

Masters Programmes  
in  
The School of Computer Science  
The University of Manchester

2011/12

Handbook for MSc, Postgraduate Diploma, and Postgraduate Certificate

This is the Handbook for the Taught Postgraduate Programmes offered by the School of Computer Science in the University of Manchester. It covers the MSc programmes and regulations for Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates. You are expected to make yourself familiar with the contents of this Handbook as it contains the regulations for your programme, assessment rules, descriptions of the facilities of the School and University, as well as guidance on undertaking your studies here and more specific guidance on aspects of your Postgraduate programme.

Although the information contained in this handbook is believed to be correct at the time of going to press, the School reserves the right to make appropriate changes without prior notice; however the School will endeavor to inform students of any substantial changes made affecting the programmes. This disclaimer does not affect any statutory rights which you may have under English law.

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# Chapter 1

## General Information

### 1.1 Contact Details

Student Support Office:  
Room LF21, Kilburn Building

School of Computer Science  
The University of Manchester  
Oxford Road  
Manchester M13 9PL  
United Kingdom

Tel: (+44) 161 275 7520  
Fax: (+44) 161 275 6204  
Email: [sso@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:sso@cs.man.ac.uk)

To visit the website of the School of Computer Science go to <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/>.

The School of Computer Science is located in the Kilburn Building.

### 1.2 Welcome and General Resources

Welcome to the School of Computer Science. We hope that you will have a productive and happy time here in your postgraduate studies. This section is a brief introductory guide to some of the services, facilities and documents that are available to help you.

#### Documents

**Programme Handbook** (this document): Full of useful details, advice and general information. **We expect you to read and consult it.**

**Syllabus:** The descriptions for each MSc programme and pathways therein are available at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/>.

A complete list of all themes is available at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/programmes/acs/themes.php>

The full list of MSc course units and their descriptions is available at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/syllabus.php>.

Do read the theme and course unit descriptions. They outline the aims of each unit, what you will learn, the contents and who should take the unit (including requisite academic background). You are strongly recommended

to attend the theme introduction talks in the first week before finalising your choice of themes and course units. The talks form a good overview of Advanced Computer Science.

**School PGT webpages:** <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/> Full of all the latest information: All handbooks, syllabi, timetables, specialist advice and guidance. Also, see university website for University support services, regulations, procedures, policies etc.

**Timetables and events:** All on the School PG website.

**Induction Events** During the first week, called *welcome week*, we run a number of very important induction events, explaining how the school, the programme, course units, exams, coursework, email accounts, projects, etc. work and setting you up to start with your studies in week 1. It is **vital** that you meet and make friends with staff and other MSc students: **don't miss it!**

See the Welcome Week timetable <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/2011/timetable/welcomeweek.php> for the schedule of events.

**Facilities** There are dedicated MSc computing facilities in and around Room 2.25a of the Kilburn Building. All machines in the MSc lab support Linux and MS Windows. On many of the programmes, **you need to be familiar with both systems**. There is an introductory Linux lab for those who need to familiarize themselves with our Unix-based system.

**Computer Accounts** (School and University): You have two computer accounts: (1) in the School, e.g. in the MSc labs, and (2) in the University. Your School account has the following log-in name: Take your family name (truncate to the first 7 letters if necessary), followed by the first letter of your given name. (Occasionally this coincides with someone else and we may use two initials.) Your password is your date of birth, so that 1st Feb 1990 becomes 19900201.

**Change your password** as soon as you login (e.g., using 'passwd' in Linux). Most machines are 'dual-boot' in Linux and Windows.

Your university account is for elsewhere on the campus and uses your university registration.

**Email, StudentNet, etc:** Email in the School: You will have a range of email names (including your login name). In Linux, type 'csinfo <yourname>' to find these details. You **must** read your email frequently as there may be important messages from the staff or from the School or University. If you use other (external) email accounts (e.g. gmail or hotmail), you may wish to set up a *forwarding* to automatically forward mail from your School mail account to your external account. **Warning:** If your School account becomes over quota, then mail will not be received so you may miss important messages. Always ensure that you clean up your account regularly, deleting large files and junk (especially in your email box and web browser caches).

There is a School StudentNet that has a host of useful information about computer facilities and how to manage them, including external logins.

CSIS (previously known as dutyoffice) is the group of people who look after the school's computers, see <http://csis.cs.manchester.ac.uk/>. If you have a problem with computer equipment or your account, look at their pages – but please do not ask CSIS questions which are already answered on these pages.

**Blackboard and Moodle:** We will make extensive use of eLearning environments, in particular Blackboard and Moodle. We expect that you are, after welcome week, able to use them to access course material and communicate with your colleagues.

**Help!** It is extremely important that, if you are having difficulties, whether it is of an academic, personal or university matter, you seek advice at the earliest possible opportunity. In particular, any matter whatever it is that affects your work and progress here must be brought to your Programme Director in confidence. We can often help and can always advise on management of work. See later in the Handbook for more details, and of how to get problems you have encountered taken into account in assessment of your results.

For academic help on particular course units, consult the lecturers on that unit. For academic help on the MSc project in the first instance consult your supervisor and for organizational queries about the project consult the MSc project coordinator. For more general academic matters consult the relevant (Associate) Directors.



**Procedures and Administration** For forms, procedures etc. go to the Student Support Office in the School on the Lower First Floor. Many forms are available on the School StudenNet (under Current Postgraduate Taught). The University has an excellent Counselling Service with a drop-in centre and quick appointments. There is also help from the Students' Union, the Academic Guidance Services, Legal Services etc: see university website for details.

**International Students and English Language Courses** During welcome week, we run a subject-specific **English Language Test** to assess training requirements. Based on the results, we may recommend that you take suitable **English Language courses**, some of which we organize specifically for Computer Science students in our school.

There are many services for international students, and good clubs and societies. See Section 3.1.2 for more information.

### 1.3 Discipline and Conduct

Please note that the University of Manchester has a regulation on *Conduct and Discipline of Students (Regulation XVII)* that governs the conduct and discipline of students, and sets out procedure for taking disciplinary actions:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=6530>

In particular, we would like to point out that students are required to conform with the regulations regarding computer and internet usage as described in the *Handbook to the Code of Practice for Student Computer Usage* at <http://csis.cs.man.ac.uk/policy/code.php>.

### 1.4 Programme Staff

Responsibility	Name and homepage:
PG Director	Prof. Uli Sattler <a href="http://www.cs.man.ac.uk/~sattler">www.cs.man.ac.uk/~sattler</a>
MSc in ACS: Associate Director	Prof. Andy Brass for students on Digital Biology or Health Informatics themes <a href="http://www.cs.man.ac.uk/~abrass">www.cs.man.ac.uk/~abrass</a>
MSc in ACS: Associate Director	Dr. Ernie Hill for students whose last name starts with <b>A - M</b> <a href="http://nest.cs.manchester.ac.uk/people/ewhill.php">http://nest.cs.manchester.ac.uk/people/ewhill.php</a>
MSc in ACS: Associate Director	Dr. Renate Schmidt for students whose last name starts with <b>N - Z</b> <a href="http://www.cs.man.ac.uk/~schmidt">www.cs.man.ac.uk/~schmidt</a>
MSc in ACS&ITM: Associate Director	Dr. Goran Nenadic <a href="http://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/G.Nenadic/">personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/G.Nenadic/</a>
Foundation Route, Modular & Part-Time studies: Director	Alex Walker <a href="mailto:alex@cs.man.ac.uk">alex@cs.man.ac.uk</a>

### 1.5 School and Postgraduate Student Support Staff

**Head of School:** Prof. Jim Miles, Room 2.125, Tel: 275 6910,  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/research/Jim.miles/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/Jim.miles/)

**Student Support Office:** general email address: [sso@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:sso@cs.man.ac.uk).

Gill Lester (Student Support Office Manager), Room LF21, Tel: 275 6210,  
Email: [Gillian.S.Lester@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Gillian.S.Lester@manchester.ac.uk)

Janet Boyd (Postgraduate Administrator), Room LF21, Tel: 275 6283,  
Email: [jboyd@cs.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jboyd@cs.manchester.ac.uk)

Susannah Hymas (Postgraduate Assistant), Room LF21, Tel: 275 7520,  
Email: [Susannah.Hymas@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Susannah.Hymas@manchester.ac.uk)

Richard Ward (Student Support), Room LF21, Tel: 306 6624,  
Email: [wardr@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:wardr@manchester.ac.uk)

**Student Disability Support Coordinator:** Dr. Ning Zhang [ning.zhang-2@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ning.zhang-2@manchester.ac.uk).

## 1.6 Student Support Office

The Student Support Office, Room LF21, Kilburn Building, is able to provide School library access, out-of-hours passes and photocopying cards in semester-time during the following sessions:

Mornings 09.30-12.30  
Afternoons 13.30-15.30

During vacation periods there will be limited cover only. The School library has copies of recommended textbooks for PG course units, see <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/resources/library/>.

**Coursework submission** Coursework that requires hard-copy submission must be posted into the relevant pigeon-hole in LF21, having first completed and attached the coursework submission form to the front of your work. If no specific label for the course unit is visible, please inform someone in the Student Support Office immediately. Do not post coursework into an unmarked pigeonhole, as such work will automatically be given zero marks.

**Out of Hours passes** Entry to the Kilburn Building outside of normal hours (before 08.00 and after 18.00 Monday to Friday, plus all day at weekends and bank holidays) requires an out of hours pass which can be obtained from the Student Support Office. You will need to bring your library card. Please also see section 17.5.

**Photocopying and Printing** As an MSc student, you will be given an annual allowance for computer printout in the School for coursework printing, which may be revised year-on-year. The printing quota for this year is 550 pages per annum. When your allowance is exhausted, you may purchase additional printing from the Resource Centre in LF21 at a cost of 5GBP per 100 sheets (or 5p a sheet). Please note that all problems relating to printers or computers in the labs should be reported to CSIS, see <http://csis.cs.manchester.ac.uk/>.

Photocopy facilities are available just outside SSO. Photocopy cards may be purchased at a cost of 3GBP per 100 copies.

**Resources** Reference copies of textbooks are available for consultation. The school library holds short loan copies of postgraduate textbooks. Lending copies of textbooks are available in the John Rylands University Library. Resources for individual course units are often available on the website for the course unit.

## 1.7 eLearning environments: Blackboard and Moodle

All course units make use of eLearning environments such as Blackboard and Moodle, to varying degrees: the school has a default model for their usage, see <http://www.cs.man.ac.uk/~bparsia/2010/elearning/defaults.html>, and this includes their usage to

- link to the course unit's web site where course material can be found;
- communicate with and amongst students, i.e., through announcements and mail to students;
- set and collect coursework, and feedback marks.

It is therefore crucial that you have access to Blackboard and Moodle, know how to use them, and check them regularly for relevant information.

## 1.8 Notice Boards, Pigeon Holes and Social Space

The Postgraduate notice board is positioned in the corridor adjacent to the MSc laboratory, Kilburn Building. This is used for displaying pass lists, general information and advice. Pigeon holes for mail are positioned next to the notice board. You are entitled to use the Senior Common Room (Room 1.23) and make use of the cafeteria there. There is also a study and dining area on the lower first floor.

## 1.9 Student Representatives and the PGSSCC

The School and University take seriously both the issues of student representation and that of quality control of the course. Student representatives are elected and will have the opportunity to bring issues to relevant members of staff, and see that they are dealt with satisfactorily. In particular, we encourage the MSc cohort to organise responsibilities for specific aspects, and suggest to nominate representatives for the following areas:

- MSc lab computers, emails, accounts,
- social events,
- eLearning environments,
- taught course units,
- common rooms, general infrastructure.

The Programme Directors and Associate Directors have overall responsibility for the running of the programme, and regular meetings of all students with the Programme Directors will be arranged. At other times, the Programme Directors are available for any issue to be raised. If a student is not satisfied with the way an issue is dealt with, then the Postgraduate Director or Head of School may be approached, or the University's complaints procedure invoked.

In all course units, *Unit Evaluation Questionnaires* (UEQs) will be distributed and collected. Students are encouraged to complete these for they are part of the quality assessment. They are processed by the School, they are read by the course unit lecturers and their appraisers, the Programme Director, the External Examiners, and others who are concerned with the course quality. Other quality controls are maintained by the Postgraduate Syllabus Overview Committee (which maintains industrial relevance as well as quality), the Faculty, the government Engineering and Physical Science Research Council, and the accreditation bodies.

## 1.10 Key Dates in the Academic Year and Timetable for 2011/12

Key dates for the academic year 2011/12 can be found in Table 1.1.

For details of all timetables consult the webpage at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/>

Period/Event	Dates
Welcome Week	19 September - 23 September
Deadline for Course Unit Registration	23 September
Semester 1 Period 1 course unit teaching	26 September - 28 October
Deadline for Semester 1 Period 2 course unit changes	7 October
Coursework Completion Week 1	31 October - 4 November
Semester 1 Period 2 course unit teaching	7 November - 9 December
Coursework Completion Week 2	12 December - 16 December
Deadline for submission of MSc project preferences	December
Deadline for Sem. 2 Periods 3 & 4 course unit changes	14 January
Semester 1 Periods 1 & 2 examinations	16 January - 27 January 2012
Semester 2 Period 3 course unit teaching	30 January - 2 March
Coursework Completion Week 3	5 March - 9 March
Semester 2 Period 4 course unit teaching	12 March - 4 May
Coursework Completion Week 4	7 May - 11 May
Project Progress Report submission deadline	Mid-May
Semester 2 Periods 3 & 4 examinations	16 May - 6 June
Final date for notice of submission of dissertation	End of July
Dissertation submission deadline	7 September 2012
Graduation week	Mid-December 2012

Table 1.1: Key Dates in the Academic Year 2011/12. Some exact dates have yet to be confirmed.

## Chapter 2

# Overview of the Programmes

### 2.1 Types and Lengths of Programmes

In general, the school offers the following taught postgraduate degrees.

Award	Duration	Mode of Study
MSc	1 year	Full-time
MSc	2-4 years	Part-time
MSc	3-4 years	Modular
PG Diploma	1 year	Full-time (exit award only)
PG Diploma	2-3 years	Part-time
PG Diploma	2-3 years	Modular
PG Certificate	1 year	Full-time (exit award only)
PG Certificate	2 years	Part-time (exit award only)
PG Certificate	2 years	Modular (exit award only)

### 2.2 MSc Overview

The MSc has three distinct phases: Induction (Welcome Week), taught course units, and the project. The first two take up roughly the first six months of the course while the remaining time and part of Semester 2 is dedicated to the project. The welcome week is the first week and introduces you to the programme, the School, the Faculty and the University. We also provide introductory lectures for some of the taught course units. You have a chance to meet your programme directors and fellow postgraduate students in the School. There is a reception at the School and a library talk. Other activities are arranged by partner Schools, the Careers Service, the Student Union etc. If you cannot join the programme in week 1, the onus is on you to contact the School and catch up on all the missed information.

After the introductory week the taught course units begin. For most programmes you will take four of these before Christmas (Semester 1), and these will be examined in mid-January. You will then take a further 2 course units in Semester 2 which are examined in May/June. The choice of these course units is subject to the degree requirements described in Chapter 4.

The Research Skills and Professional Issues course unit runs in Semester 1 and Semester 2. The Research Project starts at the beginning of Semester 2. In April/May you will submit a Project Progress Report which will be assessed in order for you to progress to the remainder of the project work and dissertation submission. The project is chosen at the end of Semester 1. It is a substantial piece of work, resulting in a dissertation, or equivalent, of approximately 60-100 pages. You can select one of many topics proposed by members of staff or suggest your own. The project

allows you to develop a significant piece of work independently, under supervision by a member of the academic staff. You determine its scope and standards. It will often involve a considerable amount of coding which gives you the opportunity to practice and extend your programming skills. Work on the project can begin any time after it has been assigned. You work under the guidance of a Supervisor and work full-time on the project after Semester 2's taught course units and the Project Progress Report. It is to be completed and a dissertation submitted by the deadline in early September.

Most course units are assessed by both coursework and examination.

