

**Department of Computer Science**

**Project Supervision Leaflet**

Dr Marina De Vos

Academic Year 2012-2013

# Contents

<b>4</b>	<b>Supervision</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Responsibilities . . . . .	7
4.1.1	Overview . . . . .	7
4.1.2	Project Coordinators responsibilities . . . . .	8
4.1.3	(Assistant) Supervisors responsibilities . . . . .	8
4.1.4	Second marker . . . . .	10
4.1.5	Project Student . . . . .	11

# Chapter 4

## Supervision

The Project Supervisor is often, though not always, the originator of the idea for the project. As such, your supervisor has a genuine interest in the development of your project. However, your supervisor is there to give direction and advice and not to do the project for you ... *the execution of the project must be your work alone.*

You are not required, and should not normally arrange, to meet with your project supervisor over the summer months, although you will need to contact various potential supervisors by email or 'phone in order to arrange supervision. On your return to University you should arrange at an early stage how regularly you can meet with the project Supervisor (normally once per week), and how long each meeting will be. You should ensure that you then stick to that arrangement. If you cannot make the meeting, or you feel that you have not done enough new work to warrant another meeting, you should e-mail the supervisor in good time to cancel the meeting and confirm that you will be at the next planned meeting. If the supervisor cannot make the meeting he or she will do the same. If you regularly miss a supervisory meeting the Project Supervisor will contact the Project Coordinator so that the Coordinator can check that sufficient progress on the project has been made. If the supervisor misses a number of supervisory meetings, you should contact the Project Coordinator to ensure that meetings are re-arranged.

At your meeting you should raise any difficulties and discuss what you plan to do next. You should *not* be expecting your tutor to tell you what to do next ... that is your responsibility. The tutor will use the requirements specification and project plan, which you will be asked to complete early on in the project, to work out whether you are “on track” and advise on possible alternative routes or possible modifications to the project plan.

You should *always* stick to the time allowed for the meeting ... never demand more time than has been allocated. You will find that it is common for the supervisor to arrange a single slot for all his/her project students rather than many individual sessions. If this is the case,

your supervisor will attempt to share the time slot between each of the students as best as possible. If you have a particular need to discuss an issue at more length, then you should warn the supervisor beforehand so that he/she can arrange the meeting appropriately.

If there is a breakdown of trust or other difficulties between you and your project Supervisor, you *must* inform the Project Co-ordinator immediately. The Project Co-ordinator will seek to resolve the problem. If a suitable resolution cannot be found the Project Co-ordinator may seek to identify an alternative Project Supervisor for the remainder of the project.

We are working with Project Supervisors and Assistant Project Supervisors. The former members are academic members of staff while the latter are postgraduate students studying for a PhD or research officers. PhD students and research officers are often more closely involved with the material (code, data gathering, ...) than the lecturers. In the past they were also helping students with their project. We decided to make this role more official and have both you and them benefit from the collaboration.

When an assistant project supervisor is associated to a project, he/she will be responsible to the day-to-day supervision of the project. So he/she is the person you will meet most. He/she will report to the project supervisor on your progress. The Project supervisor will still arrange meetings with you to follow general progress.

## 4.1 Responsibilities

### 4.1.1 Overview

Each project student is solely responsible for the planning, execution and completion of their project within the constraints of time allocated to the project. The (Assistant) Project Supervisor is available to provide advice and guidance, and the Project Co-ordinator will oversee project supervision and provide direction. If a student fails to make significant progress within the project, where sufficient time is available the Supervisor will raise the problem with the Project Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator will then make contact with the student in order to help that student identify a plan of action that will allow the production of a project that achieves the pass criteria.

However, where a student does not seek supervisor support, does not follow supervisory advice or fails to put in appropriate effort in accordance with the agreed project plan, neither the supervisor nor the coordinator will be able to help. The Project Co-ordinator reserves the right to refuse supervisory assistance to any student who has not engaged with the supervision process and/or has not worked to the agreed project plan.

### 4.1.2 Project Coordinators responsibilities

The Project Coordinator is charged with the overall running of the project unit (CM30082). The Coordinator will consider and apply the appropriate University regulations and ensure that students, supervisors, assistant supervisors and second markers are aware of the relevant regulations and procedures. The Coordinator also maintains records relating to the students enrolled on the Project units and will take action where a student's progress is not as expected or where there are difficulties between the supervisor and the student.

In addition, the project coordinator:

- Provides material and mentoring for new members of staff;
- Ensures that supervisors and second markers follow the guidelines and complete all the required documentation for progress monitoring and assessment;
- Arbitrates if disagreement arises between the student and supervisor;
- Arranges moderation if there is a large mark disagreement between the supervisor and the second marker;
- Discusses issues with external examiners, where appropriate.

### 4.1.3 (Assistant) Supervisors responsibilities

Both you and your supervisor(s) should be familiar with the syllabus in the Project units and with the contents of this handbook. Your supervisor is expected to engage with and be supportive of the allocated project students throughout the project process. The supervisor is required to identify regular times when you can meet to discuss the project.

