UG/MInf Projects

Introduction to Honours Projects (UG/MInf)

Hiroshi Shimodaira (Project Coordinator)
Your Project Should Be

- A substantial piece of independent and original work
- A highlight of your university experience: exercising all the skills you have acquired on a topic of personal interest
- The ‘capstone’ of your degree, demonstrating that you can think and work like a member of your discipline or profession
Each Project is Unique

…but typically involves (see DRPS)

- Gathering and understanding background material
- Solving conceptual problems
- Design of an artifact
- Implementation
- Experimentation and evaluation
- Writing up
Project is NOT a large piece of coursework

Coursework
- Problems to solve are well defined
- You just need to answer questions
- Data are well prepared and preprocessed

Project
- You need to define problems/questions yourself
- You need to clarify the contributions of your work in the field
- Data may not be well prepared or preprocessed
- A “scientific paper” is expected rather than a “lab report”
Requires Steady Effort Throughout the Year

Gathering and understanding background weeks 1-5, sem 1
Solving conceptual problems
Design of an artifact By week 10/11, sem 1
Implementation By week 2/3, sem 2
Experimentation and evaluation By week 6, sem 2
Writing up Draft by week 9, sem 2
Time & Task Management is Crucial

Find a method that works for you

Software engineer: agile, trello, estimate & track time …

Researcher: lab book, days in library, days at the bench …

Paperback writer: put in 3 hours a day, 4 days a week …

Write now: create an outline of your dissertation now, imagine its contents, and fill it in as you go …
Formal Checkpoints

**Semester 1**

- **Week 1:** Meet supervisor, and agree project management
- **Week 5:** Hand in background chapter for supervisor feedback
- **Week 11:** Meet second marker for feedback on work so far

**Semester 2**

- **Week 2:** Practice presentation to small group
- **Week 7/8:** Project day (posters and demonstrations)
- **Week 9:** Draft dissertation (recommended)
- **Week 11:** Hand in dissertation

**Exam wk 1:** Meeting with supervisor and second marker
Your Supervisor

(If you are still unsure who this is, contact me asap!)

• Is an expert who has offered their time to help you
• Is not your manager – completing the project is your responsibility, and they should not have to chase you
• You should meet them regularly, at their convenience, come prepared, keep notes (record it?), and don’t skip
• Will be marking your project, so best to impress!
Additional Support

See the **projects website** (also accessible from the Learn course page – click “Click Here for Teaching Materials”)

- More detailed explanation of all information above
- Links to external resources, on writing, statistics, etc.
- How to contact the coordinator (email, Piazza)

**Workshops (TBA) related to checkpoints**

- Literature Search and Background Writing (Week 3, Sem 1)
- Dissertation Writing (Week 4, Sem 2)
Additional Advice

• Clarify your expectations with your supervisor up front
• Look at the assessment criteria now—and always keep in mind that assessment is based on the dissertation content
• Talk to each other (e.g. find a project buddy)
• Talk to previous students (MInf2 students are a great resource)
• Don’t delay dealing with problems (contact me if needed)
• Don’t forget to enjoy it!
Questions?

ug-project-mgr@inf.ed.ac.uk