



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
informatics

UG/MInf Projects

Introduction to Honours Projects
(UG/MInf)

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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	} $\times k$ times
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?

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