

## **Industry-based MSc projects**

Some students may be wondering about the possibility of doing an industry-based individual project in the summer. Doing such a project is possible, and can be interesting, but there are also many pitfalls, and it can be very time-consuming for the students to set it up. This document is an attempt to explain the procedure and warn of the problems.

### **What do you need to do before the project starts?**

- 1) Obtain good lab marks. To be allowed to take up an industry-based project you must get at least an overall of 70% on the practical component of your course in the Autumn term. If you are not doing a practical component then you need to provide the approval of your personal tutor and the Course Director.
- 2) Find a company that is interested in proposing a project. The company (branch) and the work must normally be in the UK.
- 3) Provide a detailed project proposal and work plan - this will have to be uploaded in Cate (instructions later).
- 4) Find a supervisor in the department who approves the proposal and is happy with supervising a project that has been suggested/proposed by an external company. This may take several iterations in modifying the proposal and the arrangements.
- 5) Obtain the signature of the person in the company who is most interested in the project, on an agreement form that will be available later from the department.

### **What do you need to do during and at the end of the project period?**

- 1) Follow your departmental supervisor's guidelines and recommendations. In particular in cases where there is a clash of interest between the company and the departmental requirements, the latter should always have priority.
- 2) Ensure that the project is both developed and demonstrated in the department. If your project requires special software or hardware for development this must be available for use by the student in the department at Imperial. This is essential because the project might cease to be of importance to the company before the completion date, and it must be possible to continue the implementation despite this.
- 3) Follow all the department's assessment requirements and deadlines (available later).

#### **Please note that:**

- a) The company plays no (formal) part in the assessment of the project.
- b) The project must be available for assessment. If the company wishes they can request that neither the code nor the report be made publically available.
- c) No special arrangements (e.g. extension of deadline or marking flexibility) will be

available if the project work suffers because of any problems to do with the company.

**What are the pitfalls?**

a) The project work suffers because of a conflict of interest between the department and the company.

b) The company loses interest, or requests frequent changes, because of their other commitments and constraints

c) The company goes bust.

d) In our experience, industry-based projects have often had disappointing outcomes in terms of the academic quality, leading to lower marks than would be expected given the students' previous performance.