University of BRISTOL

Department of Computer Science

COMS M04111: Computer Science MEng Year 4 Individual Project

About the project

The MEng final year project gives students an opportunity to build on their own ideas and creativity, along with all that they have learned during the MEng course. The project is full time, occupying the final four months of the course and running from February to May.

There are two types of project:

Enterprise Project

This type of project is suitable for students who want to go on to design and develop innovative products, or who may want to start their own companies in the future. The aim is to develop a demonstrator of a product or service which has been produced in conjunction with, and tried out by, potential users.

The demonstrator will have the potential to attract further support and investment. The students develop and present the justification for this, along with more detailed plans, in an associated enterprise unit. The plans can be entered into competitions and used to raise support.

The product may involve hardware design, software design, or both. It may involve setting up a web-based service, the design of a robot or the release of some open- source software. In fact, anything with a technology base in computing and a potential for business or social impact is a potential topic. The project may draw on on-going research and technology development within the university or within an industrial sponsor.

This type of project provides an excellent opportunity for students to work with external companies and organisations, possibly based full-time at the company, and at the same time enables companies and organisations to work with the university and to engage with its students.

The students prepare a project report along with a demonstration of their work for an 'Enterprise Project Day' to which external sponsors are invited. They also present the business plans they have developed within the enterprise unit to a group that includes potential sponsors and investors.

Research Project

This type of project is aimed at students who are interested in pursuing research in a university or in industry.

The aim is to carry out an in-depth investigation in a specific area of computer science and to make a valuable and original scientific or technical contribution. It may involve the design and evaluation of experimental hardware or software, or be a theoretical study.

The project is done in collaboration either with a university research group, or an industrial partner, or both. This may involve working at an external company, in the form of an internship, or within a university research group.

Alongside the project, students will undertake a study into the wider context of the work and its potential impact. This will lead to a Research Proposal suitable for submission to similar to a research funder or to an industrial laboratory.

The students present their work at a 'Research Project Day', which takes the form of a workshop. This will include oral presentations and poster discussions. They will also present their research proposal to a panel consisting of academics and industrial researchers.

Finding a project

Start early!

You may already have ideas about your project. If not, you should think about areas of Computer Science that interest you - or application areas that interest you.

Try out your ideas on other people - talk to friends, staff and industrial contacts - it often takes some time to refine initial ideas into a really good plan. Think through what existing ideas and technologies you can draw on, and where you need to innovate.

Make sure your plans are realistic within a 4 month timescale. By the time you start, your project should have a clear aim and the benefits of what you plan to produce should be easy to explain.