**Tips from 2021 and 2022 Project Students**

"Motivation starts after starting not before. Start early, fear of the unknown is always there but there are always people who are going to support you. You will lead the way in your project but the people behind you will guide you. Do not think of the hours, do the work that you love, hours will follow. Do not think of the work, do the learning so you can gain something out of the project. The project is about you getting an experience."

"Do not let the first 2- 3 weeks in the industry work break your spirit. The transition from doing academic projects to doing industry projects is going to be rough and hard. Be resilient and adaptable. Know that it will get better, and you will eventually adjust. Ara gave us a great foundation to prepare for the industry work, but there is just not enough time to cover everything that we need for the project that we will end up doing. Do not feel inadequate just because you do not have the skills that you need YET (you will have it in the end). The main goal of the internship is for you to get those skills. Condition your mind that you can learn it as long as you put effort into it.

The industry does not expect you to come in saving the day. So do not be too hard on yourself. Work hard, and work smart! For project and course management, investigate the tools that will work best for you and for the purpose that you need them. Do not pick tools just because it’s what you already know how to use.

And most of all, enjoy your industry hours!"

There were so many uncertainties in the first couple of weeks. I was unsure if I could implement any features and write the project in Python, which was the language the industry supervisor was more familiar with. It turned out that it was ok that I chose another programming language, and I tried my best to create as many features as I could. All I did was discussing with the supervisors what I could do and my ideas about the project. They would always support me. Things would get clearer as I moved forwards.

Hours aren’t the be all end all. I know you’re going to be sitting there stressing about when they are going to be completed. But honestly don’t stress. Focus on the outcomes and get them to a high quality.

Regardless of how much you are told to not procrastinate, it will like still happen. The project is hard. Watching YouTube is easy. I procrastinated lots. I recommend, especially if you are working remotely to get an app/website blocker to block distracting sites like YouTube or social media during scheduled work times.

The only way to get the project done is to sit down, Shut up and get working.

"DO NOT WASTE THIS OPPORTUNITY!!! Firstly, congratulations, you made it to the last paper in the degree, and that’s nothing to sneeze at. But school life and work life are very different. Maybe you were working before you studied, or maybe you’ve never been in the workforce. But thats the goal, right? That’s why you are here. So, to that end, this project is a great opportunity to get your mind into work mode. Essentially, you need to approach this paper as a course but also as a job - you need to wear both hats. This course is the transition between school and work. And the more you can put your mind into work space NOW, the easier the transition into work will be later.

Another thing to keep in mind is that everyone is affected by your performance in this course, not least yourself. For example, if you do poorly, this reflects negatively on you, but also your academic and industry supervisors and Ara. If you do poorly, the local industry suffers because of the time they invested in you has gone to waste. If the local industry suffers, the greater industry suffers. So, by doing poorly on this project everyone suffers. Alternatively, by doing well in this course, it reflects positively on your supervisors, Ara and the local and greater communities. So, don’t be selfish, do a good job for everyone.

Regardless of the quality of work you do, whether it is good or bad, it will stay with you for the rest of your IT career. If you didn’t do good work, you’ll always wish you had. If you did good work, you can tell people about it for years to come. So, again - do well for you, do well for Ara, do well for New Zealand."

Start everything early. The semester will be more enjoyable if you give yourself plenty of time to get things done.

"Do not leave everything to the last minute/last month. Plan your hours/timetable as soon as practical and stick to them. Avoid having a part-time job if possible. Treat the project as an internship/job, not as an assignment."

To start as fast as they can. Don’t waste your time, as at the end it will be stressful.

"Project Management

• A good routine is vital to be able to manage the stress this course will bring you.

• If you feel you need help setting up a game plan for how to manage yourself this semester, approaching the Health Centre for some FREE counselling is a really good idea. They are great people and they do a good job at helping you assess what your goals for this semester/on a current week are and help you come up with good routines; self management strategies.

• During the middle of the semester or whenever you feel overwhelmed, again, Counselling is such a great service to help discuss your blocks and how to slowly overcome them. They are FREE and criminally an underrated asset at your disposal as a student.

• MOTIVATION ONLY COMES AFTER YOU START DOING SOMETHING, NOT BEFORE.

• Start small. One of the effective routines I learnt was to time yourself for 10 minutes and try at least typing 40 words. Times up? Cool, do it again... and again. You’ll find yourself easily reaching for the goal while it’s also opening your mind to the knowledge you have over what you’re doing. If 40 gets easier, do 60 words for 10 minutes. Continue as you please. The great thing about this routine is you’ll end up building motivation out of nothing.

