

## Transcript: Introduction

### Edward Mills

Hello, and welcome to this suite of online resources for the University of Exeter Doctoral College, entitled 'Preparing for your viva'. My name is Dr. Edward Mills, and I am a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures. I completed my PhD here at Exeter (between 2016 and 2020), with the catchy title, 'Imagining and enacting education in the French texts of post-Conquest England', and my own PhD viva was in October 2020. These resources, under that broad title of 'preparing for your viva', aim to help you to get ready the viva that you'll have at the end of your research degree.

There are four main sections to this resource (which, if you're watching this video on ELE, you'll be able to see off to the right). First of all, we'll look at understanding what the viva is: that is, what the viva's for, and what the rules are about how it should be conducted. After that, we look at perhaps the biggest question that people have when it comes to 'preparing' for a viva: how you can actually 'get ready' for something like a viva. This resource tackles this question in two sections: 'before you submit' (so, thinking about the viva before you hand in your thesis) and 'after you submit' (i.e. what to do in those months before the viva itself).

The middle section of the resource is called 'experiences of the viva', and it's here in particular that we've drawn on one of the unique features that we're very proud of in this resource: our interviews with supervisors and examiners. I've spoken to three experienced academics from across the University while putting this resource together, and they've all supervised and examined research degrees: Michelle Bolduc, from Translation Studies, Bice Maiguashca, from Politics, and Jon Blount, who (at the time of recording, at least) is Director of Postgraduate Research for the College of Life and Environmental Sciences. The full recordings of our conversations are available as episodes of the Doctoral College's podcast, 'R, D, and the Inbetweens' — and again, if you're watching on ELE, you can click on the link below this video to access those — but in this middle section, and elsewhere, we've included excerpts from these discussions that speak to a specific concern, tip, or topic. In this middle section, these include the idea of the viva as a conversation, which we often hear about, how to 'stay cool' in the face of nerves, and the value of listening closely and carefully, even if you're nervous. The final part of the resource is called 'after the viva', and covers everything that takes place — well, after the viva. This includes a rundown of the different outcomes that can result from the viva and their meanings — so, the difference (for example, between 'minor' and 'major corrections' — as well as some advice on how to approach corrections, and what to do going forward. You can complete these resources in any order, as they're convenient for you, and we hope that they'll be useful to you as you prepare for your viva.