Provisional results for the first Semester are published in February. Formal External Examiners' meetings take place in June/July and an official pass list is published. (Details of the examination rules and the way we handle taught course unit failures can be found later in this handbook in section 10.8.)

Dissertations are assessed by internal examiners, and moderated by an External Examiner. A second External Examiners' meeting is convened in November to consider the results. Recommendations for award or otherwise are made to the MSc panel of the Faculty, which makes the final decision in time for December graduation.

For the important dates of the academic year see the Calendar at the beginning of this document.

## **2.3 Notes for Modular and Part-Time Students**

Information about part-time options can be found at the Advanced Professional Education (APE) website at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/ape/>.

Part-time registrations are accepted over two years and three years. It is also possible to complete these programmes by credit accumulation (Modular Scheme) over not more than 4 years.

Upgrading from a modular Certificate or Diploma is permitted as long as the final award is achieved within a four-year period from first registering for the lower qualification.

Part-time schemes are managed by the Director of Part-Time Studies, Ms Alex Walker, who also provides guidance for all modular/part-time students.

In August/September of each academic year you will be asked to select the course units you wish to study in the forthcoming academic year.

The programme regulations apply for all students regardless of module/part-time or full time status. Where there may be flexibility to allow for the part-time nature of study a note will be shown in the handbook

# Chapter 3

## Programme Elements

The programme starts with the welcome week. In semester 1 and 2, you take six *course units*; if you are following the MSc in ACS or ACS&ITM programme, then these course units will be from the two *themes* you have chosen. In most cases, four course units are to be taken in semester 1, and two in semester 2.

In addition, you follow the COMP60990 (Research Methods and Professional Skills) course unit and work on your *project*: the project starts in semester 2, and is assessed in two parts, through the Project Progress Report (which counts 85% of the 30 credits for COMP60990) and the Dissertation (60 credits)).

There is also a compulsory course on Malpractice that every student must take (see Section 3.1.1).

### 3.1 Welcome Week (Week 0)

Each programme has a welcome week at the beginning of the academic year. During this period there is a wide range of activities arranged to help you with the programme, your studies, your life at University, here in Manchester and in the UK. In particular, we make sure that you can access the MSc lab computers, your Computer Science email account and eLearning environments so that you can start with your studies in week 1.

In the School of Computer Science, at the beginning of the academic year, there is an introduction to the School, to university facilities, to staff and your fellow students, and also a series of introductory talks for the themes. Students are encouraged to attend these introductions in order to choose the appropriate themes, and also to learn about all the topics, including those you are probably choosing not to take.

In addition to School activities, the University and the Students' Union have a range of introductory events, including the Societies Fair, where you may choose from an enormous list of activities, from Fencing to Mountaineering, from Dance to Films, Chess to Bellringing, from Political and Religious Groups, to Charities and Hobbies.

#### 3.1.1 Plagiarism and Academic Malpractice

Plagiarism is a form of academic malpractice which many students fail to understand and hence may be subject to disciplinary action which, depending on severity, can extend up to dismissal from the MSc programme.

To help you understand this, there is an on-line course available. All students must take this on-line course and complete it before the end of week 1 of Semester 1. This is a compulsory part of your MSc.

Other guidance on plagiarism is available from the University website and in Appendix A of this Handbook.

N.B. All Modular/ Part-Time Students should complete the on-line plagiarism course during the first year of their studies, as early as possible in the first cycle of study.

### 3.1.2 International Students and English Language Courses

During welcome week, we run a subject-specific **English Language Test** to assess training requirements. Based on the results, we may recommend that you take suitable **English Language courses**, some of which we organize specifically for Computer Science students in our school. It is very important that you follow those recommendations, to ensure that you make the most of your time at the University of Manchester, that you can communicate verbally and in writing with your colleagues and lecturers, and that possible difficulties with the English language do not prevent you from getting good marks in your coursework, exams, and project reports. Remember: being able to express yourself in a clear and precise way, and being able to understand well what you hear and read is an essential prerequisite to successful postgraduate studies.

A full guide to the University Language Centre's courses, services and its language learning resources is available at: <http://www.ulc.manchester.ac.uk>

Students from outside the UK may wish to take part in the activities of the International Society, including their Welcome Service. See the website at <http://www.internationalsociety.org.uk>. Other help for overseas students is available from the University's International Advice Team: <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/academic-life/immigration/>.

## 3.2 Themes

If you are following the MSc in ACS or the MSc in ACS&ITM programme, you choose two *themes*: a theme is a conceptually coherent set of three course units, each of which is worth 15 credits. Hence two themes make up the 90 credits taught part of these programmes.

Some themes share a course unit, usually the one that is taught in Period 1. If you choose two themes overlapping in this way, you must choose an additional course unit from any of the other course units *taught in Period 1* ensuring that you have the right background for the course unit. Other than that, ACS or ACS&ITM students cannot replace or choose other course units than those from their chosen themes: this is due to the fact that course units within a theme are designed to build on each other, and thus a student following a "later" course unit within a theme without having followed the earlier one(s) is likely to lack prerequisite knowledge.

The following is a list of currently available **themes**:

- Advanced Web Technologies
- Computational Biology
- Parallel Computing in the Multi-core Era
- Data Management
- Health Informatics
- Learning from Data
- Logics and Ontologies
- Mobile Computing
- Text Mining
- Security
- Software Engineering
- Visual Computing

In order to help you choose, there is an introduction to themes in the Welcome Week at the beginning of the academic year. The themes and their course units available are listed in the on-line Computer Science Masters Syllabus.

For more detail regarding course units and themes they belong, see Section 4.



## 3.3 Course Units

Many of the MSc course units are taught in a one-day-a-week format over 4 periods (2 in each Semester). Some course units are taught in half-days over a longer period.

For those in a one-day-a-week format, the teaching period is divided into 4 periods of 5 weeks each; 2 periods in each Semester. At the end of each period is a coursework completion week to enable you to complete the coursework for the preceding period. Examinations take place twice a year at the end of each Semester. Each course unit is allocated a day a week in a particular period, making 5 days for each course unit; see the timetable at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/> for details. These 5 days are the taught days of the course unit and will typically consist of a mix of activities including lectures, supervised practical work, seminars, discussions etc. In addition, the course units have coursework to be taken outside these taught days, amounting to one and a half days per week for each course unit. Some or all of the coursework is likely to be assessed. Deadlines for assessed work will be set in individual course units. For units taught in half-days per week format, arrangements are similar but these units extend over a full semester. Course units are worth 15 credits each and you need to take 6 taught course units for an MSc and, in addition, the 30 credit Research Skills and Professional Issues course unit, and the 60 credit dissertation.

Where there is a choice of course units you are strongly advised to spread the load evenly throughout the taught period, taking into account the Research and Professional Skills course unit and your Research Project. For example, for the MSc in Advanced Computer Science you should take 4 course units in the first Semester (two in each period) and 2 in the second Semester (one in each period). In this way, your work will be properly paced over the taught period and you will be able to manage the workload to your best advantage. Any other arrangement of your course units requires special dispensation from your Programme Director.

Whilst we try to ensure all course units will run, some may be withdrawn or changed for a variety of reasons. The University reserves the right to change the availability of course units. Some course units will have a restriction on the number of students who may attend for various reasons (e.g. licences, facilities etc) and these may become fully subscribed. Course units with very few students may be cancelled but we try to avoid this.

**Course unit selection.** Registration of the pathways, themes and course units should be completed by the end of Welcome Week. A course unit selection guide can be found at <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/selfservice/course-unit-selection/>. The deadlines for changes to course unit selections are listed in Section 1.10. It is not possible to change course unit selection for Semester 1 Period 1 after the first week. There is a 'course unit changes' form which must be completed by any student wanting to change their original course unit choices (if changes occur within the deadline). This should be collected from and returned to the Student Support Office. The student will need an agreement signature from the relevant Programme Director. Permission will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

### 3.3.1 COMP60990 Research Skills and Professional Issues

This course unit runs in the second part of Semester 1, and through Semester 2. Part of the course unit provides training in research skills and an orientation towards the practice of research as well as talks from research scientists and the initial work on your research project. The other part provides training in a range of professional skills and material on expectations and conduct in an industrial and business environment.

It is presented by a range of staff, both internal and external, including the Careers Service, the Advanced Professional Education Unit, Programme Directors, Research Staff and Groups, Industrial Consultants, and The British Computer Society (the professional body for IT professionals in the UK).

This course unit has two aims:

1. Training in Research Skills and initial work on the Research Project. This will give you a grounding in various aspects of research and project management, including advice on research methods, managing projects, working with your supervisor, professional research writing and preparing your dissertation/reports. You will also begin preliminary work on your project including background reading, familiarising yourself with the topic, other work in the area, any relevant software or other systems, and project planning. You will write a report (or 2

reports in the case of a group project) of this preliminary work which will be submitted by the deadline in April/May.

2. The course unit covers various aspects of Professional Skills as required in the IT industry and in Research and Development. The skills necessary in the IT industry are taught through the Careers Service and external consultants from the IT industry. The skills include team-work skills, industrial problem-solving, leadership skills, communication skills and presentation skills. Consideration of ethics and conduct are also presented.

This course also provides you with guidance on the choice of your project. The assessment for this course unit is via (a) continuous exercises and coursework (15%) and (b) the Progress Report (85%), which must be submitted by the deadline. Failure to submit by the deadline without permission may incur a mark penalty or submission may be disallowed. The pass mark for COMP60990, for progression to the full dissertation, is 40%. Students who achieve less than 40% will have one opportunity to resubmit work for this course. The mark for resubmitted work will be capped at 40%. Any student who fails to achieve 40% for the resubmitted work will not be allowed to progress to the dissertation stage, and will be deemed to have failed the MSc. Students who fail this course may be eligible for a Certificate.

### 3.4 Research Projects

Research projects are designed by members of staff to enable you to develop research and development skills and to gain practical experience of applying the techniques covered in the taught part of the programme to realistic problems. Projects relate to current research and development areas, and are undertaken within research groups in the School or in an industrial setting. Keen students may propose their own projects so long as the project is suitable for the award of an MSc and it can be accommodated by the School.

The projects are individually supervised and typically you would meet with your supervisor, at least at the beginning of the project, for approximately one hour each week. Although much of your work is likely to be in the form of a working program or system, your degree is awarded on the basis of the Progress Report and the final Dissertation. A typical length is 60-100 pages for the Dissertation. Although most projects involve students working individually, some may involve pairs or groups of students working on different aspects of a larger project. There are separate regulations for group projects and the format of group project dissertations.

**Project allocations** are made towards the end of the first Semester, satisfying individual preferences wherever possible. An announcement about this procedure will be made in the latter half of the first Semester.

You start working on your MSc Project at the beginning of Semester 2 as part of the COMP60990 course unit. By the end of Semester 2 you need to submit the **Project Progress Report(s)**. A deadline for the Report will be announced. You should read the **Guide to MSc Projects** in Appendix C early in the first Semester.

**Dissertation submission deadlines.** The deadline for submission of MSc dissertations is early in September and you must complete it by then. The only exception to this deadline are significant mitigating circumstances, approved, in advance. Approval must be sought via your supervisor or Programme Director with a case explaining the circumstances surrounding late submission.

**Seminars.** Students are encouraged to attend the regular programme of research seminars in the School, given by invited speakers, covering a wide variety of topics in computer science.

**Group Projects** Group projects, where several students co-operate on a project are possible and special assessment methods and regulations are provided.

### 3.5 Notes for the MSc in Advanced Computer Science and IT Management

The projects typically undertaken by students on the ACS&ITM Programme fall into three categories: general computer science, management-related and industry-based. Availability of projects in the last two categories is limited.

There is no requirement that the project topic is IT management-related. A limited number of projects supervised by staff in the Manchester Business School are normally available. These can be selected by ACS&ITM students only.

### **3.6 Notes for Part-Time Students**

As a part-time student, you should allow a minimum of one year for completion of your research project; you will start your project in the same year as you take the COMP60990 course as this forms part of the project.

Work-based research projects: If you are going to carry out a project in conjunction with your full-time work environment, this needs to be discussed fully with the Part-Time Programme Director so that all the appropriate mechanisms are put in place to satisfy both the academic requirements of a research project and the requirements of your sponsoring employer.



# Chapter 4

## Individual MSc Programmes

Each MSc programme has its own structure and regulations which are described below.

### 4.1 MSc in Advanced Computer Science

The MSc in Advanced Computer Science draws upon the high international profile of the research and teaching activities of the School, together with industrial links, to provide a high quality, intensive and leading-edge MSc programme. The programme provides both a depth of treatment and a very broad syllabus of topics in Computer Science.

This MSc offers high-quality taught course units in terms of their content, depth and quality of delivery. It provides a rich learning environment with good contact with expert staff, in both the taught course units and the research projects.

The structure of the programme is intended to be attractive to both full-time one-year students and to part-time students who take the programme over a period of years, accumulating credits to achieve a Certificate, a Diploma or an MSc. The aim is to have a broad participation both on the teaching side and amongst the students, in particular attracting industrial participants and those requiring a more flexible learning regime.

#### 4.1.1 Pathways

Depending on the themes you follow, you can choose to specialise in one of the *pathways* listed below. If your project is suitable for your chosen pathway, you can opt for your degree certificate to carry the title

*MSc in Advanced Computer Science with specialisation in <PathwayName>.*

Alternatively, you can choose the themes of a given pathway, carry out a suitable project and opt for your certificate to carry the title *MSc in Advanced Computer Science* (without the pathway being mentioned).

Next is a description of the themes associated with each of our pathways:

1. **Advanced Computer Science:** though not a pathway, for your MSc in Advanced Computer Science, you can choose any two themes apart from both *Computational Biology* and *Health Informatics*.
2. **Advanced Web Technologies:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Advanced Web Technologies theme and (2) any other theme.
3. **Artificial Intelligence:** for this pathway, you choose any two themes from Advanced Web Technologies, Learning from Data, Logics and Ontologies, Text Mining, and Visual Computing.
4. **Computer Security:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Security theme and (2) any other theme.
5. **Computer Systems Engineering:** for this pathway, you choose the Mobile Computing theme and the Parallel Computing in the Multi-core Era theme.

6. **Data and Knowledge Management:** for this pathway, you choose any two themes from Advanced Web Technologies, Data Management, Learning from Data, Logics and Ontologies, Text Mining.
7. **Digital Biology:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Computational Biology or the Health Informatics theme and (2) any other theme.
8. **Multi-core Computing:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Parallel Computing in the Multi-core Era theme and (2) any other theme.
9. **Applications of Natural Language Processing:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Text Mining theme and (2) any other theme.
10. **Semantic Technologies:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Logics and Ontologies theme and (2) any other theme.
11. **Software Engineering:** for this pathway, you choose (1) the Software Engineering theme and (2) any other theme.

### 4.1.2 Themes and Course Units

Each theme consists of three course units, one of which is taught in Period 1, one in Period 2, and one in Period 3 or 4. A complete list of course units and themes they belong to can be found at <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/2011/>, and Table 4.1 is a provisional list of course units and their themes, where **themes** are indicated by their number according to the following list:

1. Advanced Web Technologies
2. Computational Biology
3. Parallel Computing in the Multi-core Era
4. Data Management
5. Health Informatics
6. Learning from Data
7. Logics and Ontologies
8. Mobile Computing
9. Text Mining
10. Security
11. Software Engineering
12. Visual Computing

Some themes share a course unit, usually the one that is taught in Period 1 with one exception being COMP60421 in Period 2. If you choose two themes overlapping in

- Period 1, you choose an additional course unit from any of the other course units taught in Period 1.
- Period 2, you choose another course unit taught in Period 2 for which you have the right pre-requisites, and suggest that COM60721 as a good candidate.

Any other course unit choice, especially those that lead to more than two course units in Period 1 or 2 or to more than two course units in Semester 2 are strongly discouraged and require the explicit authorisation of both the (Associate) Programme Director and the course unit lecturers.

Table 4.1: ACS Course units and their themes.