• It’s better to start early in the morning than late at night. You need the sleep. Don’t forget about your body.

• Distractions are real and they will get in the way.

• Do what you have to do, block apps like Youtube, hide your consoles, take less hours on your part-time jobs.

• Once you’re in the zone and you break it to do something for leisure for even 30 seconds, it’ll take almost even an hour to get back in the zone.

• Do your reports at Ara if you can manage, focusing at home could be difficult. If at home, make sure distractions are minimal.

• Take a break at least a day a week. Make sure you are honest with yourself with those.

• Attend every class session. You’ll miss important things if you don’t, important things listed on Moodle but are elaborated in class.

• Most of all, enjoy your time in this class and with the companies you do your project for. When you put in the time and the work, you’ll end with a project you’ll be very proud with in the end.

Academic Advice

• Get whatever you have done checked by your AS, no matter how small your progress might be.

• Keep up with your weekly reports as they keep you intact for a lot of the time. Be honest in your weekly reports, your AS cannot help you if you are not honest with your reports. If you are reluctant on mentioning things you are struggling with, it will be much harder to help you and you are only lying to yourself.

• Approach your AS if you need help with something either academic or industry work. They are understanding people and will give the needed advice.

Industry Advice

• As the semester begins, start looking for potential projects. Send your CV around, but make sure it’s a project you can handle/ in the space of what you can do. You need to make sure by around week 4-5 you’ve hit the ground running with your reports.

• During your project, the most important thing is COMMUNICATION. Communication 100% of the time ensures progress.

• Positive (project progress) /negative (project setback or problems) activity all needs to be communicated, it does not matter. This is why you are doing the project. You are not regarded as a high professional yet. Communicating these ensure necessary assessments are made immediately in order to progress the project.

• Your clients are very important, it is important that you know your client matrix early on. This will dictate a lot of your progress because this means you’ll be getting feedback from the appropriate person/party, therefore efficient.

• If you feel like you’re in the dark at times, refer back to your main clients and communicate.

• Enjoy your time with the company. What you are doing is cool, and your character is the best thing you take around with you in the workplace."

"1, Make sure what are your final deliverables at the beginning of the course.

2, Do a detailed time plan for the final deliverables (phased aim can be included in the plan)

3, Continually communicate with supervisors to make sure you are on your correct way.

Don’t be shy about asking questions of academic supervisors. Every supervisor is very nice and willing to help you pass your difficult stages.

2021.07"

I wish I could quickly get used to asking for help in time to solve problems. It means when a problem cannot be solved within 2 hours, and I have conducted some research, then I should ask the question in team or supervisors. I wish I had understood that showing my research or providing possible solutions is a part of addressing issues.

"Things will be difficult at first, you might wonder how you arere supposed to finish this colossal course, it is ok to feel tired and overwhelmed at some point, what is important is that you never give up, you have to keep going. Just remember, this is just temporary, it is just 3 months of hard work, dedication, and self-discipline. if you are struggling, consult your academic and industry supervisors, they are there to help you, guide you throughout the project development process.

If you care about the quality of the work you put in, DO NOT WASTE TIME PROCRASTINATING, WHAT YOURE CURRENTLY DOING MIGHT BE RELAXING AND ENJOYABLE, BUT IN THREE MONTHS TIME I AM WARNING YOU, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF CRUNCHING TIME TO FINISH AN ESSAY THAT IS POORLY DONE!"

I wish I knew how not certain the requirements of my project were. I wish I was better at asking questions to clarify uncertainties. I wish I had started on my academic deliverables sooner rather than leaving them until the end (chip away at them as you go!). I wish I had known that industry supervisors won’t always be able to give you the ok when you suggest a change; being proactive rather than reactive tends to work out better.”

"For industry: I would recommend full emerging yourself within the business / project client, by this I mean, you are delivering them with value, so put as much as you can into understanding how they or their clients to use the product or implemented technologies considering the users of the system and technologies, and work to the best of your abilities.

For academic: start the report early and maintain good communication, make you of the regular weekly project reports as they verify you have done the work or can be used as talking points to bring up to both your academic and industry supervisor when you are struggling or stuck with a project task.

