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# Project Management

**School of Mechanical and Chemical Engineering**

Final Year Project

CHPR 4411/4412

MATE 4411/4412

MECH 4401/4402

MCTX 4421/4422

OGEG 4500/4501



**It's your  
project!**

# It's your project!



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- **You** must take “ownership” of the project for it to be successful.
  - You will receive support from your supervisor, the workshops, school staff, and your fellow students,
- **BUT**
  - You're the only person seriously affected by the success or failure of the project.
- **You** must take the initiative to keep the project moving in the absence of immediate deadlines or external pressure.
- If you get moving on your project earlier, you will have more opportunity explore your project. The more you explore, the better your project will turn out.

# Progress Report



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- The purpose of the progress report is to provide a description of the project, including:
  - An outline of the project's purpose & aims
  - Details of the research methods being employed
  - A literature review
  - Details of progress to date, and a plan for completion
- Another purpose is to encourage students to start preparing the thesis well before all the project work has been completed
- As a rough guide, the progress report should be in the region of 15 to 20 pages
  - The progress report is not marked on how much progress you have made – rather, on whether you have made an honest and accurate assessment, with sensible adjustments to your plans

# Meetings



- You should set and maintain a regular meeting schedule with your supervisor
  - Weekly would be preferred; fortnightly would be the minimum frequency.
  - It will be up to you to chase the supervisor for this if they do not set up the meetings themselves.
- Set goals to be achieved between meetings
  - At each meeting, you discuss with your supervisor the work done since the last meeting
  - Set down what will be done by the next meeting.
- Seek regular feedback from your supervisor
  - Ask your supervisor to assess your plans and findings.
  - Ask for comments on your proposal and later documents.



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# Project Activities



- Project activities NEVER go smoothly
  - Anything that you leave to the last minute WILL get delayed when you can least afford it.
  - Sometimes things that are beyond your control will go wrong (this is why we do risk management).
- Get your experiments or model development efforts going (early) this semester;
  - This will give you the chance to overcome difficulties
  - You may identify ways to enhance your project (remember– you are effectively in competition with classmates).
- Use the summer holiday– don't let your project stall over the holiday.
  - Workshops and labs are quieter over the break – it can be easier to get things done.
  - More importantly, you don't have other classes in the break.

# Be Pro-active!



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- Resolve issues as soon as they arise.
  - Procrastination is fatal in a final year project
  - Problems will not become easier to fix next week (in fact – there will be less time available to address any issues).
- Don't assume that your supervisor will be available on your timetable – so get material to them early.
  - They are busy; you may be one of many students that they are supervising, and they may have other job responsibilities to attend to.
  - You have to give your supervisor time to review and respond thoughtfully to submissions.
- Supervisors respond to your enthusiasm.
  - If you're interested and getting things done, they will take more interest in your work and contribute more.



# Thesis Writing



- You are more likely to be successful if you start drafting your thesis early (this semester!), and keep adding to it as you go along.
  - Your introduction and lit review can be started right now, in parallel with the preparation of the project brief.
  - Write up your experimental method, and start setting out your results, as soon as you have done the experiments.
- Don't underestimate the benefits of writing your work up; the process of organising your thoughts often leads to greater understanding of the problem at hand.
- If you leave the writing of the thesis to the very end, its quality will suffer. And so will your grade.