Course unit\Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
COMP60411 Semi-structured Data & the Web	1			1								
COMP60421 Ontology Engineering for the Semantic Web	2	2					2		2			
COMP60432 Building Web Applications	3											
COMP60511 Principles of Digital Biology		1			1							
COMP60532 Introduction to BioHealth Informatics		3			3							
COMP60611 Fundamentals of Parallel & Distributed Systems			1					1				
COMP60621 Concurrent Programming for Numerical Applications			2									
COMP60632 Future Multi-Core Computing			3									
COMP60721 Data Engineering				2								
COMP60732 Advanced Database Management Systems				3			3					
COMP60921 Introduction to Health Informatics					2							
COMP61011 Machine Learning & Data Mining						1			1			1
COMP61021 Modelling & Visualization of high-dimensional data						2						
COMP61032 Optimization for learning, planning & problem-solving						3	3					
COMP61111 Logic & Applications							1					
COMP61221 Mobile Systems								2				
COMP61232 Mobile Communications								3		3		
COMP61331 Text Mining									3			
COMP61411 Cryptography										1		
COMP61421 Computer & Network Security										2		
COMP61432 IT Governance										3		
COMP61511 Software Engineering Overview											1	
COMP61521 Component-based Software Development											2	
COMP61532 Pattern-based Software Development											3	
COMP61621 Computer Graphics & Animation												2
COMP61632 Computer Vision												3

### **4.1.3 Advanced Computer Science Programme Specification**

The University Programme Specification document is at:

[http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/prog\\_spec/](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/prog_spec/)

## **4.2 MSc in Advanced Computer Science and IT Management**

This MSc programme has been developed with input from our industrial partners and the Manchester Business School.

The strategic importance of information technology in the growth and development of user companies has become apparent with the huge expansion in the use of the internet and e-commerce activities. This MSc is aimed at the growing demand for specialists who can use their understanding and knowledge of new and future technologies to manage the strategic development of information technology within user industries.

The MSc is managed within the existing framework of the MSc in Advanced Computer Science. Students select themes and thereby course units from the existing advanced portfolio together with specialist management course units.

### **4.2.1 Themes and Course Units**

Students choose three course units offered by the Manchester Business School, and one theme from a selection of ACS themes, which then makes up another three course units.

The following is a list of course units from the Manchester Business School from which a student chooses three, two in Semester 1, and one in Semester 2:

- BMAN61102 Decision Behaviour, Analysis and Support
- MSEC40001 Entrepreneurial Commercialisation of Knowledge
- BMAN71642 Human Computer Interaction and Web User Interfaces
- BMAN60111 IS Strategy and Enterprise Systems
- BMAN71621 IT Leadership Forum

The following is a list of themes from which student chooses one, which corresponds to three course units, see Table 4.1 for the course units involved in these themes:

1. Advanced Web Technologies
4. Data Management
10. Security
11. Software Engineering

### **4.2.2 Advanced Computer Science and IT Management Programme Specification**

The University Programme Specification document is at:

[http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/prog\\_spec/](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/prog_spec/)



### **4.3 Foundation Route**

MSc Foundation Routes are offered to students who have a good degree in a Science or Engineering subject but little formal training in Computer Science at the degree level.

To enter the Advanced Programme you are required to take at least 2 Foundation course units by Distance Learning, and at maximum 4. Normally these are taken in the year preceding full entry to the MSc Programme.

In order to progress to the full taught programme you must pass all of the required Foundation course units at the 50% level. 15 credits are carried forward towards your MSc. You must then complete your MSc programme according to the regulations.

If you wish to enter by the Foundation Route, please indicate this on your application.



# Chapter 5

## Assessment and Examinations

The defining regulations and procedures for the MSc programme are laid down in the University's Ordinances and Regulations at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2385>.

### 5.1 General Requirements

The assessment for the MSc consists of two parts:

1. the assessment of the **taught course** units undertaken, and
2. the assessment of the **project**, which consists of a **Dissertation**, and assessments for the Research Methods and Professional Skills course unit (COMP60990) which includes a project **Progress Report** (or **group and individual reports** in the case of group-based projects).

In order to be allowed to progress to the research project, students must successfully pass the taught part of the programme and the COMP60990 unit. The award of an MSc is then dependent upon passing the assessment of the project.

#### 5.1.1 Attendance

Attendance on all days of the taught course units is compulsory and poor attendance attracts penalties on coursework. During the project phase, students are expected to be normally resident in Manchester, up until submission of your dissertation, so as to allow you to have your regular meetings with your supervisor face-to-face, see also Appendix C.8.

The Student Support Office should be notified of absences due to illness of less than 7 days by means of self-certification forms, which are available from the Student Support Office. Longer absences must be certified by a medical note signed by a general practitioner or hospital doctor. It is in your interests to keep us fully informed of medical or other problems you have so that the effect these may have on your work can be taken into account in examination meetings. Please refer to Section 10.2 for a more detailed guidance on what to do in case of illness. The University's policy regarding *Work and Attendance of students* is available from the policy webpage at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1895>.

#### 5.1.2 Interruptions

An interruption is a formal break, usually of one month or longer, in your programme of study. A request is made via the Programme Director and circumstances will dictate whether and under what terms it may be granted. The University is generally under an obligation to inform any sponsor if an interruption is granted and it may affect your visa status. The University is sympathetic and helpful in genuine cases of difficulty. The University's policy regarding interruptions can be found on the University website.

### 5.1.3 Appeals

No appeal can be made against the academic judgement of Examiners. However, a student has right of appeal on procedural grounds, on the grounds of prejudice or bias or of inadequate assessment, and on grounds that the examiners were not in possession of information relating to circumstances that may have affected the student's academic performance. There is also provision for appeal against decisions on Masters dissertations. Full details can be found on the University Policy webpage at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1872>.

### 5.1.4 Prizes

Annual prizes for excellence in academic performance in Masters programmes are awarded.

## 5.2 Taught Part

Taught course units are normally assessed by a combination of coursework and examination (though some are coursework only).

### 5.2.1 Coursework

Coursework is likely to include practical laboratory exercises (individually or in groups), written reports and essays, seminar presentations, and/or other forms appropriate to each individual course unit. The weightings of coursework and examination marks used in computing the course unit results are given in the course unit descriptions.

Make sure that you understand all issues related to **academic malpractice** as summarized in Appendix A, and the following issues pertaining to coursework: make sure you read all of these sections carefully before undertaking any coursework.

**Group and Individual Work** There are two types of coursework, Group and Individual. Students may not elect to undertake a given assignment as group work when it has been set as individual work.

**Individual Work** Individual work is an assessment of your own ability to complete the coursework. It should not be tackled in a group and you are responsible for ensuring that you submit your own original work.

You should read Appendix A carefully before submitting individual coursework.

**Group Work** Some coursework requires students to work in groups. The marks awarded for a student can be generated in two ways:

- a group mark: all members of the group will be awarded the same mark irrespective of the contribution of the individual team members.
- an individual mark: each member of the group will gain an individual mark that will be based on their individual contribution to the group.

Where given, an individual mark is often computed from a group mark (awarded to the entire group) and an individual mark that will be based on observation by members of staff and/or the assessment of an individual report.

You should be clear about the means of assessment that is to be used before you embark on coursework.

You should also be aware of the basis on which the coursework is assessed. There are two types:

Academic quality only: in this case the groups mark is determined solely by the standard assessment of the academic quality of the work. No marks are given for group organisation and management; of course, well-organised, well-managed groups will generally produce higher quality submissions than those groups that are not.

Academic and organisational quality: in this case a group's marks are based on the academic quality of the work and the ability the group have demonstrated in managing and organising itself, and the ability of the groups members to work together. Finally, you should be aware that most group projects are assessed through a number of group deliverables (for example, a single group report). However, in some cases individual reports or presentations will also be required from the group's members. In this case, the individual assessment will be treated in the same way as individual work.

**Deadlines for coursework** and rules for late submission will be set by the course unit lecturer(s), but the **default** is as follows:

- coursework is handed in weekly, to cover that week's topics. Deadline is 9:00 of the 'next' taught day.
- each piece of coursework that has not been handed in by the deadline is **marked with 0 marks**, and deadline extensions are only given on the basis of mitigating circumstances (see Section 10.2). **Late submission is not possible.**
- in order to prevent students from failing a course unit due to missed coursework, there is an additional, complementary set of coursework that can be answered by students to make up the marks they need in order to pass the coursework part – but these are **capped at 50%**. This coursework can also be used to prepare for exams and deepen students understanding of the material.

This is the default model only: make sure you understand the deadlines and procedures for each of the course units you take. Also, a course unit lecturer may make exceptions if there are practical considerations (such as problems in a lab).

## 5.2.2 MBS rules relating to coursework

If you are doing any MBS/BMAN/MSEC course units, e.g. as part of the ACS&ITM MSc or the MSc in Informatics, you should be aware that you need to follow the rules of the Manchester Business School, which are different and **much more stringent** than the rules of the School of Computer Science.

Please read the relevant sections in the MBS Handbook (available from <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/handbook/>), and take special care to understand the MBS process regarding coursework for MBS course units. In particular note that:

- MBS course units have **one deadline** for both full-time and part-time students.
- The MBS PGT office set 2 days for assignment submission which are Monday and Thursday by 1 pm. In semester 2 all assignments must be submitted to the MBS Programme Administrator (a hard copy) and via the Blackboard (soft copy), both must be submitted by the deadline by 1 pm.
- MBS have a zero tolerance policy for late submission of coursework. This means any coursework submitted late (even by a few minutes) will be given a mark of zero at first attempt. The work will be marked but the mark will be regarded as a resit mark, which means the mark of the piece of work is capped at 50% and so is the mark for the course unit. No further resits will be possible.

**NOTE: There is no tolerance whatsoever in the MBS deadlines.** Whatever their deadline is, we suggest that you submit the work **30 minutes earlier**, to avoid any unanticipated delays (queues forming outside the MBS PGT office, etc).

- All extension requests for MBS course units must go through the MBS PGT office **only**. Students must collect the forms from PGT and submit them with full evidence **prior** to the deadline.

**Full-time or part-time employment, even for part-time students, is not a valid reason to request an extension for a deadline.**

The MBS PGT office is Room 5.22 in Harold Hankins Building and the MBS Programme Administrator is Svetlana Budyakova (Email: [Svetlana.Budyakova@mbs.ac.uk](mailto:Svetlana.Budyakova@mbs.ac.uk)).

Please address questions regarding MBS coursework to the MBS Programme Administrator.

### 5.2.3 Notes on Coursework Deadlines for Modular and Part-Time Students

In relation to coursework deadlines, for course run by SCS as a modular/part-time student you can negotiate with the course lecturer a deadline that is longer than the given date if you know that your work commitments will not allow you to meet the published course deadline. For courses MBS/BMAN/MSEC the strict submission rules apply as shown above in subsection 5.2.2.

### 5.2.4 Examinations

The examinations usually consist of a two-hour paper for those course units with examinations. The examinations take place at the end of each Semester. Past examination papers are available via the School's website at [http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/assessment/exam\\_papers/index.php?view=pgt](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/assessment/exam_papers/index.php?view=pgt).

Some examinations may be Open Book, in which case material may be taken into the examination room. Sometimes this material will be prescribed. Most examinations however are not of this form and no supporting material may be taken into the examination room.

### 5.2.5 Resitting Examinations

If you fail the examination component of your programme, the Board of Examiners will determine which examinations you must retake in accordance with The University of Manchester progression rules are set out in the Ordinances and Regulations for the Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2385>.

If you are required to resit any examinations then you are responsible for ensuring that you are able to attend the correct set of examinations.

An examination timetable will be sent to you before each examination period. For resit exams, you may not attend lectures and laboratory classes except by arrangement with the Head of School.

**Use of language translation dictionaries in the examinations.** Students who are registered on these programmes of study are not allowed the use of a dictionary during examinations.

### 5.2.6 Remarking of Examination Papers and Coursework

It is the policy of the School of Computer Science not to selectively remark examination papers or coursework on request.

Examination papers and coursework will only be remarked where the school officers (Chair of the Board of Postgraduate Studies or Examinations Officer) have good cause to believe that there has been a marking irregularity and, under such circumstances (which would be exceptional), all examination papers or coursework would be remarked.

The School will not remark work simply because you believe that you should have obtained a better mark than that shown on your transcript.

## 5.3 Assessment Regulations for MSc, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate

In this section, we give assessment regulations for the MSc, together with the Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate.

### 5.3.1 Taught Course Units

For the MSc, each student will be assessed on 90 credits worth of coursework and/or examination questions. The University regulations are at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2385>

**Pass Rules for individual course units:** Individual course units are assessed as follows: a pass at MSc level is awarded if the overall mark for the course unit is at least 50%. For a pass at diploma or certificate level, an overall mark for the course unit of 40% is required.

**Pass Rules for course units on MSc programmes** A candidate for the MSc degree must register for 90 credits worth of taught course units, and will normally be considered as passing the units if **all** course units have been passed at **50% or more**.

The failed course units may be re-sat once and the maximum mark to be awarded for re-submitted coursework or re-taken examination will normally be 50%.

**Compensated pass:** Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a **Masters degree** when they fail **no more than 30 credits** and receive a mark between 40 and 49% for those failed credits. The student must also have gained an overall average for all taught credits of 50% or more in order to be granted a compensated pass.

**Failed units:** The maximum allowable cumulative failure of course units in a Masters programme at the first attempt is 45 credits of the taught component of the programme.

A student whose failures at the first attempt exceed 45 credits will be deemed to have failed the programme. They will then be judged against the requirements for a pass on the Postgraduate Diploma programme. If this results in their failing less than or equal to 45 credits at Postgraduate Diploma level, the student may resit those units failed at Postgraduate Diploma level to obtain the award of Postgraduate Diploma.

The final decision on whether a student passes is taken by the MSc Examination Board.

### 5.3.2 Pass rules for Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate

**Postgraduate Diploma** The University regulations are at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2385>

A Postgraduate Diploma is awarded to a student who has been assessed on 120 credits worth of coursework & examination questions, and will normally be considered as passing the units if all course units have been passed at 40% or more.

Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a **Postgraduate Diploma** programme when they fail **no more than 30 credits** and receive a mark between 30% and 39% for those failed credits. The student must also have gained an overall average for all taught credits of 40% or more in order to be granted the compensated pass.

The maximum allowable accumulative failure at Postgraduate Diploma level at first attempt is 45 credits of the taught component of the programme. These failed course units can be re-sat at Postgraduate Diploma level. The maximum mark to be awarded for re-submitted coursework or re-taken examination will normally be 40%.

**In addition**, to complete the award of a Diploma, students are required to achieve a mark of 40% or more on the assessment for COMP60990 (Research Skills and Professional Issues).

**Postgraduate Certificate** The University regulations are at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2385>

The Postgraduate Certificate is awarded to students who have successfully taken 60 credits worth of coursework & examination questions with a result of 40% or more in each course unit.

Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a **Postgraduate Certificate** programme when they fail no more than **15 credits** and receive a mark between 30% and 39% for those failed credits. The student must also have gained an overall average for all taught credits of 40% or more in order to be granted the compensated pass.

### 5.3.3 MSc Project

The MSc Project comprises two parts:

1. Background research, specification, design studies, preparatory work and first first steps, project plan and Research Methods and Professional Skills, carried out February to May, worth 30 credits.  
Assessment: Project Progress Report (85%) and COMP60990 coursework(15%)
2. Completion of MSc project, from May to early September, worth 60 credits.  
Assessment: Dissertation (and Group Report for a group project)

All work must be original: students presenting work from another source, including from other students, without explicit acknowledgement may be regarded as attempting a fraud and will be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedures. A more extensive discussion of what is and what is not permitted in this area can be found in Appendix A.

**Project Progress Report and COMP60990** The assessment for COMP60990 (Research Skills and Professional Issues) is through:

- coursework (15% of the overall mark) and
- the Project Progress Report (85% of the overall mark) in the case of an individual MSc Research Project (or)
- a group report and individual report (85% of the overall mark) in case of a group based MSc Research Project.