The supervisor(s) should:

- provide a range of project ideas for publication on the project website, ranging over level of difficulty and areas of interest, although the majority of projects will be within the area of technical and/or research expertise of the staff member;
- arrange a time and place for the meeting with the project students on a regular, ideally weekly, basis. Provide appropriate notice of meetings that will be missed and, as far as possible, rearrange these meetings;
- report to the Project Coordinator any student who fails to attend meetings or who is suspected of falling significantly behind in progress. This report should be timely so that successful intervention is possible;

- discuss and provide initial direction on the production of the Project Proposal, including background reading, aims, objectives, and on planning;
- mark and provide feedback on the Project Proposal within three weeks of submission;
- provide guidance and direction in relation to appropriate literature for the Literature Survey, and comment on drafts of the literature survey where they have been submitted in good time;
- mark and provide feedback on the Literature Survey;
- consider the Progress Report provided by the student and discuss the revised project plan so that the student is able to produce a plan that will achieve the primary project objectives;
- attend the poster session and provide a mark and brief feedback on the form provided;
- provide feedback on drafts of the project which have been provided by the student in good time;
- mark the dissertations of their students and meet with the second marker to agree a mark.

If an assistant supervisor is associated with the project, the assistant supervisor should:

- support day-to-day supervision by meeting students on a regular basis
- report to the project supervisor any student students failing to attend meetings or student suspected to failing behind
- provide feedback on drafts which have been provided by the student in good time
- provide a progress report to the project supervisor on a regular basis
- provide marking advice to the project supervisor

while project supervisor should:

- mark and provide feedback to the student, possibly taking advice from the assistant supervisor
- attend the poster session, mark and provide feedback the poster
- mark the dissertations of their students and meet with the second marker to agree a mark.

Early on in the supervision, the supervisor(s) will seek to ascertain the academic strengths and weaknesses of their project students. For example, the supervisor(s) will consider whether the student knows how to conduct a search and evaluation of appropriate information sources, is familiar with the key sources of information in the field to be studied, and has a sufficient standard of academic writing. If software implementation is required, the supervisor(s) will seek to ascertain how strong are the student's design and programming skills are. This does *not* mean that the supervisor is responsible for providing these skills . . . the responsibility for gaining the information and skills required for a project remain entirely with the student. However, the supervisor will use this investigation to warn the student and notify the Project Coordinator as early as possible if it is believed that the student's ability to carry out the project and complete the project is compromised.

The supervisor is required to ensure that, within reasonable confidence, the work submitted by the project student is their own work. If there is any suspicion of work submitted that is not their own, or any lack of visibility into the students' work that might raise suspicion, the Project Coordinator will be informed. It is therefore important that the student ensure that the Project Supervisor has good visibility into the process of completing the project.

#### 4.1.4 Second marker

The second marker is appointed prior to the Easter Vacation in order to provide a 'blind' second mark for the project dissertation. This provides an impartial mark to the product of the project. In order to maintain this impartiality, you are not normally permitted to be in regular contact with the second marker in regard to your project.

The second marker is responsible to:

- Attend the poster session to become more familiar the ongoing outcomes of the project at that stage;
- Provide a mark and feedback on the poster
- Read the dissertation and complete the second marker's evaluation of the project using the supplied form, providing a suitable level of written comment as to enable a moderator to consider the appropriateness of the allocated grade;
- Meet with the supervisor to complete the agreed mark form;
- If a viva is recommended, take the lead role in the viva voce.

### 4.1.5 Project Student

You must take primary responsibility for the project, being proactive in managing your own work, meeting deadlines and communicating regularly with your supervisor(s). You should regularly look at the Moodle website for the unit to see if there is any new information. You should attend all preparatory lectures and read all the supporting material, familiarising yourself with the content and format of all the deliverables. You should keep your supervisor(s) informed of your progress, particularly if you feel you are getting behind on your schedule. Your supervisor(s) will be able to help you reschedule work but this cannot be left until the last minute. You should always check promptly with your supervisor(s) if you are in doubt about the next phase of your work. You should be aware that your entitlement to supervision time is finite, and so use your time wisely. You will be expected to spend 8 hours per week in the first semester and 16 hours per week in the second semester, or 15 hours per week across the year, on your project. Some students may elect to spend more time on their project, but that is a decision for individual students to make, and will not necessarily lead to better project marks . . . it is the quality rather than the quantity of the time you use that is important. You should be aware of the key elements of the project process, four of which are formal submissions:

- Selection of a project idea and arrangement for supervision by a supervisor who has interest in and knowledge of the area of the project idea;
- Initial reading for, preparation of, and submission of the Project Proposal by Monday 29 October 2012;
- In depth literature search and review required for the preparation and submission of the Literature Survey by Monday 10 December 2012;
- Preparation of the Project Progress report on the provided form, submission to your supervisor for signature and comment, and submission of the completed form by Monday 11 February 2013;
- Preparation and presentation of a poster summarising your progress in TBC, the week before the Easter break;
- Construction, out of the work you have contributed to the project over the year, of the dissertation, formatted in accordance with the requirements given in this document, for submission in the required format by Friday 3 May 2013, along with the electronic submissions that are required;
- Attendance at any project viva that might be required on the date specified within the summer examination period.