MSc Individual Project

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Introduction To The MSc Project
What We Are Covering

• What the MSc Project is
• How the MSc Project is assessed
• Support available for the MSc Project
• Choosing an MSc Project
• Dates, deadlines, contacts and links
Official Project Information

The official information and Project Guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/lab/msc-projects

This presentation just provides an overview (the official information always takes precedence)
What Is The MSc Project?

- A major and open-ended piece of work
- Mainly selected from staff approved Proposals
- Addresses a non-trivial problem
- The main research component of your MSc
- Includes a substantial implementation or theoretical piece of work
- The concluding part of your MSc
Substantial Work

The MSc Project takes place across the summer term and the summer ‘vacation’ period (many students will start this earlier)

Officially, it represents 900 hours of work before the September deadline
The Summer Period

Summer is **not** a vacation period for MSc students

You are unlikely to have time to devote to other substantial activities
MSc Project Assessment
Some Project Targets

• Conduct **independent research**, with evaluative judgement, under the guidance of a Supervisor

• Discuss the **wider context** of the field you are investigating, including its legal and ethical implications

• Apply relevant **theoretical and practical** techniques

• **Communicate** your process and accomplishments clearly verbally and in writing (including in a Report)
To PASS the Project

Obtain a mark of **at least 51%**.

Complete the components:

- Background and Progress Report
- Project Report
- Oral Presentation and Demonstration
  (must be presented to both supervisor and second marker)
Pass/Merit/Distinction

Overall, a **Project** will not be recommended for a Pass/Merit/Distinction if the **Project Report** is not at the level of a Pass/Merit/Distinction, respectively
To Obtain An MSc With Distinction

Obtain an aggregated mark of at least 70% on the MSc taught components

AND

Obtain a mark of at least 71% on the individual project

(AND meet all other requirements to pass the MSc)
To Obtain An MSc With Merit

Obtain an aggregated mark of at least 60% on the MSc taught components
AND
Obtain a mark of at least 61% on the individual project
(AND meet all other requirements to pass the MSc)
(AND not qualify for Distinction)
To Pass The MSc

Obtain an aggregated mark of at least 50% on the MSc taught components
AND
Obtain a mark of at least 51% on the individual project. (AND not qualify for Merit/Distinction)
Project Support
Project Supervisor

All Projects have an internal **Supervisor** (who must be on an approved list, usually a member of the Department of Computing, such as a Lecturer or Teaching Fellow)

The College expectation is that the Supervisor will provide you with regular support throughout the duration of the Project
Supervision Meetings

Arrange the schedule for these with your Supervisor
(bear in mind that they have vacation time, even if you do not)

Our expectation is that you arrive prepared for every meeting, with details of your progress and questions

Your supervisor may prefer to provide some support with you through other channels, such as email (e.g. when giving feedback on draft work)
Project Attendance

You are expected to be in attendance throughout the project duration for the supervision meetings and the Oral Presentation/Demonstration

Short-term absence needs to be approved by the Director of Studies
Selecting A Project
The Standard Route

Staff Proposals are available on the MSc Project Portal

https://project-portal.doc.ic.ac.uk

Use sensible criteria to select from these (i.e. personal interest, achievability, relevance to MSc, future aims, competition for the proposal)
Many Proposals attract a lot of interest. You will need to convince a supervisor that they are investing their time wisely if they choose to work with you. You are expected to meet with multiple possible supervisors.

Be prepared!
(why do you want to do that project? what do you know about the area?)
Selecting Projects From The MSc Project Portal

This does contain plenty of choice
You will only see Proposals relevant to your MSc

**Mark the Proposals** that interest you in the Portal
See the Supervisors in good time (don’t assume they will be available last minute)

Ensure that the **Supervisors also mark that you have seen them** in the Portal

Supervisors will also indicate *how interested* they are in supervising you, but this will not be visible to you
You must shortlist three Projects (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} choice) from at least two different supervisors

Use the information on the Project Portal regarding how competitive each topic is to aid your choice

It is quite common to not receive your first choice, particularly for competitive projects

A supervisor cannot guarantee you will get any particular topic – the allocation is completed by the Project Coordinator
Common Error

Only listing one project

(in this situation, there is a very good chance you won’t end up with a Project – and your choice afterwards will be much more restricted)
The Alternative Route (**Rare!**)

You **can** propose a project yourself (the other Proposals will give you an idea regarding the level/depth)

You will need to add a Proposal to the Project Portal

You will need to attract a Supervisor (and have the meeting recorded in the Project Portal)
Industry-Linked Projects

• They are possible and can be useful, but need planning
• Permission must be obtained from the Course Director
• They still need a departmental Supervisor
• They are not an internship
• Can be difficult to manage the industry requirements and the academic requirements (the industry partner is not involved in assessment)
Non Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

You are advised to consider carefully if you wish to be bound by an NDA
(if you can’t submit it, we can’t assess it)
Project Shortlisting – Alternative Route

You need only shortlist your own Proposal
Make sure that the Supervisor has confirmed their interest on the Project Portal
The Individual Project **must be distinct** from the ISO and any previous work

You cannot get credit twice for the same work (this is a form of self-plagiarism)

You **can** relate your Project to previous work, but you need to acknowledge and reference this without using the previous words

(example – your ISO was a Literature Review in the same field)
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Breaches

Plagiarism anywhere in the Project is unacceptable (whether in the reports, implementation or presentation slides)

You are expected to fully reference (and build upon) external sources. **Do not copy and paste**

You could be asked about anything you write about. Don’t include it in the Report if you don’t understand it
Project Milestones
Project Milestones

1. Choose (and be chosen for) a project
2. Submit a Background and Progress Report
3. Present and demonstrate results
4. Submit a final Report (“thesis”)
5. Submit any artefacts (“code”)

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Important Dates (Spring Term)

Review project proposals and meet with potential supervisors
Spring term weeks 2–4
Indicate your project preferences
first, second, third choice
deadline: 23:59 Thursday 30 January 2020
Important Dates (After Spring Term)

Submit Background and Progress Report electronically: by 23:59 Thursday 4 June 2020

Present and demonstrate results to supervisor and second marker: by arrangement, close to report deadline, absolute deadline 17:00 Friday 11 September 2020

Submit final report electronically: by 14:00 Friday 4 September 2020
Project Contact And Links
### Useful Project Contacts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
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Some Important Links

Project Information
http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/lab/msc-projects
http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/lab/msc-projects/ProjectsGuide.html

(this can also be accessed via MSc noticeboard)

Viewing project proposals and recording preferences
https://project-portal.doc.ic.ac.uk

Examples of Previous Distinguished Projects
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/computing/prospective-students/distinguished-projects/pg-prizes
The MSc Project is challenging but it is rewarding!
Any Questions?