The precise content of the Project Progress Report depends upon the nature of the Research Project, but typically will include (1) Description of the project and its context and aims, (2) Survey of relevant literature, (3) Study of relevant research methods, design methodology, and implementation tools, (4) Requirements and specification, (5) Criteria of success and evaluation, and (6) Project plan for the full project.

Reports are assessed according to the standards expected of the Masters Dissertation with respect to substance, soundness of contents, and quality of presentation. The supervisor and a second marker make independent assessments. An agreed mark is moderated by an external assessor. Reports contribute 85% of 30 credits to the MSc. The pass mark for this part of the MSc, for progression to the full dissertation, is 40%.

Students who achieve less than 40% in COMP60990 will have one opportunity to resubmit the Progress Report by a given deadline, normally within 3 weeks of the July Exam Board meeting. The mark for the resubmitted Progress Report will be capped at 40%, and will count 100% of the new COMP60990 coursework mark. Any student who fails to achieve 40% for the resubmitted work will not be allowed to progress to the dissertation stage, and will be deemed to have failed the MSc. Students who fail may be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate.

**Research Project and Dissertation** The general requirements for presentation of a dissertation are set out in the University's Ordinances and Regulations, in particular in the *University's guidance on the presentation of taught Masters dissertations* at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/tlao/Presentation-of-dissertations.pdf>.

**Group-based MSc Projects** The assessment of group based MSc projects is:

- The group report worth 40% of 60 credits and
- The individual report worth 60% of 60 credits.



The group report is prepared by the group as a whole. The group report should include a brief description of the organisation of the project tasks, how decisions were reached and a summary of all joint and individual contributions to various aspects of the group report (typically this will include contribution to the specification and design, research, program code, program documentation, project management logs, minutes of meetings, editorship of group report). The group report, together with any supporting documents which are prepared jointly, should be submitted as a separate document under joint ownership. Each member of the group will normally get the same group report mark.

Each member of the group should prepare and submit an individual dissertation.

The Individual Report in a group project must include the following:

- Details about the individual contribution to the project and a summary of the other group members contributions to the project.
- A suitably formulated declaration about authorship. The declaration should state that the work referred to in the dissertation was completed as part of a group project, what portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been (or will be) submitted by which other members of the group, and what portion (possibly none) of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

**Examination of Dissertations and Reports** The MSc dissertation/reports is/are evaluated by two internal examiners at Manchester (normally your supervisor and another not involved with your work on the project) who submit written reports. These reports and the dissertations themselves are considered by the external examiner at a specially convened examination meeting in October/November.

The **MSc Project Mark** is the credit-weighted average of the marks for the course unit COMP60990 (30 credits) and the MSc dissertation, and Group Project Report were applicable (60 credits). A pass for the Project is awarded for a Project Mark of 50% or above.

At the recommendation of the board of examiners, a student who achieves at least 40% but less than 50% for their MSc Project Mark will have one opportunity to resubmit the Dissertation—and Group Project Report were applicable—by a given deadline, normally within four months of the date of the publication of the result. In this case, the MSc Project mark will be capped at 50%, and the resubmitted Dissertation will count 100% of the new MSc Project mark. Resubmission will not be allowed if the mark is below 40%.

Students who pass the taught units and achieve an MSc project mark of between 40-49% may accept the award of Postgraduate Diploma with no further work required or may resubmit the dissertation/reports on one occasion, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. Students achieving a mark 40-49% for a resubmitted dissertation/reports may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma if they pass the taught course units at Diploma level.

The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted dissertations or projects will normally be 50% for the Masters degree and 40% for the Postgraduate Diploma. The Diploma project is assessed by the same procedure, applied to a project of 30 credits (instead of 90 credits) and the minimum pass mark is 40%.

### 5.3.4 Awards by Credit Accumulation

As well as the one-year MSc programme, the School offers an MSc, Diploma and a Postgraduate Certificate, by accumulating credits over a period, normally no more than four years. These qualifications are suitable for part-time students and for those who are on release for training and skills enhancement.

The **MSc Programme** requires a total of 90 credits in taught course units (6 course units), assessed as described above, and a 90 credit full project. The whole must normally be taken within four years, and students are encouraged to take it within a shorter period, either over two years; or in a three-year scheme in which 45 taught credits (3 course units) are taken in each of the first two years and the research project in the third. These arrangements can be modified to suit personal circumstances.

There are two routes to achieving the Diploma.

**Route 1.** This route is only open to part-time or part-time modular students and requires a total of 120 credits in taught course units (8 course units), assessed as follows: To pass at Diploma level the credit weighted average of the

course units must be 40% or more and no more than 30 credits shall fall below the 40% mark, and these failed credits should be between 30% and 39%. The selection of these course units must fulfil the same criteria as selection for the MSc programme. Candidates would select this option at (a) entry point into the programme or (b) on successful completion of 90 credits (6 course units).

**Route 2.** This route is open to all students and requires a total of 90 credits in taught course units (6 course units), assessed as described above, with a credit weighted average of 40%. The selection of these course units must fulfil the same criteria as selection for the MSc programme and the 30 credits COMP60990 Research skills and Professional Issues unit.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** is awarded to students who have successfully taken 60 taught credits (4 course units) with a result of 40% or more in each course unit.

**Individual course units** may be taken and these are awarded a pass when the marks for the unit are 50% or more.

The results for every student are presented to the Computer Science MSc examination board and provided they fulfil the stated criteria will be confirmed as a pass.

For credit accumulation, upgrading from a Certificate to a Diploma or to an MSc, or from a Diploma to an MSc is permitted as long as the final award is achieved within a four-year period from first registering for the lower qualification.

### 5.3.5 Degree Classification: Distinction, Merit, Pass

An MSc can be awarded with distinction, merit, or pass, depending on the following rules.

- The overall mark for the *taught elements* of a Master's programme is a weighted average of the overall marks obtained for the programme.
- A student who has had to resit any unit(s) as a second attempt or has been granted a compensated pass will not be eligible for the award of distinction or merit.
- The overall mark ranges for the *taught elements* are:
  - for *potential distinction*,
    - \* not less than 70.0% or
    - \* not less than 68.0% and at least two thirds of the credits for the taught element are not less than 70%
  - for *potential merit*,
    - \* less than 70.0 but not less than 60.0% or
    - \* not less than 58.0% and at least two thirds of the credits for the taught element are not less than 60%
  - for *potential pass*,
    - \* less than 60.0 but not less than 50.0% or
    - \* not less than 48.0% and at least two thirds of the credits for the taught element are not less than 50%
- If a student's overall mark for the *taught element* is a potential distinction, the examiners award a *project mark* of at least 70%, and the external examiners agree, then the recommendation for the award of a Distinction is given to the Faculty's MSc Panel.
- If a student's overall mark for the *taught element* is at least a potential merit, the examiners award a *project mark* of at least 60%, and the external examiners agree, then the recommendation for the award of a Merit is given to the Faculty's MSc Panel.
- If a student's overall mark for the *taught element* is at least a potential pass, the examiners award a *project mark* of at least 50%, and the external examiners agree, then the student obtains a pass for an MSc degree.
- The above boundaries and rules are *strict*: no other measures of leniency are permissible other than in cases of mitigating circumstances, see Section 10.2.

Diploma students can gain a Distinction or Merit if they satisfy the same rules, i.e 70% or 60% in taught part with no resits or compensated passes and 70% or 60% in the project, with the 2% boundary rules as above.

### **5.3.6 Procedures for Students Who Fail**

Students who fail the assessment for the taught part of the programme are permitted single resits of failed examinations on the next occasion that the examinations are set. Resubmission of coursework may also be required. If a candidate satisfies the criteria for a Diploma or Certificate, they may exit with the award of Diploma or Certificate. If in the opinion of the Examiners, a candidate fails to meet acceptable standards of performance, they will be excluded from the programme and their registration will be cancelled. In all such circumstances the Programme Director will discuss the candidate's circumstances with the aim of achieving the most satisfactory outcome for the student.



## Chapter 6

# Programme Management

Each programme is run on a day-to-day basis by your Programme Director and Associate Directors. The Student Support Office is managed by Gill Lester who is assisted by Janet Boyd and Susie Hymas.

The Postgraduate Committee oversees management of the MSc programmes. Its principal function is to determine and monitor the academic content of the programme, to admit and examine students and to monitor student progress and to decide on policy and planning. It is answerable to the MSc Panel of the Faculty. Its chair is Professor Uli Sattler, Head of the Postgraduate School in the School of Computer Science. The Postgraduate Committee usually meets monthly.

There is also a joint Industry Club which includes advisors from commerce and industry; currently Thales Information Systems, NCC, Tessella Support Services, Logica, Fujitsu Services (CMS), IBM UK Ltd among others in recent years.

**Student involvement** in programme management is possible in three ways: through election of representatives to carry your concerns to the SSCC (Staff-Student Consultative Committee) which meets three times a year, typically in October, February and June; via feedback meetings with the Programme Directors, and through Course Evaluation Questionnaires, which are consulted and acted on (see Section 17.2)

**Staff-Student Consultative Committee** meetings between the students and the relevant staff take place once per Semester where you may bring forward comments and suggestions, and raise complaints about the programmes.

We encourage you to raise problems immediately as the programme management may not be aware of difficulties. Queries or comments about individual course units should be addressed in the first instance to course unit lecturers. The Programme Directors operate an open door policy for genuine problems of either an academic or personal nature.

**External examiners** are appointed to monitor the standards of our teaching and assessment. During the year they review coursework and examination papers and provide critical advice of these which we are obliged to take into account. Following the second semester examinations, they attend the University and scrutinise the written papers and coursework of students, submitting a report to the University on our conduct of the whole student assessment. They also examine the Masters dissertations and moderate marking.



# Chapter 7

## Student Support Services

The School and University offer a wide range of student support services. You are encouraged to make use of these services: they are there **for you**. If you need any help, whether it be academic help, in finances, in your personal life, with relationships or the family, in legal matters, or with health, there are services provided for you.

*Do not hesitate to use these services.*

It is important that any factor that affects your work is communicated to the School, usually directly to the (Associate) Programme Director or Student Support Office in room LF21. This is entirely confidential. Such factors may be taken into consideration during the assessment process, and we can compensate for any disruption to, or difficulties during, your work here.

You may well want to make the Programme Director your first port of call. She or he will be able to handle some of the issues directly or advise you what other services are relevant.

If you have difficulties of any sort that you don't want to talk to the programme management about, you may want to consult the University's excellent, professional counselling service or other advice teams:

- A collection of useful links to all sorts of services can be found at <http://www.sos.eps.manchester.ac.uk/>, at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/international/support/>, and at <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/>.
- Student Counselling Service: It is based in Crawford House in the University Precinct Centre, is open 9.00-5.00 weekdays, and can be phoned on 275 2864, see also <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/counselling/>.
- The Academic Advisory Service: it is designed to help with special academic problems, and located near to the Accommodation Office on the 1st Floor of University Place, open Mon-Thurs 10-4; Fri 10-1.30. Phone 275 3033.
- The Student Union: has a wide range of services, including a welfare officer, and a legal advice service, see also <http://www.umsu.manchester.ac.uk/>.  
The Student Union Advice Centre, Steve Biko Building, Oxford Rd. Phone 275 2930.
- The Student Occupational Health Service, Waterloo Place opposite the Kilburn Building. Phone 275 2858.
- The Accommodation Office: 1st Floor, University Place. Phone 275 2888.
- Manchester Student Homes <http://www.manchesterstudenthomes.com> has a 'Virtual Accommodation Bureau' (an on-line property database), which contains information on all the available student properties.
- The Careers Service, Crawford House, Precinct Centre. Phone 275 2828
- The Student Services Centre, Burlington Street, by the library. Phone 275 5000.

- The International Students Advice Team. Phone 275 5000 (option 1).
- The University Language Centre, <http://www.lancent.manchester.ac.uk>. Contact details for information on English language courses: 306 3397, [englang@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:englang@manchester.ac.uk).

## 7.1 Students with Additional Support Needs

The University of Manchester welcomes students with additional support needs arising from a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, a medical condition, a mental health difficulty or a disability or impairment. The University has a central Disability Support Office (DSO) which can offer confidential advice and **organise support**. In order to access the full support that the University can offer, you should contact the DSO to discuss your support requirements, either by

- email: [disability@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@manchester.ac.uk)
- telephone 0161 275 7512 or 0161 275 8518
- minicom 0161 275 2794
- text 07899 663512
- fax 0161 275 7018
- or just drop into the DSO offices where you can speak in confidence to a Disability Adviser about your needs.

If you are a student with support needs and have not yet informed the DSO, then please contact them in the first instance.

In addition to this, each Faculty and School has a Disability Coordinator, Ning Zhang, who liaises with the DSO to organise support in the School—a full list of Disability Co-ordinators is available on the DSO web pages <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/personalsupport/disability/>. The DSO can also organise screening tests for students who think that they might have dyslexia.

## 7.2 GRADS Scheme and Personal Development Planning (PDP)

The aim of the Graduate Education Scheme is to support postgraduate students, in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, in the development of personal/professional skills required to successfully complete a degree and ensure maximum future employability.

For students taking taught master programmes, we do this primarily by providing a set of Key Skills workshops and online learning programmes. Additionally, postgraduate students are offered the chance to complete an online Personal Development Plan (PDP). The PDP allows you to self-assess your skills, record your achievements and reflect on your progress throughout your degree. At the end you can take away your records and use them to help you write your CV.

The PDP covers the following:

- The philosophy of personal development planning
- Identify areas for development
- Prioritise your skills development needs
- Plan how to develop these skills
- Record and monitor your development
- Review and reflect upon your development



The online Personal Development Plan is a tool for you to use to achieve the goals of the process outlined above. As this is a self-directed tool, you will only benefit from the process if you take ownership of the PDP and take the initiative in using it to enhance your own learning and personal and professional development.

The Faculty of EPS has developed a file for all PGT students which we strongly encourage you to use.

**Training Workshops** The Graduate Development Scheme offers Key Skills workshops for MSc students. The sessions are provided in addition to school provision and are targeted specifically to meet the needs of dissertation/project students. There is no charge for attending these workshops.

To find out more about the Graduate Development Scheme and the workshops or to register for online Personal Development Plan see <http://www.graduatedevelopment.eps.manchester.ac.uk/graddev/> or email your query to: [eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:eps-grads@manchester.ac.uk).

## 7.3 International Students

The University provides special facilities and support for overseas students. <http://orgs.man.ac.uk/intsoc/> The International Society provides a meeting point for overseas students, provides support and advice and also organises many activities, including welcome activities in the first few weeks of the academic year. See their website for more details.

Each year, there is a range of welcome activities and orientation courses for overseas students on arrival at the university. See both [http://www.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/international/arrival\\_guide.pdf](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/international/arrival_guide.pdf) and the International Society welcome page.

The University of Manchester Language Centre provides a range of courses for those who wish to acquire the English language, from beginners' courses, through to advanced courses, and specialist and technical courses.

**Confirmation of registration** If you are an international student, please note that if you require a letter for your visa application, visa extension or your sponsor confirming that you are registered in this School, you must provide one week's notice of this request to the Student Support Office.



## Chapter 8

# University Learning Resources

With over 3.5 million books, some 7,000 current periodical subscriptions and a wide range of electronic resources, the John Rylands University Library is one of the largest academic libraries in the UK.

Admission to the library, which is located at the end of Burlington Street, is controlled by turnstiles operated using your University swipecard, which also serves as your library card. The computer catalogue of the library provides details of the books and periodicals available and can be used to reserve and renew books. It can be accessed using dedicated terminals distributed throughout the library and through the library's website. Graduate students may borrow 12 books plus additional books from a short loan collection which contains duplicate copies of books in heavy demand. The majority of periodicals are restricted to the library to ensure ready availability. Any material that is not available in the library may be ordered through the document supply unit. The main information desk is at the top of the escalator where staff will be pleased to help you to make best use of the library and the computing facilities. Additional information desks are distributed throughout the library together with self-service photocopiers. A range of guides is available including a general library guide, bookmark guides, which contain basic information specific to individual subjects and a series of general guides which cover various library services and facilities. In addition, a series of information sources guides, which describe the printed and electronic information sources relevant to particular subjects are available, together with leaflets describing the content and use of particular electronic databases.

