted, get their PhDs. Then, I'm learning more about the process and thinking, oh wow, oh that's different. So, I'll try and read comments, and reply, if you have anything that I got wrong as well, then let me know. And, see you next week for my last PhD blog. Bye.
0:06:35		[MUSIC/TITLES].

END OF TRANSCRIPT