**Project Plan.**

When you start work on your project in June, things can feel fairly daunting -- so much to do, and such a long time to get it done in -- but in fact most people find that the time passes very rapidly and all too soon the deadline for submitting the thesis starts to feel very close. Usually the first three or four weeks are spent "ramping up": reading any books or papers that are specific to the project, gathering or generating the necessary data, assembling the various analytics tools that are going to be used. One thing that it is very useful to do at the outset is to agree a draft project plan with your supervisor, a statement of what you aim to achieve week-by-week, and/or what sequence of "work-packages" your project will involve, i.e. what subtasks you will complete and when the deadline for finishing each is; this should include an appropriate risk-assessment and associated mitigation plan. It is also important to factor in your supervisor's availability: there are likely to be periods over the summer where the supervisor is either working away from Bristol, or on vacation, and you should ensure that you plan around those periods of limited or non-availability. As you will have spent this period doing a fair amount of specialist reading, it can be very useful to write a first-draft of the opening chapters of your thesis during this period: this gives you less to write when it comes to the end-game period of assembling your complete thesis.

The opening weeks of your project culminate with submission of your Project Plan. This is worth 10% of the overall credit for your project. As the project in total carries 60 credit points (CP), the Project Plan is worth 6CP; and as each 1CP is expected to require roughly 10 hours of your time, this means that you should expect to spend 60 hours, so a solid 1.5 weeks of work (assuming a 40-hour-week) on your project plan, and the document should clearly reflect that investment of time.

The **submission deadline** for the Project Plan is **start of July – exact date to be confirmed.**

The Project Plan (PP) document should be submitted as PDF, and should contain the following:

1. Title: It should show the draft title for your MSc thesis, your name, and the name(s) of your supervisor(s).
2. Abstract: this should fit on one page, and should be a draft of what you hope to be able to say about your thesis when it is complete, several weeks into the future (that is, this is a "fairy-tale" abstract).
3. Project plan: It should include two pages of coherent text (i.e., of the form you intend to write for your thesis, not rough-notes) that could be used as the opening pages of your Introduction/Overview chapter (Chapter 1 of your thesis).
4. Literature review: It should include four pages of coherent text forming an *initial s*urvey/summary of relevant literature, that could be used as the basis of your Contextual Background or Literature Review chapter (typically Chapter 2 and/or 3 of your thesis).
5. Bibliography/References: that lists all the literature sources cited in your literature survey, **consistently**formatted in a commonly-used style (such as APA or IEEE), and with each item in the References being **complete**, i.e. as you would format it it in your final submitted thesis.
6. Appendix:
   1. It should include a one-page time-plan for your project, which you may choose to format as a week-by-week bullet-list, or possibly as a Gantt Chart.
   2. It should include a one-page risk assessment for your project, talking about the major risks you can foresee that might plausibly occur and interfere with your plans. For each risk, state clearly what it is, what its likelihood is, what its effects/impact would be on the project, and what your intended mitigation or risk-reduction involves

The Project Plan is a test-run for you to show us what kind of work you intend to submit in your final thesis. If you submit something that looks and reads like the first nine pages of a finished polished MSc thesis, you can expect to get a good grade; if you submit something that looks like a hastily-assembled set of rough notes with muddled content, unclear prose, poor structure, incomplete references, and with the appendices missing or incomplete, then you can expect a really low mark.