Nearly 200 electronic services, including the main scientific, engineering, biological and medical databases, are available through a library web-based service called Rybase. About 250 computers in the library can be used to access these services and the other resources available through the University network, including word-processing and other software, e-mail and the internet. The electronic databases provided by the library may also be accessed from elsewhere on the University network. The library website provides information and news about the library and its services, access to the library catalogue and links to electronic publications and the catalogues of other libraries. A section on navigating the internet provides access to internet subject guides and links to a wide range of information resources and internet search tools. Each year sessions are arranged to introduce new students to the library and the information resources that are available.

A training suite in the library is used to provide hands-on training in the use of electronic databases. These sessions are normally arranged by programme directors; however, library subject specialists can provide additional tours and training as required. If you need any help or information about the library, its resources and services; please do not hesitate to contact 275 3738.



# Chapter 9

## Health and Safety

### 9.1 Introduction

This Health and Safety section, is intended only as a summary of the major Health and Safety issues of which all staff and students should be aware. The full *School Health and Safety Policy Document* is available for consultation on the School website at <http://intranet.cs.man.ac.uk/csonly/committees/Health/HealthPolicy2009-10.pdf> and on appropriate notice boards around the School.

This document provides summary information about the following topics:

- Emergencies
- DSE Usage
- Electrical Safety
- First Aid
- Out of Hours Working
- Lone Working
- COSHH
- General Advice

### 9.2 Specific Health & Safety Information

**Emergency Evacuation Kilburn and ITS Buildings** Kilburn Building: The Fire Alarm is a 2-stage system:

- Stage 1 Intermittent - prepare to leave
- Stage 2 Continuous - leave immediately by nearest emergency exit

ITS Buildings: The Fire Alarm is a single stage alarm:

- Continuous - leave building immediately by the nearest exit

If a call point is activated, the alarm goes straight to continuous.

Lifts must not be used when the fire alarm is sounding.

Out of hours the building should be evacuated on the intermittent alarm.

Familiarise yourself with the location of emergency exit points and fire alarm call points. In the event of an evacuation proceed to the Emergency Assembly Points which are as follows:

- ITS Building - In front of George Kenyon Building
- Kilburn Building - 1st Floor Precinct Centre or Ground Floor beyond Chaplaincy steps

**Fire Alarm Testing** The Fire Alarms are tested as follows:

- Kilburn Building - Wednesday at 14.00 hours
- IT Building - Thursday at 14.00 hours

The test should last approx 15 seconds and no action is required during this period. If the test extends beyond 30 seconds you should assume it is an emergency situation and evacuate the building.

**If you discover a fire** Set off the fire alarm by pressing the nearest call point. Then leave the building by the nearest emergency exit.

All rooms will be locked after an evacuation and no entry into buildings will be permitted.

Rooms will only be opened by a porter or security in stages after the all clear to enter has been given.

Health and Safety General Induction Document: 2010

**Fire Extinguisher Policy** Only people trained in the use of extinguishers should attempt to extinguish a fire. Incorrect use of an extinguisher can make the situation worse.

**Evacuation Chairs** If you would need assistance during an evacuation inform your supervisor.

Evacuation chairs are available at specific locations for the evacuation of the disabled. Disabled persons should wait in the refuge areas and await trained personnel to use the chairs.

**Evacuation Wardens** A number of staff have been trained as evacuation wardens. If they are in their location, they will check that offices are vacated and if anyone is waiting at a refuge point.

### **What to do in event of bomb threat**

- Take seriously any information you receive about a bomb.
- If the information is given in a telephone call:
  - Let the caller finish the message without interruption.
  - Write down the message exactly as spoken.
  - Note the time.
  - Ask the following questions, if possible: Where is the bomb located? What time is it due to explode?
- Try to remember as much as possible about the caller's sex, age, accent, and state of mind.
- Notify, by telephone, all the following:
  - the Main Security Office (Tel: 52728/69966)
  - the School Porters' Lodges (Tel: 56262, 56263 )
  - the School Safety Advisor (Tel: 50148) and
  - the Head of School's Office (Tel: 56154).

**DSE use** All staff and PhD students are required to have a workstation assessment (VDU) on arrival in the School.

The assessment can now be accessed on line at <http://windev.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/surveys/TakeSurvey.asp?SurveyID=5M3613KI687MG2>

The following equipment is provided or is available if required

- Adjustable Chair
- Monitor Stand
- Foot rest
- Wrist rest
- Document Holder

**Electrical Safety** All electrical equipment in the School is regularly tested.

- Portable equipment is tested by the technicians and has a label attached.
- Fixed electrical equipment is tested by the University Estates Department.

**Use of Personal Mains Electrical Equipment** You are permitted to use some personal mains-operated electrical equipment, provided that:

- You take it to Frank Pickard, Steve Rhodes or Chris Connolly who will test it before you are permitted to use it. No personal mains-operated electrical equipment may be connected to the mains supply until it has been tested and shown to be safe.
- You arrange for it to be re-tested annually or more frequently if that is specified by the person carrying out the test. Equipment that has failed an electrical test must not be used under any circumstances.

Electrical equipment must only be dismantled by a competent qualified person and after reassembly, must be re-tested as above. Microwaves are tested for radiation leakage by the University and are located in Kitchen areas only.

Microwaves must NOT be located in offices or other areas.

Fridges brought into the School must be registered with the Environs Office and their location must be agreed. Disposal of fridges costs money and that charge must be met by the person or group who brings the fridge into the School.

**First Aid** The names of people who are qualified to administer First Aid are listed on notices around the School. These notices also explain what action to take in the event of an accident or medical emergency. Familiarise yourself with the procedures.

The people in the School who are qualified to administer First Aid are:

- Bob Holmes, Kilburn Building, room KB 2.86: Tel: 56212.
- Susannah Hymas, Kilburn Building, room KB LF21: Tel: 57520

Out of hours, or if neither Bob Holmes or Susannah Hymas is available, contact Security on 52728 or 69966.

**Out of Hours Working** Out of hours is defined as before 08.00 and after 18.00 Monday to Friday, plus all day at weekends and bank holidays. It is important that all persons remaining in the building out of hours or entering the building out of hours sign in at the Shift Porters lodge (Loading Bay) and show their out of hours pass. This is required in order that, in the event of an emergency, the emergency services know who is in the building.

If you see anything or anyone suspicious notify the Shift Porters on 56262.

All opening windows in the ITS building should be shut out of hours. On no account may work be done out of hours using cryogenic material. No work on live electrical equipment may be done No working in or on any machines in the Mechanical Workshop be operated out of hours.

**Lone Working** Lone working should only be carried out in areas and on activities where it is safe to do so. After a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment and method statement have been completed and all information, instruction, supervision are in place.

If it is necessary to be working in the office out of normal hours you should arrange to be monitored at regular intervals.

**COSHH** Chemicals and other substances hazardous to health must not be brought into the School for personal or other use.

All such substances used within the School must have associated COSHH data sheets provided by the manufacturer or supplier of the substance.

Before using chemicals or substances a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment must be carried out.

You must be competent and trained when working with any chemical or substance and understand the outcome of working with and combining such chemicals and substances. You must have in place all necessary emergency procedures in the event of an accident / incident occurring from working with chemicals and substances

COSHH sheets are held by Russell Arundale in the Mechanical Workshop and by Ian Stutt in the Nanotechnology area.

**Cryogenic Material** All personnel must carry out a suitable and sufficient Risk assessment and be suitably trained before using cryogenic material.

All work using cryogenic material must be carried out in accordance with the University code of practice and guidance note for the storage and handling of cryogenic material. See <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs\&Guidance.htm>, in particular [http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs\&Guidance/Cryogenic\\_materials-g.doc](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs\&Guidance/Cryogenic_materials-g.doc)

material must not be used out of hours.

If lone working is necessary a task specific risk assessment must be carried out it must be monitored by a person trained in the use of cryogenic material.

**General** The following general points should be noted:

- Corridors and escape routes must not be obstructed by rubbish, furniture or bicycles.
- Recycling:
  - Boxes are provided for recycling plastic bottles and cups and for general waste paper
  - Blue bags should be used only for recycled paper.
    - \* All paper in blue bags is treated as confidential.
    - \* Blue bags should never be more than half full and should have a maximum weight of 10kg.
    - \* Blue bags should be left INSIDE locked offices alongside the normal waste bin. They will be collected by the Building Attendants
    - \* Blue bags should never be placed in corridors.
- If you have problems with building services e.g., with heating, cooling, floors, ceilings, furniture, doors, locks, toilets, lights and electrical faults, send an e-mail to [environs@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:environs@cs.man.ac.uk) In an emergency
- during normal working hours, telephone 50148 (Environment Manager) or 00633 (Assistant Environment Manager) or 00515 (Deputy Building Superintendent).
- For problems with computers, e-mail [dutyoffice@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:dutyoffice@cs.man.ac.uk)
- For problems with AV equipment or advice on AV equipment phone Dave Bowden on 00634
- For problems with cleaning or bin recycling, phone Elaine (Deputy Building Superintendent) on 00515 or e-mail [environs@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:environs@cs.man.ac.uk)
- For problems with vending machines, e-mail [environs@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:environs@cs.man.ac.uk)



## Chapter 10

# University Regulations, Procedures and Policies

The university website contains details of university regulations, procedures and policies, including those for work and attendance, for MSc dissertations, for appeals, on plagiarism, etc.

### 10.1 Ill Health

It is a requirement of your registration with the University of Manchester that you register with a local general practitioner. A list of GP practices can be obtained from the Student Health Service, any University hall of residence or a local Pharmacy. According to guidance issued by the General Medical Council it would not be regarded as good practice for a family member to be the registered GP or to offer treatment except in the case of an emergency.

You should always consult your GP (or for emergencies the Accident and Emergency Department of a hospital) if your illness is severe, if it persists or if you are in any doubt about your health. You should also consult your GP if illness keeps you absent from the University for more than 7 days including week-ends. If you do consult a GP and they consider that you are not fit for attendance at the University, then you should obtain a note from the doctor to that effect or ask them to complete Part III of the University form 'Certification of Student Ill Health' copies of which are available at local GP surgeries and the Student Support Office. You should hand this certificate to your Programme Director or the Student Support Office as appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

If your condition is not sufficiently serious to cause you to seek medical help, then the University will not require you to supply a doctor's medical certificate unless you are absent from the University due to illness for more than 7 days. You must however contact the Student Support Office as soon as possible and self-certify your illness (that is complete and sign the 'Certification of Student Ill Health' form to state that you have been ill) as soon as you are able to attend your school. You should do this if your illness means you are absent from the University for any period up to 7 days, or if you are able to attend the University but your illness is affecting your studies.

The following explains what you should do if your illness affects your attendance at compulsory classes or if you consider that your performance in your studies/examinations has been impaired: If you are unwell and feel unable to attend the University to take a compulsory class, assessment or examination then you must seek advice by contacting the Student Support Office immediately, in person, through a friend or family member, by telephone or by email. This is to ensure that you understand the implications of being absent and the consequences for your academic progress, which might be quite serious. You must do this as soon as possible so that all options can be considered and certainly no later than the day of your compulsory class, assessment or examination. If you do not do this then you will normally be considered to have been absent from the class without good reason, or to have taken the assessment or examination in which case you will be given a mark of zero. You must also complete and hand in a 'Certification of Student Ill Health' form on your return.

You may be unwell but able to proceed with an assessment or examination and yet you feel that your performance will have been impaired. If you wish this to be taken into account as an extenuating circumstance, you must inform the Student Support Office about this on the day of the assessment or examination and hand in to the Student Support

Office a completed 'Certification of Student Ill Health' form. If you leave this until later it will not normally be possible to take your illness into account when assessing your performance.

If, as a consequence of your illness, you wish to seek an extension to a deadline for submitting assessed coursework, you must complete a 'Certification of Student Ill Health' form and discuss it with the Programme Director. The application for extension must be made before the deadline and not retrospectively.

You may be receiving occasional and ongoing medical attention which affects your studies. If so, you should obtain a letter from your physician which should be given to the Student Support Office before the relevant examination period if you wish your condition to be taken into account as an extenuating circumstance.

## 10.2 Mitigating Circumstances Committee

Evidence of illness or any other mitigating circumstances during the course or examinations is considered by the School's Postgraduate Mitigating Circumstances Committee, which makes recommendations to the course examiners. It is therefore particularly important that any periods of ill health are properly documented, and that such documentation is deposited with the Postgraduate Office at the time of the illness. Other Mitigating Circumstances which disrupt your studies will also be considered.

If you wish the Mitigating Circumstances Committee to consider your case you must complete a Mitigating Circumstances form at [http://intranet.cs.man.ac.uk/Intranet\\_subweb/Postgrad/mitigatingcircsform.pdf](http://intranet.cs.man.ac.uk/Intranet_subweb/Postgrad/mitigatingcircsform.pdf), which is available from the Student Support Office or from the web. You will normally need documentation, eg a medical note to support your application.

**Notes** Certification of Student Ill Health forms are available in the Student Support Office, all schools and halls of residence. Your school will give you guidance on the effect of any absence from your studies or if you consider your illness has affected your studies. If you have repeated episodes of ill health which is affecting your studies, your school may refer you to the Student Health Centre.

If you are found to have been deceitful or dishonest in completing the Certification of Student Ill Health form you could be liable to disciplinary action under the University's General Regulation XVII: Conduct and Discipline of Students.

The use of the 'Certification of Student Ill Health' forms by GPs as described above has been agreed by the Manchester Local Medical Committee. A GP may make a charge for completing the form.

## 10.3 Student Representation and Feedback

The School and University take seriously both the issues of student representation and that of quality control of the course. Student representatives will have the opportunity to bring issues to relevant members of staff, and see that they are dealt with satisfactorily. Programme Directors have overall responsibility for the running of the course, and regular meetings of all students with Programme Directors will be arranged. At other times, Programme Directors are available for any issue to be raised. If a student is not satisfied with the way an issue is dealt with, then the Head of School may be approached, or the complaints procedure invoked.

All course units have Course Evaluation Questionnaire (CEQs), students are encouraged to complete these for they are part of the quality assessment. They are processed by the School, they are read by the course unit lecturers and their appraisers, the Programme Director, the External Examiners, and others who are concerned with the course quality. Other quality controls are maintained by the Faculty, the Government's Engineering and Physical Science Research Council, and the Accreditation bodies.

## 10.4 Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Malpractice

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2870> As a student, you are expected to cooperate in the learning process throughout your programme of study by completing assignments of various kinds that are the product of your own study or research. Whether unwittingly or otherwise, students may commit what is known as plagiarism or some other form of academic malpractice when carrying out an assignment. This may come about because students have been used to different conventions in their prior educational experience or through general ignorance of what is expected of them. This guidance is designed to help you understand what we regard as academic malpractice and hence to help you to avoid committing it. You should read it carefully, because academic malpractice is regarded as a serious offence and students found to have committed it will be penalized. At the very least a mark of only 30% would be awarded for the piece of work in question, but it could be worse; you could be awarded zero (with or without loss of credits), fail the whole unit, be demoted to a lower class of degree, or be excluded from the programme.