For the project as a whole, your reason to do it may be to pass, but in the real world there is more than just passing, aim to provide the best value to the clients within the project as I have already mentioned. I think the best thing you can do is treat the project as your first job and put all your effort into it, and no matter how stressful it gets or how many long nights you end up having, at the end its worth it to think I did this, I implemented / produced /learning from the experiences and the supervisors.

and my final piece of advice is that you get out, far more then you put in, in terms of skills and real world skills learnt along the way"

"Firstly, do not stress that you do not know all the skills going into the project. I felt unprepared going in, but I was able to learn the new skills required of me super-fast. You have 3 months to pick up new skills – that’s a lot of time! Doing well does not mean you have to be perfect!

Your life should not revolve around this project. Yes, this course is worth 45 credits, but you must make time for a work-life balance. Get regular exercise, sleep well (haha), eat good food, keep in touch with friends. All these things will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.

It’s good to take microbreaks often. Every 30 minutes, stand up and go for a quick walk. Even around the house. My workspace had a standing desk, so I often alternated between standing and sitting to do my work. You do not want to turn into a potato."

"Be confident and don’t be afraid to ask questions. You are capable of doing this (I thought I wasn’t and I got very good grades), so ask questions, seek understanding and especially show engagement to learn. You are not expected to know everything, but displaying you actually want to learn is the foundation for this project, because once you do start learning, your confidence and capabilities will follow. Also, mandatory don’t procrastinate. With COVID-19, procrastination could end up setting you back a lot if any further complications arise from lockdowns etc."

"Manage time efficiently by planning the amount of time (hours) you want to work each day / week and do not get distracted by other things.

- Balance work with recreation (e.g., reward yourself for every 2 hours of work with something you enjoy such as food, T.V., movies etc.) and resume working after a reasonable time (e.g., 1 - 2 hours.)

- Do not leave anything to the last minute or you will stress yourself out."

"Have a mentor and network. Self-initiate communication with all stakeholders in your project regularly. Build your resilience to get through challenges by always staying hopeful, be adaptable, but also consistent."

“I wish I had learned how to properly format documents to make images and text fit on a single page without becoming unreadable as this was one of the major issues for both my industry and academic deliverables.”

"Integrate all of your academic and industry tasks into your daily routine, don’t allow you academic work to become something you occasionally update. Set aside some time during your workday to write a daily reflection. Don’t plan to complete it after work or else you will find you don’t have the time or motivation. Leave sufficient time between tasks to complete them to a satisfactory level."

**Tips from the S1 2021 Project Students**

To start as fast as they can. Dont waste your time, as at the end it will be stressful.

Motivation starts after starting not before.

Start early, fear of the unknown is always there but there are always people who are going to support you. You will lead the way in your project but the people behind you will guide you.

Do not think of the hours, do the work that you love, hours will follow.

Do not think of the work, do the learning so you can gain something out of the project.

The project is about you getting an experience.

On Time Management -Regardless of how much you are told to not procrastinate, it will like still happen. The project is hard. Watching YouTube is easy. I procrastinated lots.

I recommend, especially if you are working remotely to get an app/website blocker to block distracting sites like YouTube or social media during scheduled work times.

The only way to get the project done is to "Shit down. Shut up and get working"

For industry: I would recommend full emerging yourself within the business / project’s client, by this I mean, you are delivering them with value, so put as much as you can into understanding how they or their clients use the product or implemented technologies considering the users of the system and technologies, and work to the best of your abilities.

For academic: start the report early and maintain good communication, make you of the regular weekly project reports as they verify you have done the work or can be used as talking points to bring up to both your academic and industry supervisor when you are struggling or stuck with a project task

For the project as a whole, your reason to do it may be to pass, but in the real world there is more than just passing, aim to provide the best value to the clients within the project as I have already mentioned. I think the best thing you can do is treat the project as your first job and put all your effort into it, and no matter how stressful it gets or how many long nights you end up having, at the end its worth it to think I did this , I implemented / produced /learning from the experiences and the supervisors, and my final piece of advice is that you get out , far more then you put in , in terms of skills and real world skills learnt along the way

I wish I knew how not certain the requirements of my project were. I wish I were better at asking questions to clarify uncertainties. I wish I had started on my academic deliverables sooner rather than leaving them until the end (chip away at them as you go!). I wish I had known that industry supervisors won't always be able to give you the ok when you suggest a change; being proactive rather than reactive tends to work out better.

