

Computer Science Final Year Project

Organizing Your Practical Work and Working With Your Tutor

Making best use of your individual project tutor

- This is **your** project
- **You** set the agenda
- **You** are responsible
- Your individual project tutor **cannot and will not** do the project (or any part of it) for you.

(S)he will not tell you what to do, nor will (s)he take responsibility for your mistakes!!

You need to *manage* the time you spend on your project **including the time you spend with your tutor**

What will your individual project tutor do?

Your individual project tutor will advise and support

Your individual project tutor is a valuable resource. Use him/her wisely.

This resource is limited:

- you have 15 minutes per week,
- but **only** 15 minutes.

We expect you to meet with your tutor every week during term time, at a time that is mutually convenient

You will need to do some work every week, or else you won't have much to talk about!

Making best use of your own time

Your project must go beyond what you can do with your individual tutor in the time available for the individual tutorials (about 5 hours).

300 **productive** hours of work are expected.

Aim to learn by *doing part of the project.*

- This will give you something to talk to your tutor about
- It will also give you something you can write about in your final report!

EXAMPLE

Project A involved a long description of a new (to the student) methodology, followed by a long analysis of his system using that methodology.

This was not very good.

Much better would have been to use his own system to illustrate the description of the method, and put the rest of the analysis in the appendices.

Prepare a weekly progress report

A weekly progress report will help you to get the most out of your meeting:

- It will help your project tutor to focus on important issues.
- It will force **you** to be clear about what you have achieved, and to be honest about any problems you are having.

Improve the efficiency of the tutorial process by dispelling vagueness!!

Your weekly report should fit on one A4-sized page, and should set out:

- **What** you have **done**
- **What** you have **learnt**
- **What problems** you are currently facing
- **What** you intend to do **next**

What done

These should be concrete achievements.

Are any of the following reasonable achievements?

- Reading about VPNs,
- Learning VB,
- Thinking about the design,
- Started on implementation.

No, in fact **none** of these is measurable.

What about these two?

- I wrote 6 lines of code
- I read 270 pages of "C++ in 21 days"

Which of these is better?

Generally speaking writing code is better, because it becomes part of your project. Learning standard techniques may be needed, but it is not part of the project that you can write about.

What learnt

This is an *academic* project.

You should learn **new** stuff, not just complete something you could have done in CS2 or for your Higher Diploma.

This is what you can write about.

What problems

What problems are you facing now?

This is where your individual project tutor is likely to focus attention in the meeting.

If the problems are fixed, they are described under what done/learnt.

What next

How you plan to resolve the problems.

What task(s) is/are coming up in the next week or two

Maybe just “steady as she goes”, which leads us to your Project Plan...

Have a simple plan

- Divide the time available into weeks - you will need to do about 12 hours work each week
- Note whether you are on schedule or not
- If you miss one week, you will have to find an *extra* 12 hours the next week, making 24 hours in total
- Large tasks, with modest error in your estimates, can easily become several weeks behind schedule without noticing
- If all tasks are of one week duration, you will know at the end of every week whether you are on schedule or not
- Allow lots of time to write up - but not just at the end
- Expect parallel processes

One last thing...

Do some work every week.