Academic malpractice includes plagiarism, collusion, fabrication or falsification of results and anything else intended by those committing it to achieve credit that they do not properly deserve. In addition to the advice that follows, your School will give you advice on how to avoid academic malpractice in the context of your discipline. It will also design assessments so as to help you avoid the temptation to commit academic malpractice. Finally, you should take note that work you submit may be screened electronically to check against other material on the web and in other submitted work. Plagiarism is an important disciplinary offence. You should make sure you understand exactly what it is and how to avoid it. There is an on-line course to help you. All students must take this course. All written work submitted for assessment must be free of plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the ideas, work or words of other people without proper, clear and unambiguous acknowledgement. It also includes self-plagiarism (which occurs where, for example, you submit work that you have presented for assessment on a previous occasion), and the submission of material from essay banks (even if the authors of such material appear to be giving you permission to use it in this way). Obviously, the most blatant example of plagiarism would be to copy another student's work. Hence it is essential to make clear in your assignments the distinction between: (1) the ideas and work of other people that you may have quite legitimately exploited and developed, and (2) the ideas or material that you have personally contributed. To assist you, here are a few important dos and don'ts: Do get lots of background information on subjects you are writing about to help you form your own view of the subject. The information could be from electronic journals, technical reports, unpublished dissertations, etc. Make a note of the source of every piece of information at the time you record it, even if it is just one sentence. Don't construct a piece of work by cutting and pasting or copying material written by other people, or by you for any other purpose, into something you are submitting as your own work. Sometimes you may need to quote someone else's exact form of words in order to analyse or criticize them, in which case the quotation must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that it is a direct quote, and it must have the source properly acknowledged at that point. Any omissions from a quotation must be indicated by an ellipsis (...) and any additions for clarity must be enclosed in square brackets, e.g. [These] results suggest that the hypothesis is correct. It may also be appropriate to reproduce a diagram from someone else's work, but again the source must be explicitly and fully acknowledged there. However, constructing large chunks of documents from a string of quotes, even if they are acknowledged, is another form of plagiarism. Do attribute all ideas to their original authors. Written ideas are the product that authors produce. You would not appreciate it if other people passed off your ideas as their own, and that is what plagiarism rules are intended to prevent. A good rule of thumb is that each idea or statement that you write should be attributed to a source unless it is your personal idea or it is common knowledge. (If you are unsure if something is common knowledge, ask other students: if they don't know what you are talking about, then it is not common knowledge!) As you can see, it is most important that you understand what is expected of you when you prepare and produce assignments and that you always observe proper academic conventions for referencing and acknowledgement, whether working by yourself or as part of a team. In practice, there are a number of acceptable styles of referencing depending, for example, on the particular discipline you are studying, so if you are not certain what is appropriate, ask your tutor or the course unit coordinator for advice! This should ensure that you do not lay yourself open to a charge of plagiarism inadvertently, or through ignorance of what is expected. It is also important to remember that you do not absolve yourself from a charge of plagiarism simply by including a reference to a source in a bibliography that you have included with your assignment; you should always be scrupulous about indicating precisely where and to what extent you have made use of such a source.

So far, plagiarism has been described as using the words or work of someone else (without proper attribution), but it could also include a close paraphrase of their words, or a minimally adapted version of a computer program, a

diagram, a graph, an illustration, etc taken from a variety of sources without proper acknowledgement. These could be lectures, printed material, the Internet or other electronic/AV sources. Note: Plagiarism includes not only text but also other written matter including computer programs and diagrams, graphs etc. Remember: no matter what pressure you may be under to complete an assignment, you should never succumb to the temptation to take a short cut and use someone else's material inappropriately. No amount of mitigating circumstances will get you off the hook, and if you persuade other students to let you copy their work, they risk being disciplined as well (see below). Collusion Collusion is any agreement to hide someone else's individual input to collaborative work with the intention of securing a mark higher than either you or another student might deserve. Where proved, it will be subject to penalties similar to those for plagiarism. Similarly, it is also collusion to allow someone to copy your work when you know that they intend to submit it as though it were their own and that will lay both you and the other student open to a charge of academic malpractice.

On the other hand, collaboration is a perfectly legitimate academic activity in which students are required to work in groups as part of their programme of research or in the preparation of projects and similar assignments. If you are asked to carry out such group work and to collaborate in specified activities, it will always be made clear how your individual input to the joint work is to be assessed and graded. Sometimes, for example, all members of a team may receive the same mark for a joint piece of work, whereas on other occasions team members will receive individual marks that reflect their individual input. If it is not clear on what basis your work is to be assessed, to avoid any risk of unwitting collusion you should always ask for clarification before submitting any assignment. Fabrication or falsification of results For many students, a major part of their studies involves laboratory or other forms of practical work, and they often find themselves undertaking such activity without close academic supervision. If you are in this situation, you are expected to behave in a responsible manner, as in other aspects of your academic life, and to show proper integrity in the reporting of results or other data. Hence you should ensure that you always document clearly and fully any research programme or survey that you undertake, whether working by yourself or as part of a group. Results or data that you or your group submit must be capable of verification, so that those assessing the work can follow the processes by which you obtained them. Under no circumstances should you seek to present results or data that were not properly obtained and documented as part of your practical learning experience. Otherwise, you lay yourself open to the charge of fabrication or falsification of results.

Finally. . . If you commit any form of academic malpractice, teaching staff will not be able to assess your individual abilities objectively or accurately. Any short-term gain you might have hoped to achieve will be cancelled out by the loss of proper feedback you might have received, and in the long run such behaviour is likely to damage your overall intellectual development, to say nothing of your self-esteem. You are the one who loses.

## **10.5 Ethical Approval Mechanisms**

All experiments that involve human or animal subjects have to be approved by the University Ethical Approval procedure. This includes all usability studies for software and hardware systems and HCI evaluations of systems. To get approval, contact the Ethical Approval Officer in the School, see <http://intranet.cs.man.ac.uk/ethics>.

## **10.6 Complaints Procedure**

The University has a formal Complaints Procedure. Copies of the procedure and form can be found on the University's policies webpage <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1893>

In essence, most complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally. Complaints should be made promptly, orally or in writing, to an appropriate member of staff, such as your Programme Director or tutor. If your complaint is of a general nature it might be best to mention it to your student representative so that he/she can raise it at the relevant school committee. If you are dissatisfied with the response, you should put the complaint in writing to the Head of School, or, if the complaint relates to actions taken by the Head of School, you should write to the Dean of the Faculty concerned. The Head/Dean concerned will investigate the matter and come back to you, normally within 10 working days. If, having pursued the matter informally, you are still dissatisfied you should refer the matter formally and in writing to the University's Registrar and Secretary. You should consult the Complaints Procedure for advice on how a formal complaint should be carried out.

If you need help using the procedure or guidance on where to refer your complaint, you can seek advice from any

of the following: The Academic Advisory Service, the appropriate Faculty or School Secretary, the office of Student Support and Services, or the Students' Union Advice Centre (Students' Union, tel. 275 2930).

The Complaints Procedure does not cover the following:

- disciplinary issues (for which a separate procedure exists)
- matters where other separate procedures apply, e.g. harassment, academic appeals relating to examinations or assessments, appeals against exclusion on academic grounds, or against refusal to be issued with a Certificate of Satisfactory Work and Attendance, or Complaints about the Students' Union.

Information on these separate procedures can be obtained from the University's policies webpage.



# Chapter 11

## Useful Forms

- Notice of Submission form: <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/submission.php>
- Mitigating Circumstances form: <http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/assessment/mitigatingcircumstancesform.pdf>
- Interruption form, Permission to Submit Late form, Extension to Period of Programm form, and Change in Registration Status form: [http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/interruption\\_and\\_extension.php](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/interruption_and_extension.php)





## Appendix A

# Coursework, Reports and Academic Malpractice

This appendix summarizes a selection of issues regarding various forms of academic malpractice which are relevant for coursework and reports. It is by no means complete—the University Guidance for students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice can be found at

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2870>

### A.1 Referencing the work of others

Some coursework consists of a written report or essay in which you are required to read relevant literature and to submit a report. It is extremely important that **all** your coursework is original; all reports, **even when they are only a couple of sentences**, need to reference the sources that have been used to construct the report. In some cases, direct quotations may be taken from the literature and included in the report. It is vitally important that these are clearly referenced. In certain (rare) circumstances it may be permissible for students to work together to produce separate individual reports and, in these cases; some sections of the reports may be common. These sections must be clearly identified.

### A.2 Coursework Offences

The School and University will take action in all cases where coursework offences have been detected and ignorance of the regulations will not be taken as an acceptable defence. You should also note that you have a responsibility to ensure the originality of your own work (i.e. you should not give other students a chance to copy your work). Students whose work has been made available to be copied will normally be subject to the same penalties as those applied to students who copied.

There are four types of offences:

**Copying and Collusion:** This occurs when two or more students submit the substantially same piece of coursework in whole or part. This may be from the same electronic source (e.g. a word-processed document or a program listing) or when the same material is presented in a different way.

You should be aware that material that derives from the same source but which has been changed to make the submissions appear less similar will be considered to be a breach of regulations. This type of offence can occur when students have worked together as a group or where one student has copied from another. Irrespective of how the breach of regulations has occurred all of the students involved will be penalised in the same way. So, for example, if you have your work copied by another student, then you will be punished in the same way as the person who did the copying. This imposes significant responsibilities on students to ensure the integrity of their own coursework. You should ensure that:

- You do not leave work on printers.
- You do not give passwords to other students.
- You do not allow other students to use your home computer without taking adequate precautions.
- You do not show your coursework to other students.

These issues are very important. There have been a number of cases in recent years where a student has lent his/her coursework to another student in order to help the other student understand the exercise. After submission the originator has found that the other student has copied his/her coursework. In other cases, students who have shared home computers have found that other students have submitted their coursework.

If you believe that another student has gained access to your coursework, you should inform your Programme Director as soon as possible.

It is vitally important that when you discuss coursework with others you do so in very general terms and are not so specific that it leads to the same piece of coursework being submitted. The school will use whatever means it sees fit to test coursework for breaches of this regulation. This may include the use of software that checks submissions against each other. The school reserves the right to insist on electronic submission in specified formats.

**Copying from another source:** This case occurs when you submit work from another source as if it were your own work. The other work may be copied from textbooks, academic papers, Internet resources, and the submission of other students in previous years. You should be very careful that you correctly reference the work of others. Failure to adequately reference the work of others will be deemed to be a breach of this regulation.

**Repeated Submission:** You may submit an item of coursework for assessment on only one occasion (apart from in exceptional circumstances see below). Where you submit the same piece of coursework for multiple assessments, it will be deemed that you have copied from another source.

**Fabrication of results:** This occurs when you claim results that you have not actually obtained. For example, you may be asked to develop a program that computes a set of results and to write a report giving the results. If you fail to get your program working but submit a report saying that you have obtained a certain set of results then you are in breach of this regulation. Another breach of this regulation concerns the demonstration of a deliverable. If you demonstrate another students program as your own then you are in breach of this regulation. If you write a dummy program that appears to calculate the correct output from a set of input data, but which does not properly calculate the results you will also be deemed to be in breach of this regulation.

**Penalties for Submission of Improper Coursework** will be applied in line with University policy.

## **Appendix B**

# **Advice on Essay Writing**

For help in developing your essay writing skills (and as preparation for writing your dissertation) useful webpages have been compiled by the Faculty of Humanities:

Study skills: Essay writing [http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/essentials/writing/how\\_to\\_write.html](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/essentials/writing/how_to_write.html)

Here are some other UK based sites which you might want to persue:

How to write an essay (University of Birmingham, Department of English) <http://www.english.bham.ac.uk/staff/tom/teaching/howto/essay.htm>

Many books are available on this topic, e.g. in the University library or any bookshop.



## Appendix C

# Guide to MSc Projects

### C.1 Introduction

The MSc project is the most important single component of the MSc programme. It provides the opportunity for you to demonstrate independence and originality, to plan and organise a large project over a long period, and to put into practice the techniques you have been taught throughout the course. Whatever your level of academic achievement so far, you can show your individuality and inspiration in this project. It should be the most satisfying piece of work in your course.

### C.2 Choosing a project

The idea for your project may be a proposal from a member of staff or your own, or perhaps a combination of the two. After project proposals are published, you should consult with staff about the projects that interest you. Not every project is suitable for every student; some may be specifically tailored to a particular degree and some may only suit students with a very specific set of interests or background knowledge and skills. Project proposals originating outside the school are encouraged, but you must provide clear details of what the project involves and have the approval of the Programme Director. In exceptional cases permission may be given to do the project work in another institution or country, subject to suitable arrangements for regular contact with your supervisor in the school being made and approved. If you have your own idea for an MSc project it is your responsibility to find a member of staff who both approves of the proposed programme of work and is willing to supervise it. External projects cannot be approved unless a suitable internal supervisor can be found. Not all project ideas are suitable for an MSc project since certain academic requirements have to be met. The project coordinator will assist you in finding a supervisor but you cannot assume that one can be found in every case.

### C.3 Allocation

You must submit your project choices online by a given deadline, usually in mid December. If you choose from the published proposals your first choice of project cannot be guaranteed since individual supervisors can only take responsibility for a limited number of projects. In some cases you may be allocated the project but another member of staff will be assigned to supervise it. Failing this, you may be allocated your second or subsequent choices. When considering a project, you must consult the prospective supervisor—ideally during our *Project Open House*—and provide them with a short CV, so that you agree on pre-requisites, background and project aims and objectives. If you are enrolled in a specialized MSc programme you must make sure that your project is approved by the Programme Director as suitable for the programme.

## **C.4 Assessment**

General requirements. All MSc projects are required to contain some element of original work. This does not mean that they have to produce ground-breaking, innovative research results (although some do). It means that they have to cover some new ground. An implementation project could develop a complex application which does not already exist, or enhance some existing application or method to improve its functionality or performance. Projects which are predominantly survey reports can be backed up with experimentation, implementation, theoretical or conceptual analysis, new illustrative examples, etc. Your supervisor will advise on how to develop your project appropriately. A Distinction level project involves a combination of sound background research, a solid implementation or piece of theoretical work, and a well-structured and well presented report detailing the project's background, objectives and achievements.

Assessment. For the purpose of the MSc degree (including Distinctions and Merits), the only thing that can be taken into consideration about your project is the quality of your Project Progress Report and your final Dissertation. Formally, your project work is assessed on the basis of your dissertation/reports and the group report if applicable, only. You cannot compensate for a poor write-up by a well-conducted project. You cannot get credit for ideas or experiments not included in the dissertation/reports. Dissertations not meeting minimal standards of presentation will not be accepted for award of the MSc degree, no matter how good the project work itself.

Other considerations. Remember that your attitude to, and performance in, the individual project is taken very seriously by prospective employers and other institutions to which you may be applying. Your project work is usually reported in some detail in academic references provided for you by your supervisor or other staff members. In this respect you do obtain credit for the way in which you approach your project.

## **C.5 Equipment**

You are permitted to develop software (or hardware, if appropriate) on your own equipment, provided that you can give a demonstration to your supervisor. However, you should prepare a fall-back position in case your equipment misbehaves. Remember that the software on some home computers may not be reliable. It is not unusual for a potentially good project to be spoiled by bugs in compilers, libraries etc. on your own computer equipment, or to be lost or corrupted. If you wish to use software which is not currently provided in the School please inform your supervisor immediately. A request can then be made to purchase it if an acceptable alternative is not available. A purchase request will need the support of your supervisor and is not guaranteed to be approved. Please note that there is no excuse for failing to keep adequate backups on your home computer. If you lose your program or your data or your report because of a system failure no allowance can be made. Extensions will not be given at the end of the project for you to re-type a lost report, for example. All students should equip themselves with a Laboratory Workbook in which they record their progress, the development of ideas, results of discussions with supervisor and decisions made as the project progresses. This will provide a source book for writing the dissertation and also provides a record of your progress through the project.

## **C.6 Research Skills and Professional Issues Course Unit**

The 30-credit weighted course unit on Research Skills and Professional Issues, as well as covering workplace skills issues arising in a professional career, acts as a foundation for your Research Project and you will undertake the initial part of your project as part of this course unit. The course unit covers various aspects of research skills, including the process of undertaking research, managing a research project, conduct during your MSc project, preparation for dissertation writing and the skills associated with professional and research writing. In addition, you will have regular meetings with your project supervisor and begin preliminary work on your project during the course of the second Semester. This work includes all required background and preparatory work, reading related literature, learning to use software/hardware systems required for the project, and extensive project planning including its scope, aims, achievements and timetable. This work is to be written up as a Project Progress Report (including a group report in case of group projects) and submitted before the end of the second Semester (exact deadline to be announced).

