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# TMA 03 Working Towards the Final Report

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## 1 Introduction

At this stage you should have made significant progress towards completing your project work. The purpose of this TMA is to give you the opportunity to review your progress, to give you practice writing your draft project report, and to provide sufficient detail for your tutor to provide you with advice on both completing your project work and writing your final project report.

The Draft Project Report you submit for TMA 03 will form the basis of your final project report (the EMA), so investment at this stage will save work later on.

The marking of this TMA will assume that you have continued working at the required study rate of about 10 hours per week since you submitted TMA 02. You should be spending about 75% of your time on your project work, and about 25% of your time writing TMA 03.

Once you have submitted this TMA you should read the EMA document, so you have this in mind as you finish your project. Continue with your project work and writing your final project report (which forms the end-of-module assessment) while you are waiting for the feedback on this TMA from your tutor, or you risk running out of time. There are no extensions for any reason on the EMA. Also, stay in touch with your tutor on a regular basis between TMA 03 and the EMA, letting him or her know if you encounter any difficulties.

## Submitting your TMA

This module uses the electronic TMA (eTMA) system for submission of TMAs. To submit your TMA, please go to your StudentHome page and follow the link provided.

The eTMA system limits file sizes to 50 MB for this TMA. If your submission file is larger than this you may need to remove some of the less important aspects of the appendices and/or reduce the resolution of any image files. Leave yourself plenty of time to do this before the cut-off date.

If you foresee any difficulty with submitting your assignment on time then you should contact your tutor well in advance of the cut-off date.

For further information about policy, procedure and general submission of assignments please refer to the Assessment Handbook, which can also be accessed via your StudentHome page.

## 2 Project activities

When you submit TMA 03 you will be expected to have made progress on the following project activities, which are derived from the module learning outcomes.

- a. Refining the goals and content of your project in the light of progress. Assess the risks to the availability of resources you need to complete your project. Plan the final phase of the project.
- b. Gathering, analysing and evaluating relevant information to complete your project successfully.
- c. Demonstrating comprehension of the key literature that underpin the project by relating and/or applying them to the project work undertaken so far.
- d. Demonstrating and applying a systematic understanding of the fundamental technical concepts and principles relevant to your project.
- e. Demonstrating and applying an understanding of the context in which technical knowledge can be applied.
- f. Analysing a practical problem and, where appropriate, devise and implement a solution which should be within the area of your chosen specialist route, if applicable, building on and extending the knowledge and skills developed throughout your previous OU studies.
- g. Demonstrating the ability to report clearly and critically on the outcomes of your project work.
- h. Reviewing progress against your latest project plan. Identify major risks to success in the next phase and propose ways to manage these appropriately.
- i. Learning independently. Communicate regularly with your tutor on progress, seeking guidance as and when needed.

And if appropriate for your project:

- a. Documenting identifying and assessing relevant academic and/or technical literature, understanding and analysing its content, drawing well-founded conclusions and making recommendations relating to the particular research question or problem.
- b. Documenting appreciable practical progress towards developing a working/workable solution to your chosen problem using suitable technical concepts and principles.
- c. Documenting appreciable progress towards a critical evaluation of your chosen problem/user interface or experiences using suitable technical concepts and principles supported by appropriate references.

You should continue to maintain your project journal as you complete these activities, including a record of what you have done and why, what you have read, problems you have encountered and how you overcame them, and so on. This will make writing your EMA much easier to do.

Before starting these activities you should study the guidance in Section 4 and the indicative marking scheme in Section 5 – the latter outlines some of the expectations of your tutor so bear these in mind as you do the work.

As you complete these activities, refer to the various documents on the TM470 website, linked from the Resource Map, as these are designed to assist you.

### **3 What to submit for TMA 03**

We suggest you organise your TMA under the two headings:

- Draft Project report
- Review.

As with the previous TMAs, whilst you need to include all the elements in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, you should not see it as a rigid template for your report. Rather, identify the structure which best enables you to express your work in a coherent narrative that is easy to follow. However, you should make sure that the elements in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 are easily identifiable and assessable.

If you are hoping for BCS accreditation you should also check the guidelines in Section 4.3 of Project Choice.

You should be able to provide what is needed in around **5000 words, plus appendices**. Please use landscape format where it improves readability for the marker – this can be a problem for some screen shots and program code listings. Please be considerate with the marker who cannot be expected to mark reports that exceed substantially this word count.

Each TMA will build on the previous TMA; please include material from TMA02 with a clear indication of what is additional material or what you may have added/changed in the meantime (taking into account feedback received or further work undertaken).

