## What does a UBC Master of Data Science (MDS) Student Workload Look Like?

I did not have a good grasp on this program before I started, so I wanted to make this post to improve the visibility of the workload for potential applicants and incoming MDS students. I really wished I had this resource coming into this program and I am going to write from that perspective. I do not know if this will become outdated one day: however, after speaking with the department heads they do not seem like they are going to change the format of the program anytime soon.

### The MDS workload

Our program is broken down into six five-week long sprints of classes called blocks. Each block has four classes, week 1 to week 4 are when classes take place. Mornings are for lectures and afternoons are for labs. We have weekly assignments that open on Monday mornings and are due at Saturday 6pm. Yes, we have Sundays off: however, it should be used for review and personal projects. The labs are dedicated work blocks for specific weekly assignments where you can get help and clarification from the lab instructor and teaching assistances. Usually, each block has one team project-based course and three traditional assignment and quiz format courses. The team project-base course is comprised of a block long project and each week submission is a “milestone”. The traditional course has individual assignments and quizzes at lunch time on week 3 (midterms) and week 5 is dedicated to quizzes (finals). I should note there are no classes on week 5.

With so many “balls-in-the-air” each week, time management and organization are critical to my success. In our course *DSCI 524 - Collaborative Software Development* our instructor, Tiffany Timbers, introduced us to the idea workflow management process called a Kanban Board.

### What is a Kanban Board

A Kanban Boards is a way to organize tasks into three groups of “to-dos”, “doings” and “done”. It is a good way to visual progress on a project and make sure task are not being done by two people or going unassigned. They are very popular in software development and agile software developments. Which makes sense because the only exposures I had with it before this program was with HBO’s *Silicon Valley*.

A picture containing person, indoor, wall, standing

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Source: Silicon Valley *S01:E05 Signaling Risk*[<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3467892/?ref_=ttep_ep5>]

If you want to watch the full clip [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyVksFviJVE>

] after you are do with this article. Warning it does have mature content.

GitHub has full integrations for Kanban boards under the project tab [<https://help.github.com/en/github/managing-your-work-on-github/about-project-boards>

]. As a warm-up exercises for our class Tiffany wanted us to make a basic Kanban Board on GitHub to help organize our workload for this block. The Kanban Board appended to me because it reminds me of when I made schedules using Microsoft Project in my previous job. So, this block I want to follow through and actively us the board we created.

A screenshot of a cell phone

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If you want to keep up with my workload, you can see my live progress at here [<https://github.com/MrThomasPin/MDS-Homework/projects/2>] and a progress bar here [<https://github.com/MrThomasPin/MDS-Homework/milestones>].

### Visualization

Another reason why I wanted to use GitHub instead of a traditional Kanban board is because it keeps a log of all my activities.

My plan is after the block I wanted to create a visualization of my workflow similar to this:

https://www.datanovia.com/en/wp-content/uploads/dn-tutorials/r-tutorial/images/let-data-gradually-appear.gif

I’ll make an update when I do complete the visualization.