## C.7 Supervision

The relationship between yourself and your supervisor is critical to the success of the project. You must make sure that you arrange regular meetings with your supervisor. The meetings may be brief once your project is under way but your supervisor needs to know that your work is progressing. You should inform the supervisor of your address and any changes to it, so that he or she can contact you, if necessary. If you need to talk to your supervisor between meetings and cannot locate him/her in their office, leave a note, or send electronic mail, asking them to suggest a time when they will be available. When you go to see your supervisor you should have prepared a written list of points you wish to discuss. Take notes during the meeting so that you do not forget the advice you were given and the conclusions that were reached.

Most importantly, you need to maintain a good working relationship with your supervisor, which includes in particular that you inform them openly if you feel you lack understanding, have not made enough progress, or are experiencing any form of problem that prevent you from working properly on your project (you don't need to mention any details - in particular when these are confidential).

**The Supervisor** Each student is allocated an individual supervisor who is normally a member of the academic staff of the School to oversee the progress of the project. The role of the supervisor is to provide intellectual guidance and offer advice on the planning and progress of the project – it is the role of the student to carry out the project.

**Responsibility of the supervisor** A supervisor offers the following supervision, which students may or may not make use of (e.g. a student may prefer fortnightly meetings to weekly ones).

- A weekly meeting, scheduled for at least half an hour, during the whole of the project period, i.e. semester 2 and the summer period between the end of exams and the submission deadline, except when the supervisor is absent or otherwise unavailable.
- If a supervisor expects to be absent or otherwise unavailable, (s)he should inform the student well in advance. If (s)he expects to be unavailable for a significant period of time (e.g. 3 weeks or more) (s)he should consider making alternative temporary supervision arrangements.
- Some additional and/or longer meetings may be scheduled to give detailed feedback on student's work. Feedback on students' work should be timely, within 3 working days where possible, but normally not longer than 7 days.
- For each segment (e.g. a chapter) of either the dissertation or the progress report, the supervisor must read it carefully when first offered and provide detailed feedback. This includes some correction of the English where necessary, but does not include full proof reading. If the student's English is too poor to be routinely corrected, they should be advised on appropriate remedial action, for example a University Language Centre tutorial.
- On the second reading of each segment, the supervisor should give general advice rather than the detailed feedback required for the first draft. This also applies to a final draft provided by the student shortly before submission.
- Other responsibilities of the supervisor are:
  - To ensure the project matches the student's ability/expectations and can be completed within the available time,
  - To assist the student in formulating a viable project plan,
  - To direct students to source material and give guidance on computer systems,
  - To give guidance in conducting research,
  - To give guidance in managing the timetable and progress of the project,
  - To assist the student in identifying problems and possible solutions,
  - To identify any health and safety issues,
  - To make the student aware when work is falling below the expected standard and give corrective advice,

- To advise students regarding ethical policies and regulations relating to the conduct of research.

Where appropriate, a supervisor may also, at their discretion:

- Do a second round of detailed feedback on parts of the dissertation or progress report which are problematic, particularly for students with English problems. However, repeated detailed correction is not allowed as this would give the student an unfair advantage.
- Arrange additional and/or longer meetings with a student where the purpose of these meeting is clearly defined; e.g. a meeting with a research group to discuss the problem the student is working on, or a pastoral meeting to help the student with problems.

For group projects, the supervisor will ensure that group meetings are scheduled appropriately to discuss the project in general and the management of the group. In addition, where appropriate, individual meetings can be scheduled to discuss individual issues.

## C.8 Student Responsibility

Students should note that they are responsible for their work and that the role of the supervisor is to provide guidance and advice. Students may **not** expect their supervisors to provide detailed feedback on more than one draft of each chapter or to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, use of English etc.

It remains the sole responsibility of the student to ensure that all requirements of the dissertation are met.

The responsibilities of the student normally include:

- arranging meetings with his/her supervisor(s) (taking account of any periods of holiday or work-related absence during the supervision period).
- keeping appointments with his/her supervisor(s), or informing his/her supervisor(s) where this is not possible.
- discussing with his/her supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comments s/he finds most helpful.
- maintaining a professional attitude to his/her work and to the supervision process at all times.
- maintaining a suitable record of supervision meetings, including dates, action agreed and deadlines set.
- preparing adequately for meetings with his/her supervisor(s).
- attending and participating fully in any courses related to the dissertation element of the programme provided by the School.
- discussing issues arising from feedback and taking appropriate action.
- maintaining the progress of the work as agreed with his/her supervisor(s).
- raising problems or difficulties with his/her supervisor(s).
- making his/her supervisor(s) aware of any circumstances likely to affect his/her work.
- giving his/her supervisor(s) due warning and adequate time for reading any drafts. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they understand the supervisors advice and the feedback on early drafts, and to generalise from specific pieces of advice and feedback.
- being familiar with University / Faculty / School regulations and policies that affect him/her.
- submitting the dissertation title and ethical approval form to the relevant office by the due date specified.
- ensuring that the final dissertation is written in accordance with requirements relating to the correct use of English language and presentation of tables, references, figures etc.



- where necessary, arranging for the completed dissertation to be proof-read, ensuring that this is done in adequate time to allow submission by the required date.
- checking the completeness and accuracy of the text of the dissertation / project submitted.
- ensuring that submitted work is their own (i.e. avoiding plagiarism and other disciplinary offences).
- ensuring adequate time for the binding of the dissertation.
- submitting the dissertation to the appropriate office by the submission date specified.
- informing his/her supervisor of the need for formal extensions or interruptions to the period of study and to ensuring that such extensions or interruptions are applied for in the appropriate way.

## C.9 The Dissertation/Reports

The dissertation/reports is/are extremely important. We give advice below on how to structure and present your dissertation/reports. Regulations will be found on the University website.

Please also refer to the **relevant section** for the requirements of the group report in case you are doing a group-based project. The dissertation/reports serves to show what you have achieved and should demonstrate that:

- You understand the wider context of computing by relating your choice of project, and the approach you take, to existing products or research.
- You can apply the theoretical and practical techniques taught in the course to the problem you are addressing, and that you understand their relevance to the wider world of computing.
- You are capable of criticising your own work objectively and making constructive suggestions for improvements or further work based on your experiences so far.
- You can explain your thinking and working processes clearly and concisely to third parties who may not be experts in the field in which you are working.

Remember that second markers, and other readers, will not have followed the project throughout. Make the presentation reasonably self-contained. State the objectives clearly; provide sufficient background material.

Many students underestimate the importance of the dissertation/reports. You should consider that the aim of the project is to produce a good dissertation and that software, hardware, theory etc. that you develop during the project are merely a means to this end. Do not make the mistake of leaving the write-up to the last minute. Ideally you should produce the bulk of the report as you go along and use the last month or two to bring it together into a coherent document.

A typical length for individual project dissertation is 60-100 pages, double spaced. In the case of a group based project a typical length of a group report is 24-40 pages x n, where n is the number of group members, and a typical length of the individual report is 36-60 pages, double spaced. These specifications are guidelines only.

Remember that quantity does not automatically guarantee quality. A 150 page report is not twice as good as a 75-page one, nor a 10,000 line implementation twice as good as a 5,000 line one. Conciseness, clarity and elegance are invaluable qualities in report writing, just as they are in programming, and will be rewarded appropriately. Also, it is important to appreciate that the appropriate size and structure of a report can vary significantly from one project to the next. Despite these variations, however, most good reports have the components below in common.

**Presentation** Below we give an outline of how the dissertation/reports should be presented. This is **for guidance only**: University regulations for the dissertation can be found on the University's policies webpage These regulations should be followed exactly. The dissertation/reports must be bound in the university approved manner. The University Library offers a binding service, as do other local binderies.

**Title page** This must be in the standard form described in University regulations.

**Acknowledgements** It is usual to thank those individuals who have provided particularly useful assistance, technical or otherwise, during your project. Your supervisor will obviously be pleased to be acknowledged as he or she will have invested quite a lot of time overseeing your progress.

**Contents page** This should list the main chapters and (sub) sections of your report. Choose self-explanatory chapter and section titles and use double spacing for clarity. If possible you should include page numbers indicating where each chapter/section begins. The table of contents should not have more than two levels of headings (say chapters and sections within chapters).

**Abstract** The abstract is a very brief summary of the report's contents. It should be about half a page long. Somebody unfamiliar with your project should have a good idea of what it is about having read the abstract alone and will know whether it will be of interest to them.

**Introduction** This is one of the most important components of the report. It should begin with a clear statement of what the project is about so that the nature and scope of the project can be understood by the reader. It should summarise everything you set out to achieve, provide a clear summary of the project's background and relevance to other work and give pointers to the remaining sections of the report which contain the bulk of the technical material.

In the case of a group based project, both the group report and the individual report must include details about the contribution of the different group members to the project.

**Background** The background section of the report should set the project into context by relating it to existing published work (or unpublished work) on which the project builds. The background section is sometimes included as part of the introduction but more usually is a separate chapter, or collection of chapters if the project involved an extensive amount of research. The published work may be in the form of research papers, articles, text books, technical manuals, or even existing software or hardware of which you have had experience. You must acknowledge the sources of your inspiration; you are expected to have seen and thought about other people's ideas; your contribution will be putting them into practice or developing them in some new direction. One rule is clear: if you present another person's work as your own and do not cite your sources of information/inspiration you are cheating. When referring to other pieces of work, cite the sources at the point they are referred to or used, rather than just listing them at the end. The University takes a very strict line on plagiarism, and its standard notice on the subject is included in this Handbook (and is available on the University website).

**Body of report** The central part of the report usually consists of three or four chapters detailing the technical work undertaken during the project. The structure of these chapters is highly project dependent. Usually they reflect the chronological development of the project, e.g. design, implementation, experimentation, optimisation, although this is not always the best approach. However you choose to structure this part of the report, you should make it clear how you arrived at your chosen approach in preference to the other alternatives documented in the background. For implementation projects you should describe and justify the design of your program at some high level, e.g. using dataflow diagrams, pseudocode, ADT specifications, Z, VDL, etc., and should document any interesting problems with, or features of, your implementation. Integration and testing are also important to describe. Your supervisor will advise you on the most suitable structure for these middle sections.

**Conclusions and future work** All projects should conclude with an objective evaluation of the project's successes and failures and suggestions for future work which can take the project further. Even the very best pieces of work have their limitations. You will not have time, and you should not try, to tie up every loose end. You are expected to provide a proper critical appraisal of what you have done. Your assessors are bound to spot the limitations of your work and you are expected to be able to do the same. **Bibliography.** This consists of a list of all the books, articles, manuals etc. used in the project and referred to in the report. You should provide enough information to allow the reader to find the source. You should give the full title and author and should state where it is published, including full issue number and date, and page numbers where necessary. In the case of a text book you should quote the name of the publisher as well as the author(s).

**Appendix** The appendices contain information which is peripheral to the main body of the report. Information typically included are things like program listings, tables, proofs, graphs or any other material which would break up the flow of the text if it appeared. Large program listings are rarely required, and should be compressed as much as possible, e.g. by printing in multiple columns and by using small font sizes, omitting inessential code etc.

**User guide** For projects which result in a new piece of software you should provide a proper User Guide providing easily understood instructions on how to use it. A particularly useful approach is to treat the User Guide as a walk-through of a typical session, or set of sessions, which collectively display all the features of your package. Technical details of how the package works are rarely required. Keep it concise and simple. Do not bother including instructions at the level of 'Turn on the machine, and then insert disk'. The use of diagrams illustrating the package in action can often be effective. A user guide is sometimes included as a chapter in the main body of the report, but is often better as an appendix to the main report. Do not include user guides for trivial pieces of code where these are not the main subject of the dissertation.

**Internal Chapter Structure** Each chapter should have an introduction stating its purpose within the dissertation and why it is placed at that point, and outlining what is to be covered in the chapter and why.

Each chapter should finish with a summary describing what it has presented and what is to follow.

Chapters should not be overly long it is important to show summaries of ideas and not simply repeat everything that has been read. A chapter of longer than 20 pages should usually be avoided. When a chapter is more than 30 pages it should generally be split into two (or more) chapters.

**Proof Reading & Quality of English** It is extremely important that you carefully proof read your work. This should catch most typing errors that are not spelling errors, for example form instead of from.

Proof reading means also checking for inconsistencies, disparities, missing paragraphs, unintelligible sentences, bad formatting of text, graph and drawings, etc.

The dissertation/reports is/are expected to be written in English as practised by a native speaker. If English is not your first tongue then you should consult your supervisor to determine if you need additional help in this regard. This may involve outside help.

Note: the quality of the English in your dissertation/reports is solely your responsibility. If you require, the English Language Teaching Centre organises classes in academic writing.

**Spelling and Grammar Checking** You must spell check all parts of the dissertation/diploma report. A number of tools are available for spell checking, for example in MS WORD. Such tools should be used where available.

Note: this is not instead of proof-reading but as well as!

Additional guidelines include: In general, the text should be left and right justified; All chapter/(sub)section headings should be in bold-font with increasingly less eye-catching presentation; All figures/tables should be numbered and included in the table of contents; All tables/figures must be referenced in the text; The author should not normally refer to him/herself explicitly by using the first person, i.e. we should read the author, s/he, etc. instead of I, my, etc.

## **C.9.1 Referencing and Citing**

**Referencing** When researching a piece of written work you will frequently read other peoples ideas, theories or data that you will want to make reference to in your own work.

**Citing** Making reference to other authors in your own work is called citing. The names of the authors who are cited in your text are listed in alphabetical order at the end of the written work. This is a reference list.

The process of citing authors and producing a reference list can be done in one of two common styles the Harvard or the Numeric. A consistent approach to references should be adopted when citing in the text and in the reference

section. This guide describes the Harvard Referencing System as it is the mostly commonly used, but you may use other standard systems.

**Why reference?** To show evidence of the breadth and depth of your reading;

To acknowledge other peoples ideas correctly;

To allow the reader of your work to locate the cited references easily, and so evaluate your interpretation of those ideas;

To avoid plagiarism.

**What is the difference between a Reference List and a Bibliography?** A reference list provides all the information about the published works - books, journals and newspaper articles etc., you have mentioned within your text. It is organised alphabetically by the family names of the authors (or originators). The list appears at the end of the work and gives full details of the authors name, what the work is called, the date of publication and where it was published.

A bibliography is a list of all works read in the course of your preparatory reading. This includes material that has been helpful for reading around the subject area but has not been referred to directly in the text. It is still important to acknowledge this work. This list is also arranged alphabetically by authors family name and is located after the reference list.

Some people mix the list of references from within the text (references) and the references to wider reading (bibliography) together in one list, which they call the Bibliography. This is discouraged, because it creates difficulties for your examiner, who has to sort out which is which, in order to be clear about the accuracy of your referencing.

**Citing in your text** The Harvard System (sometimes called the Name and Date System) uses the family name of the author of the work you wish to cite and the date it was published. These are incorporated into the text of your work each time you make reference to that persons ideas.

**Citing a single author** The author and the date of publication are provided

For example:

Smith (1993) has suggested that ..

or

Some commentators suggest that .. (Smith, 1993), whilst others ...

**Citing more than one author** If there are two authors, the names of both should be given in the text and in the reference list. When citing and referencing use the same format for both, and words are preferable to symbols. For example, Smith and Jones not Smith & Jones.

If there are more than two authors, the name of the first author only should be given in the text, followed by the abbreviation et al. (meaning and others in Latin).

For example:

Bennet et al. (1997) showed that ..

Note that et al. is in italics and is followed by a full stop. In your reference list, however, you will list all the authors who compose the et al.

For example:

Bennet, S., McRobb, S. and Farmer, R. (2002) Object-Oriented Systems Analysis and Design. London: McGraw Hill.

Note that in the reference list the family name and initial are inverted.

**Distinguishing several publications in the same year by an author** Sometimes you will find that an author has published two or more books, journal articles, etc. in a given year. It is important to distinguish between the different publications by adding letters (a, b, c, etc.) to the date in the text.

For example:

Johnson (1991a) has progressed both experimental and practical aspects of software technology to the point where they provide a serious challenge to Pacific Belt dominance (Johnson, 1991b).

In the reference list the articles are presented alphabetically: 1991a, then 1991b and so on.

For example:

Johnson, C. (1991a) Software: The way ahead .  
Johnson, C. (1991b) Changing Global Markets .