There were so many uncertainties in the first couple of weeks. I was unsure if I could implement any features and write the project in Python, which was the language the industry supervisor was more familiar with. It turned out that it was ok that I chose another programming language and I tried my best to create as many features as I could. All I did was discussing with the supervisors what I could do and my ideas about the project. They would always support me. Things would get clearer as I moved forwards.

Dear next semester schoolmates,

I am honoured to share some personal experiences about the wonderful course BCIS 309.

I'd like to share some suggestions the following points for you:

1, Make sure what's your final deliverables at the beginning of the course.

2, Do a detailed time plan for the final deliverables(phased aim can be included in the plan)

3, Continually communicate with supervisors to make sure you are on your correct way.

BTW at last:

Don't be shy about asking questions to academic supervisors. Every supervisor is very very nice and willing to help you pass your difficult stages.

Good luck, new schoolmates! You definitely are able to learn more knowledge in the ICT department in ARA.

**Tips from the S2 2020 Project Students**

Always plan and pace yourself with reports and documentation. It might look good on paper but it may have many faults after review.

Don't give up at the beginning. You will eventually reach the end with something you can be proud of.

I wish I knew that getting started on things quickly is key to doing well in the project. The project is unlike any class you have done before, and it requires your immediate attention as soon as it starts. You must be on the ball in regard to time management and having the correct documents ready as soon as you start your industry hours

It is important to focus on the working relationship with your industry supervisor. Don't just choose a project, based on your passion; ensure that you are able to communicate well with the person giving you oversight.

1) There is an elevator pitch in the panel meeting.

2) Understanding the Panel Assessment Marking Rubrics is a great help at the beginning of the course.

3) Using agile project management from the beginning of the course is a great help

If you know those above, you can prepare the course better.

Timelines and other plans should definitely be realistic and achievable, not just magicked out of nowhere! They are important and can include what you need them to make them happen.

1. Prioritise the tasks. The importance of each task is not equally important. Identify the high-priority tasks and focus on them. My experience is that try to do everything at once would usually get mediocre results, especially doing something unfamiliar (etc. the project)

2. Have buffer time for the tasks and do not leave them to the last one week. It is very unlikely things would follow your plan. Most of the time there would be unexpected events throw your plan to the garbage bin. Buffer time can help mitigate their impact and let you have time to find alternatives

3. Define the scope and stick to it. Scope-creeping is one of the reasons many projects failed; do not let your project be one of them. Review the scopes and requirements of the project frequently and early

Be sure to set up all of your systems/practices early on in the project.

You will have to gather evidence and make changes throughout the course.

You WILL get busy, so set up everything as best you can at the start. Stick to your plan/schedules and build your case for the final panel!

I would suggest that I would try to setup to project before the semester starts. Sending emails to perspective businesses, telling them that I am a student looking for a project for my bachelor’s final capstone project. Be sure to remind them that I am are looking for a project that is around 300 hours.

Not having a project ready to go can cause you to do very little for the first few weeks while you try and set one up. You will need as much time as possible to get everything done in time.

To give myself more time and not set such a rigorous schedule because life happens and there needs to be slack periods to allow for this.

Don't let timing define your project. It's your project let your work define what you need to do.

1.) Prepare a plan of approach for the outcome; planning, findings/research, understand the project and its requirement

2.) Time management, do not keep things till end. It has been said by every tutor of the courses and most of us still do it anyway like me but still it helps to reduce pressure of doing at last moment.

3.) Stay focus, motivated, positive and give your best. This is the best opportunity to use your skills and learning from the previous courses and implement them with the ideas.

Do not be afraid to organize meetings, especially when you feel confused about your project. This will save you from wasting time incorrectly working on something.

**Tips from the S1 2020 Project students:**

Get on the ball immediately, do not sit around doing nothing, don’t delay.

Don’t procrastinate, don’t prevaricate

Document continually

Keep a diary of what happened.

Manage your time.

Time Management is important, this is not an assignment!

Build in some slack or down time in your plans

The real world project experience is way more complex than course assignments.

Plan and structure your day. Work your plan.

Find a tool for managing your time and use it every day.

You have both academic and Industry deliverables, do them both throughout, do NOT leave academic to later!

Balance your work and academic requirements!

Risk needs to be reassessed frequently

QA planning need to be thought about much more at the start.

Communications with your Team / Supervisors needs to be frequent and throughout.

Communication is Key.

Ask for Help early - do not struggle for hours when someone else can probably solve the issue in minutes.

Hang in there, don’t give up. But keep on doing the tasks and you will get there.