The length of each section will vary according to the nature and subject of your project. Your tutor can advise on the balance. But remember that your TMA will be marked against the learning outcomes, so if you omit one of these or only treat it in a cursory manner, you will limit the marks you can be awarded. Also, L07 emphasises clarity of communication, so poorly structured and/or over-long TMAs are likely to do less well.

The relationship between the various project activities you carry out and the learning outcomes is not always straightforward but we have indicated the most important learning outcome for each. But when your tutor marks your TMA other learning outcomes may be relevant as well. For example (this is not the only example):

- **L07. Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions clearly** is relevant to all activities.

Your TMA will be assessed **as a whole** so you must ensure it is internally consistent.

You should write in a grammatically correct, professional manner, avoiding slang or colloquialisms, recognising that your tutor is broadly knowledgeable in Computing and IT, but may not be familiar with the specifics of your particular project. Continue to adopt a style of writing that addresses a knowledgeable and specialist reader (see *Writing, Structuring, Styling and Editing Reports*).

Before you start work on your TMA it is **extremely** important that you study in detail both the guidance in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 and the indicative marking scheme in Section 4 – the latter outlines some of the expectations of the marker.

## 3.1 Draft Project Report

**Table 3.1**

Draft project report	Learning outcome
Project title	
Problem description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. nature and context of the problem</li> <li>b. proposed solution or recommendations</li> <li>c. analysis of likely impact</li> </ul>	<b>LO2.</b> Identify and refine the goals and content of your project which should be within the area of your chosen specialist route, if applicable
Account of related literature	<b>LO4.</b> Gather, analyse and evaluate relevant information to complete the project successfully  <b>LO6.</b> Make effective use of a variety of information sources including the internet, demonstrating awareness of the credibility of the source
Account of project work and its outcome	<b>LO1.</b> Demonstrate and apply a systematic understanding of the fundamental technical concepts and principles relevant to your project

## Problem description

In previous TMAs you have developed and refined an account of the problem that makes clear both the nature and the context of the problem. You have had feedback from your tutor on the descriptions you have given. This part of your draft should be fairly easy to write and very close to what will appear in the final report.

One useful suggestion is to give short, one- or two-sentence answers to each of the following questions:

- What is the problem that needs to be solved or understood?
- Why is it considered a problem?
- What will be the benefits of solving it?

- What are the key ICT aspects of this problem?
- What is your existing knowledge of this problem?
- What might the solution look like?

[If you are registered in a Computing and IT (Honours degree) specialist route]

- Will the solution be within the specialism route of my degree?
- What, specifically, will you deliver by way of a project output?

You may need to adapt some of these to suit the nature of your project. In particular, you will need to expand a little on the context within which the problem arose: the audience is not familiar with the problem you are solving. In discussing the scope, be very clear about what part of a system or aspect of the research problem/question you set out to develop, evaluate or research and what you decided to leave out. A good problem description and scope are crucial as they are the starting point for the analysis of the problem you are addressing.

The description of the proposed solution or recommendations could be about what you aimed to deliver rather than what you will eventually deliver or what you believe you have already delivered or completed.

You may not yet be at a stage where you can indicate the likely impact of what you will be developing or, for research projects, what you will be concluding. If that is the case, leave some placeholders for the parts of this section that you intend to work on later for your final report.

## Account of related literature

You should now have a well-developed draft of what is needed in this section. And again, you will be able to get feedback from your tutor on this work. How you organise this section will depend very much on the nature of your project. Some research projects will use references to the literature sources throughout the main body of the report. Your coverage of the literature should display appropriate skills of comparative and critical reading and evaluation. You should also aim to relate the main elements of the literature to each other so that it is clear how individually and collectively they contribute to the problem you are trying to solve;

*Reviewing Literature* and *Preparing a Literature Search* should help you with this. The sources that you select should be those that are most important for the critical aspects of your project; they should not be dealing with peripheral issues. This section of your draft should read as a narrative, not as a bullet list of sources.

If you have used the OU Library's PROMPT tool it does not have a place in your final report. PROMPT is a teaching tool to help you evaluate the value of the sources that you use. You will have used such selection techniques in selecting your sources, but now it is the technical content and informed opinion of the authors that matters.

## Account of project work and its outcome

At this stage you should have made substantial progress with your project work. Work that was exploratory, sketchy or tentative in TMA 02 should now have been refined and polished (assuming it is still relevant), but some recent work may still be at an early stage.

In your draft report, show the structure you intend to have for this section and start filling in the parts that you may have already done. You may want to structure it in terms of analysing a problem, synthesising some sort of solution, and evaluating this solution. Of course, how these activities are organised within any project management framework may differ considerably. For more guidance see Skills of Analysis and Synthesis.