**The Required Information** You will find all the information that you need to build up a reference from the title page of the book or document you are citing. Remember to

- Keep the order of authors names the same as on the title page
- Cite the first named place of publication.
- Note that when citing the place of publication the following applies: If a text was referenced as published in Manchester it would be assumed this was in the UK. If a text was published in the US it would be referenced as Manchester, N.H. (abbreviation for New Hampshire).

Note that edition dates are not reprint dates (new editions will have new text and must be cited as such). The copyright sign will often indicate the date of production.

If the work to be referenced has not originated from a commercial publisher and lacks obvious title page data for example, papers presented at conferences but not published then the appropriate information should be obtained from any part of the document. A books editor is referenced in exactly the same way as an author, adding (ed.).

For example:

Cibora, C.U. (ed.) (1996) Groupware and teamwork: invisible aid or technical hindrance?. Chichester:Wiley.  
or  
Grosz, B.J., Sparck Jones, K. and Webber, B.L. (eds.) (1986) Readings in Natural Language Processing. Los Altos: Morgan Kaufman.

Note, the capitalisation of the title should be the same as on the source.

**Corporate Authors** Sometimes it is not possible to name an individual as an author. For example, where there has been a shared, corporate responsibility for the production of the material. In such cases the corporate name becomes the author (often called the corporate author). Corporate authors can be government bodies, companies, professional bodies, clubs or societies, international organisations.

For example:

Institute of Waste Management (1995) Ways to Improve Recycling. Northampton: Institute of Waste Management.

The corporate author' appears in the text in the same way as authors.

**Chapters in edited books** An edited book will often have a number of authors for different chapters. To refer to a specific authors ideas (from a chapter), cite him or her in the text, not the editors. In the reference list indicate the chapter details and the book details from which it was published.

For example:

Whitehead, C. (1991) Charismatic Leadership. In: W. Harrison and D. Cole (eds.) Recent Advances in Leadership Theory. London: Waverley. pp. 73-89.

Note the use of in to link the chapter to the book, and the use of page numbers. Whiteheads name would appear as the author in your text, and in the reference list. The year of publication is only given once in the reference list.

**Secondary sources** A journal article or book someone else cites that you have not seen is called a secondary source. You should try and find the bibliographic details of the source yourself (for example, by using the bibliographic CD-ROM services available in the University of Manchester library) and cite them in the normal way. It is important that when criticising ideas you do it first hand.

If you are unable to locate the bibliographic details of the secondary source, you may cite it in your text using the text that is your primary source.

In your text and reference list you must link these two items with the term cited in.

The format is: Author of original works family name, initials, (Year of original publication), Title of original work. Place of publication: Publisher. Cited in Author/editor surname, initials. (Year) Title. Place of publications: Publisher.

For example:

A change in family circumstances can affect a child's emotional stability (Pollock, 1995) cited in Jones (1996).

Pollock, T. (1995) *Children in Contemporary Society*. Cited in Jones, P. (1996) *A Family Affair*. London: Butterworth.

Note that only the primary source title is italicised and both years are included.

**No publication details given** Occasionally you will find documents that lack basic publication details. It is common practice to indicate that this information is not available by using a series of generally accepted abbreviations:

author/corporate author not given	use (Anon.)
no date	use (n.d.)
no place (sine loco)	use (s.l.)
no publisher (sine nomine)	use (s.n.)
not known	use (n.k.)

**Quotations** If you quote from a publication directly, then you must place the page number within the citation. In the reference list, however, it is not necessary to indicate the page number.

**Short Quotations** Short quotations, meaning the use of a phrase or part of a sentence. Short quotations used within the text require the use of single quotation marks.

For example:

Whilst it is possible that poor parenting has little effect on primary educational development, it more profoundly affects secondary or higher educational achievement (Healey, 1993, p. 22).

**Longer Quotations** Quotations that are one sentence or more should be distinguished from the rest of the text by indenting the quotation by an equal amount from both side margins and placing in single space format (as opposed to the rest of the text which should be in 1.5 or double spaced format). Note the example below of a long quotation set with text. You may also use a smaller font size to further distinguish the quoted text.

Indented quotations should still be placed in quotation marks.

For example:

The rise of capitalism and the expansion of the world market have made international trade an essential part of modern society. The industrialised core has developed, and continues to maintain its lifestyle, by exploiting the labour and resources of the periphery. Because the developed countries hold the power they dictate the terms, not only with regard to pricing but also the uses to which resources are put.

The resource depletion cost of individual people in the North is much greater than that in the South: 80 per cent of the world's resource consumption is by 20 per cent of the people. This 20 per cent live mainly in the North. Since many resources are transferred (at prices favourable to the purchaser) from the South to the North, much of the cost is paid in the South. (Kirby et al, 1995 p.4)

This uneven development is the central argument of the neo-Marxist point of view.

Never split a quotation in your text. If it does not fit completely on a page then start a new one so that the whole quotation is kept together.

**Format.** The University requires that dissertations/reports are submitted in a certain format whose description is available in Section C.9 and on the University's policies webpage <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/studentnet/policies/>.

Make sure that your dissertation/reports is/are in the required format (there are various 'style files' to help with this), otherwise it may not be accepted at submission time.

**Submission.** All dissertations and Group Reports are to be submitted electronically. Instructions for this are available on the University website.

Note: Project Progress Reports, submitted in April/May, also need electronic copies but these are submitted via a different route. All electronic submissions are available for automated plagiarism checking. You should make sure that your submissions are entirely free of plagiarised material before you submit.

## C.9.2 Scientific Writing

The Project Progress Report, Masters Dissertation and Diploma Report should have a purpose and tell a story. Similarly each chapter should have a purpose which contributes to the Project Progress Report, Masters Dissertation or Diploma Reports purpose; each section should contribute to the chapters purpose; each paragraph to the section; and each sentence to the paragraph.

Each sentence should contribute to the overall purpose of the Project Progress Report, Dissertation or Diploma Report. If a sentence does not fit in its current place then consideration should be given as to whether it contributes, if it does then an alternative location for it should be considered, if there is no alternative then it is usually indicative of a poor structure. If the sentence does not contribute it should be removed.

A number of internal dependencies, forward or backward, within the text are usually indicative of a poor structure. In this case the structure should be reviewed.

All opinions and conclusions must be justified by you or referenced to their source, results should be fully presented and discussed, and experiments should be presented in enough detail to be repeatable by the reader.

When approaches and results are being evaluated this must be done based on given criteria, thus results are only good with reference to stated criteria. Similarly one approach is better than another only with reference to stated criteria. As far as possible these criteria should be measurable and quantifiable.

Sentences should be short and to the point; the use of subjective adjectives (e.g. nice) should be avoided. Long sentences often lead to misunderstanding or ambiguity and should be avoided.

## C.10 Assessment of the Dissertation/Reports

Dissertations/reports are normally assessed on the following broad criteria:

**Background research.** This assesses your awareness of relevant background work and how your project builds upon or exploits existing techniques or results. For implementation projects, it assesses the way you arrived at your initial project specification, work programme and list of objectives.

**General competence.** This assesses your general approach, the clarity of your objectives, and your ability to relate the significance of your achievements to the state-of-the-art.

**Technical accuracy.** This assesses the main technical output from the project, as regards correctness, elegance, usability etc. of the final product, theoretical or practical, and the techniques employed. Report. This assesses the

quality of the write-up itself: the organisation of the material, quality of the prose, clarity of explanations, spelling, punctuation, legibility, relevance of diagrams, etc. Note that reports falling below minimum acceptable standards will not be accepted.

**Finally...** Remember that one of your supervisor's main responsibilities is to advise on how to write-up your project results. You are not expected to be able to produce a perfect dissertation without help. You should discuss with your supervisor all aspects of the dissertation, but particularly its structure and how to present the material. You might find it useful to look at MSc dissertations from previous years.

### **C.10.1 Pitfalls**

Why do some projects go wrong? Here are some of the common causes of failure: Choosing or starting the project too late. Submit your project request form on time and start the project as soon as you can. The longer you leave it the harder it is to get motivated, especially when all your friends seem to be flying ahead. You should aim to have completed most of the project by early August, thus leaving sufficient time to fill in gaps and write the dissertation.

Failing to meet your supervisor regularly. If you arrange a meeting with your supervisor, turn up at the agreed time. If you are stuck for any reason and you have no meeting arranged, contact him or her immediately. You gain no sympathy from anyone if you lose contact with your supervisor and produce a poor project as a result. Your supervisor will be happy to help you but he or she can do nothing if they are unaware that you are having trouble. Also, make sure that you are prepared for each meeting with your supervisor. This may take the form of a completed piece of work that you have done ready to demonstrate to your supervisor; or it may be that you have hit some problem, in which case come along prepared to explain the problem so that you both can attempt to solve it. Always bring your laboratory workbook and any results you have to each supervision.

Allowing too little time for the report. You should try to produce as much of your report as you can as you go along, even though you don't know in advance its exact structure. Written work along the way has two forms: (1) written accounts which describe a piece of work you have completed along the way. Write these at the time that each stage is completed—it is much easier then; and (2) an evolving plan of your dissertation—chapters, sections and their contents. This changes as the project evolves, but will provide guidance to the overall structure. The last two weeks of the project should be dedicated to pulling together the material you have accumulated and producing a polished final product.

Failing to plan a fall-back position if the planned work is not completed on time. Try to plan your project in stages so that if things go wrong in a later stage you have a completed stage to fall back on.

Trying to satisfy an external customer at the expense of your academic work. Do not let any outside interests interfere with your work. The guidance for your project should come from your supervisor, not your prospective employer.

Over- or under-ambition. Try to be realistic about what you can achieve in the time available. A good project requires a lot of input from you and should prove to be technically challenging throughout. At the same time, however, it is better to do a small job well than it is to fail to do a big job. Your supervisor will advise you on his or her expectations of the project and this will help you to set your sights accordingly.

Submission of preliminary drafts. Do not submit your dissertation without letting your supervisor read drafts first. He or she will invariably have comments and suggestions for improvement. Don't leave this to the last moment. Give your supervisor a good period to read and comment as he or she will possibly have several to look at, and it can take a while to read through a draft. You should normally expect to revise the complete draft at least once. Dissertations failing to meet minimum standards will not be accepted for award of the MSc degree.

The dissertation/reports has to be your own original work. Guidance on the use of the work of others and on plagiarism can be found elsewhere in this Handbook.

## **C.11 Research Project Timetable**

**In Semester 1.** Project proposals are posted on the web; students should go to the postgraduate information page and navigate from there. Having perused the list, you should:

Obtain a Project Subscription form from the Student Support Office in the School.



See the supervisors of the projects that interest you to discuss the projects in detail.

Get them to sign the Project Subscription form. This is vital; you will not be assigned a project unless you have seen the supervisor first; without a project you cannot gain an MSc. Bear in mind that members of staff may be away even during term-time, so do not leave this until the last moment.

When you have completed your enquiries, return the form to the Student Support Office in the School (we suggest that you keep a copy). You should indicate at least three choices on the form (in order of preference). This is important: you may be given any of these, so do not select a project unless you are really prepared to do it! Of course, the allocation scheme will respect your preference order typically, every year around 70% of the students who submit a form by the deadline are allocated their first choice but clashes of one kind or another always happen. There may changes to this procedure this year: we [(CS) hope to remove the paper sign off form and replace it by a web based sign off form. Hence, we intend to create an electronic sign off system rather than the previously used paper sign off form; if time allows. You will be notified of all and any changes.

There are a large number of students in the School; all have to complete a project as part of their MSc programme. To help you decide on a project there is a list of suggested projects supervised by different members of staff. But you can choose a project from this list or you can discuss with a member of staff completing a project you have developed yourself. Your chances of being allocated a project depend on the number of students wishing to undertake the project. For example, if you develop your own project, and this is agreed with a supervisor, then you will be allocated this project. However, if you and 5 other students all wish to undertake a particular project then your chances are 1 in 6. Some projects are very popular and whilst we try to match you with your preferred projects this can be difficult if projects are oversubscribed. To help us allocate projects we normally ask you to rank the projects you select in order of preference and we try to allocate you with your most preferred projects.

Please perform this exercise as quickly as possible (i.e. start thinking about a project immediately after the projects are announced typically, around mid-January - or well beforehand if you wish to arrange your own project) and hand in your form by the deadline. Please note that there is no advantage if you hand your form in early (but there is a disadvantage if you hand in after the deadline). The project coordinator will then collate the data and attempt, in discussion with programme directors and supervisors, to give as many people as possible their first choices, or, failing that, one of their most preferred choices. Please note that, with the exception of group projects, only one person will get to do one project. Also, there is a limit to the total number of projects that a staff member is capable of supervising. For these reasons, there is a strong likelihood of disappointment if you plump for popular projects/supervisors. Unfortunately there is no way of knowing the pattern of demand in advance (you might like to ask staff members about the level of interest in projects when you see them). If you are unsuccessful, there will be a further round of the process.

It is possible that you wish to do a project of your own devising, or follow up an idea that has arisen in conversation with a staff member. If you wish to do a project that does not appear on the list then you should first get the agreement of a staff member to supervise you, and then hand in a description of the project (signed by the supervisor) to the Student Support Office in the School, again by the deadline. Projects with industrial partners may also be available.

**Students select suitable MSc Projects** During the first semester, you (as an MSc students) will be making decisions about which projects to undertake. As you can appreciate there are about 150 projects for students to select from, all with different requirements and outputs.

Students are required to discuss the projects with the supervisor whom will advise you on their projects. To be fair to academic staff the students must be capability of undertake the project.

In order for you (the student) to make an informed decision about whether to proceed with the project selection, there are a few things you might want to discuss with the supervisor, namely:

- explicitly what artefact has to be developed;
- what computing skills are required;
- what research must be undertaken;
- what mathematics is involved in the project.

In making your decision you might want to consider, and discuss with the supervisor if necessary, the following:

- what competence the student has in the specific area the project addresses;
- what previous experience they have had of undertaking research in the project domain;
- what mathematical skill they have that aligns to those required for the project;
- what high-level computing skills they presently have; and at what competence level.

MSc projects should be challenging for the students, but they should also be achievable. In discussing the project requirements with the supervisor beforehand you might be saving a great deal of time that might otherwise be required at a later date attempting to bring a your self up to scratch in research knowledge or mathematical/computing skills. You should discuss the issues in a frank and open way ask what explicit existing knowledge is required for the project domain.

Remember, the main aim of this initial meeting is to make sure you are happy to undertake the project under the guidance of this particular supervisor; also you should make yourself fully aware explicitly of what the project entails. If you are happy that you are capable of undertaking the project and you fully understands what the project entails; then select the MSc the specific project you have discussed.

**Second Semester and Remainder of MSc year** After choosing your project at the turn of the year you will:

1. Complete the Research Skills & Professional Issues course unit in the second semester, alongside some taught course units.
2. Submit your Project Progress Report by the deadline before the end of the second semester. If you pass then:
3. Work full-time on your project and writing the dissertation until the deadline which is usually early to mid September.

**Warning:** Writing your dissertation may take much longer than you imagine. You should therefore allow at least 1 month (and probably longer) full-time to write, and also write-up parts of your work as they are completed so that the dissertation is part-way written before your project is completed.

**Mid Summer.** You must give prior notice of your intention to submit by completing a Notice of Submission Form. A fee is payable for late notice. The rules regarding the form of the dissertation are currently being made and will in due time appear on the University's policies webpage. You will be made aware of the rules regarding the form of the dissertations/reports, and you will also be told where to submit both, the Notice of Submission Form as well as the dissertation/reports.

**Early September.** The deadline for the submission of MSc dissertations or reports for a group project varies from year to year but is usually in early September. Two bound copies of your dissertation must be submitted. In the case of group projects two bound copies of the group report must be submitted and two bound copies of the individual reports of each group member. Bear in mind that binding may take some time please allow for this.

To let us know that you have submitted, could you please email [sso@cs.man.ac.uk](mailto:sso@cs.man.ac.uk). Submitting late. If you are unable to submit by the deadline in early September you must request the permission to submit late by completing a request form.