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The reason I chose UL is due to the location of my supervisors and funding opportunities, but I was delighted to hear about the Structured PhD course here in the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences. The structured element allows for the development of research skills and provides a chance to meet other PhD candidates across the Faculty.

I completed a research internship with my supervisor, Prof. Ann MacPhail, at the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, and Ann informed me of this course.

What impressed me was the staff and lecturers of the Structured PhD course - they are always willing to meet and talk things through with you if needed. A great support system which is needed over the PhD journey! The best thing about the course was the structured modules which helped develop research and transferable skills needed in the PhD journey. I most enjoyed meeting other PhD students across the faculty!

The Structured PhD has presented me with so many experiences and opportunities. There are so many different workshops to attend from support during COVID-19 to how to prepare for the viva. There are a number of opportunities for you to get involved in to as a result of the course, for example, sitting on the Faculty course board.

I was lucky to receive the PESS Scholarship which funded my fees and yearly stipend.

The structured modules were run over a number of consecutive days. There are a number of core modules and elective/research modules which can compliment and enhance your PhD research.

The assessments were manageable and useful for our PhD projects. The assessments included a review of literature, a presentation, group work, the construction of a CV and a research portfolio - all useful for PhD and career progression.

Networking was one of the main things I gained from the course. The other PhD candidates in the course are your support network over four years.

I plan to continue in academia and hopefully secure a lecturing role in teacher education. This course has improved my employability through the structured modules especially the 'Professional Portfolio' module whereby you constructed a CV, create a research portfolio, and log workshop hours.

If a person is interested in this course my tips would be to: (i) engage with the content and modules - these really help you in your research journey; (ii) talk and meet up with other PhD researchers in your year group - you will learn a lot from your fellow PhD researchers; (iii) ENJOY IT!