You may be able at this stage to draft most of the analysis of the problem – that is, some sort of expression of the problem that pointed towards the nature of a solution or recommendations. You should also outline what you have done so far in terms of synthesis. For example, for a research project you may have drafted some conclusions and recommendations based upon a detailed study of the literature. For a development project you should have by now carried out a careful requirements analysis of the problem, designed a solution and made progress developing the solution. For an evaluation project then you should have completed the analysis aspect and be producing recommendations based upon your evaluation.

For TMA 03, providing **evidence** of the work you have done and its quality is of particular importance as the TMA includes a draft of your project report. Your EMA, which is the final project report, will be second marked by another TM470 tutor who will not know about you or the work you have done so he or she will be relying heavily not only on the project report itself but on the supplementary evidence in your appendices, to confirm what work you have done and establish its quality. So including this evidence in TMA 03 is good practice and will provide your tutor with the opportunity to comment upon how well you have done this.

The evidence of your progress which is central to the argument of your TMA should be in the main body of the report. However, you will need to provide supplementary evidence of progress in appendices. For a research project this will probably take the form of a draft research report aimed at the client audience including tentative recommendations plus justifications and/or technical information elicited from a detailed consideration of the literature. For development projects and evaluation projects supplementary evidence might include interview plans plus summaries of interview findings, program designs and code, UML diagrams, evaluation findings, concept maps, design documentation, a business process model, etcetera.

If you include program code, you must omit any auto-generated code as this will be picked up by Turnitin and make it appear that you have been plagiarising.

The appendices must support the main body of your report as it is the report that will be the focus of the assessment rather than the appendices. So the appendices should be referenced from within the main body of your report. Your tutor is not required to read the appendices in detail – only to scan them and dip into them as necessary.

## 3.2 Review

Table 3.2

Review	Learning Outcome
Review of current stage of project work	
Review your project management. Identify those elements of your plan that have not progressed as satisfactorily as you expected and briefly record the reason(s)	<b>LO9.</b> Plan and organise your project work appropriately, and keep systematic records of plans, progress and outcomes
Assess the risks to project completion (remember that this is not the same as whether you expect to pass or not). Identify any significant risks to project completion and determine how these are going to be managed. Identify those elements of the project that may not be addressed if plans need to change	<b>LO3.</b> Identify, list and justify the resources, skills and activities needed to carry out the project successfully. Identify and address any associated risks



Review your personal development	<b>LO8.</b> Learn independently and reflect on what has been done, with a view to improving skills and knowledge
Briefly indicate to your tutor any issues on which you would like specific feedback	<i>This will enable your tutor to advise you.</i>
References	
Appendices	

## Review of current stage of project work

Begin the account of how you feel the project is going. This is not an analysis and evaluation of the work that you have already reported in the earlier sections: this is your reflection on the process you have been going through and what you have achieved. It should include your thoughts on what went well/badly, and you how you would do things differently another time. Be critical: as an understanding of the process can be just as important to your personal development as it is to future projects you are involved with.

## Review project management

You may want to start writing a short account of the project management method/lifecycle model that you are using. However, you will probably want to leave the discussion of its effectiveness until the final report. This section should be specifically about the approach you have taken; do not include generic discussion of life cycles or the theory of project management methods.

## Assess risks to project completion

By this stage you should be able to write about the risks you had initially identified, the strategies you had identified to mitigate them, and possibly about how effective these were. You may also identify any risks that may still occur before completion and how to mitigate them.

## Review of personal development

Critically reflect on your own experience in order to identify what you have learnt so far, effective ways in which you learn and work, and what you need in order to extend your current knowledge and skills in relation to the work and context of the project.

Reflect on the skills you have acquired or appreciably improved so far in the project. The skills considered may include both project management and self-management skills.

This section should be the result of ongoing reflection as you develop your project and you may have a nearly final draft.

## 4 Indicative marking scheme

Please check this mark scheme carefully as it differs from that of previous TMAs.

Your tutor will use a grade-related marking scheme based on Table 4.1. You can use this table as a form of self-assessment to help ensure you are working at the appropriate level. Learning outcomes 4, 6 and 7, and learning outcomes 3 and 9 have been grouped, resulting in five learning outcomes/groups of learning outcomes which will be given equal weighting when your TMA is marked.

A full statement of each learning outcome is given in the Study Guide.

**Table 4.1 Indicative marking scheme**

Learning outcome	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	(17–20)	(14–16)	(11–13)	(8–10)	(0–7)
	Distinction				Fail

**LO2** Identify and refine the goals and content of your project which should be within the area of your specialist route, if applicable.

Based on progress to date has a realistic assessment of what can be achieved in the next phase and has a clear and plausible schedule to achieve it.

As Grade 1 but somewhat unrealistic about what can be achieved.

On the basis of experience and progress to date, the work proposed for the next phase is either too ambitious or too insubstantial.

Has not made a realistic assessment of progress to date and has not made appropriate refinements to the project specification. The plan and schedule are achievable, if slightly overambitious.

Has not made a realistic assessment of progress to date and has not made appropriate refinements to the project specification. The plan and schedule are highly overambitious and/or lacking in credibility.

<b>LO4.</b> Gather, analyse and evaluate relevant information to complete the project successfully	Has continued to find relevant material, from a range of sources of information, clearly showing an understanding of the credibility and significance of the source. Effectively and succinctly identifies how they can contribute to the work to be done.	The quality or relevance of the sources of information may be more diverse and credibility and authority of some of the sources may be less clear. How they relate to the project may be less clear.	The relevance, credibility or authority of many of the sources of information is unclear. There may be high-risk elements of future work that threaten a successful outcome.	Very few additional sources have been identified or sources of information may be lacking relevance, credibility and/or authority. They may be out of date. They may bear only general relevance to the project. Sources mainly based on OU modules.	Sources of information are very general, have little credibility or authority and it is not clear that they contribute at all to the work to be done.
<b>LO6.</b> Make effective use of a variety of information sources including the internet, demonstrating awareness of the credibility of the source.	Clear, concise structured communication using diagrams or other illustrations where appropriate. Opinions and judgements are always supported by relevant argument or evidence as appropriate. Effectively written for a knowledgeable specialist audience.	Clear, concise structured communication using diagrams or other illustrations where appropriate. Opinions and judgements are sound but are not always fully justified. Broadly successful in writing for audience.	Accessible communication style, perhaps lacking in structure. Perhaps misjudging audience by explaining common and familiar concepts.	Ineffective communication, inclusion of irrelevant material. The most important opinions and judgements are supported with some reasons, though these may not be entirely convincing. Perhaps requires a second reading to glean what is being said.	Style obscures what is being conveyed, difficult to comprehend, little or rambling structure. Features opinion and anecdote rather than informed opinion and evidence. Requires a third reading or more.
<b>LO7.</b> Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions clearly.					

<b>LO1.</b> Demonstrate and apply a systematic understanding of the fundamental technical concepts and principles relevant to your project.	There is a comprehensive and clear account of the fundamental concepts and principles relevant to the work.	As for Grade 1, but less comprehensive.	Fundamental concepts and principles are used. There is some understanding of their relationship to the work but this is not clear.	Although fundamental concepts and principles are used there is little understanding of their relationship to the work.	There is little or no explicit use of principles and concepts.
<b>LO8.</b> Learn independently and reflect on what has been done, with a view to improving skills and knowledge.	Makes progress under own supervision, communicating regularly and accurately in respect of progress. Seeks guidance when needed, but offers own ideas when doing so.	Makes progress under own supervision but communication is more intermittent and is sometimes vague in respect of progress and/or problems. Seeks guidance when needed.	Makes some progress under own supervision. Communication is more intermittent and rarely specific about progress and problems. On occasions has struggled with a problem for too long without seeking guidance.	Either makes some progress but hardly ever initiates communication about progress, or does not ask for help when needed, which inhibits progress.	Even with close supervision and support, does not make progress. Communication is sporadic and doesn't highlight problems being encountered, except in the most general terms.

<p><b>LO3.</b> Identify, list and justify the resources, skills and activities needed to carry out the project successfully. Identify and address any associated risks</p>	<p>Has identified the resources, skills and activities, the timely availability of which is essential. Has judged risks (likelihood and impact) appropriately. High-risk elements have been excluded and other risks are manageable.</p>	<p>Has missed at most a couple of less important resources, skills, activities and risks.</p> <p>Has a plan and makes an accurate assessment of progress in relation to the original plan.</p>	<p>Has missed an important and obvious resource, activity, skill or risk.</p> <p>As for Grade 2 but the assessment of progress against the plan is less accurate, perhaps a degree of 'denial' about what has not gone so well.</p>	<p>Identifies only 'routine' resources, skills and activities.</p> <p>The plan and/or assessment of progress against the plan are shallow and formulaic.</p>	<p>Has still not developed an adequate list of key resources, skills and activities.</p> <p>The plan and/or assessment of progress against the plan are inaccurate.</p>
<p><b>LO9.</b> Plan and organise your project work appropriately, and keep systematic records of plans, progress and outcomes.</p>	<p>Has a clear plan and makes an accurate assessment of progress in relation to the original plan. Understands what has gone well and what has not gone to plan.</p>	<p>Identifies things that have gone well and some things that have not gone to plan.</p>			