An independent piece of work

- Often in a general area discussed in admission interview
- Potentially based on faculty suggestion or own idea
  - ACS project web page has links with a variety of examples and suggestions
    - But beware of old proposals from previous years
  - Talk with Michaelmas Term lecturers
  - Talk with Lent Term lecturers
- Must have a member of academic staff to supervise
  - Normally “UTO” (University Teaching Officer) or Research Fellow
  - UTO signs off on the project, and examines it
  - May have a day-to-day co-supervisor or help
A research project

- The word *research* describes an aspiration...
  - A successful project should be something that could lead to a paper submission to a decent venue
  - Perfectly acceptable to do a measurement study or to reproduce (or not!) previous results
- Aim is to show you can:
  - find a problem and area (perhaps with help),
  - produce a research proposal,
  - effectively carry out a decent amount of work, and
  - write it up coherently.

Phase 1: Confirm topic and supervisor

- By Friday 26th October, provide details via Moodle form:
  - Course adviser
  - Name of proposed supervisor (may be same as course adviser)
  - *Provisional* title for project
  - Is this 'self-proposed'?
  - Has your course adviser already agreed this is suitable for you?
  - Has the supervisor already agreed to supervise?
Phase 2: Full proposal, in three parts

- **Coversheet**
  - with signatures of supervisor and course adviser
  - and word counts!

- **Proposed research area and plan**
  - An abstract (<100 words; optional)
  - Introduction, approach and outcomes (<500 words)
  - Work plan (<500 words)

- **Resources form**
  - What equipment, software, network etc you need ...
  - ... even if you are using your own machine

... *unless you are one of the NLIP group*

- Choose 3 projects from 3 different supervisors
  - Submit these for consideration in the NLIP group load-balancing

- Submit your full proposal based on the assigned one of these by 25th January
Introduction, approach & outcomes

- Motivate the work and explain the context
  - General background
  - Key references to related work
- What’s the basic idea and approach?
  - What are you thinking of doing, and how is it going to solve the problem (or need) you’ve identified?
- What are you going to “produce”?
  - Try to name the specific things (and describe them) in this part of the proposal – this will allow you to refer to them in the work plan

Work plan: what you will do and when

- Total of approximately 27 weeks
- One approach would be to divide the time available into 13 two-week chunks:
  - Each chunk describes work to be done and milestones achieved (as appropriate)
  - Leave two chunks for writing dissertation
  - Leave one chunk for contingencies
  - If you plan holidays, sports trips, travel to interviews, include these
Project Briefing and Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>MPhil Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Phase 1</td>
<td>26th October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Proposed Proposal</td>
<td>16th November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Phase 2</td>
<td>24th November</td>
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<td>Examiner feedback</td>
<td>28th November</td>
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<td>Research begins</td>
<td>3rd December</td>
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<td>Revised proposals</td>
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<td>Progress reviews</td>
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<td>31st May</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
<td>11th and 12th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission (hard deadline)</td>
<td>11.00, 7th June</td>
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</tbody>
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Risk management

- Intellectual
  - Hard deadline means you must produce something!

- Practical
  - Do not rely on speculative work of others, such as untested software and flaky hardware

- Legal
  - We do not accept dissertations with NDAs

- Ethical
  - Ethics Committee reviews research with human participants
The dissertation

- 15,000 words
- The word count
  - *excludes* the bibliography, photographs, diagrams and data listings, but
  - *includes* narrative text in tables, footnotes, and appendices
- Writing this much text is **hard work**: make sure you leave enough time to do it well

Take care not to plagiarise others

- The declaration of originality states everything is your own work except where explicitly stated
- Your results should be reproducible
  - You will need to upload an electronic copy of your source code together with your dissertation
- Examiners reserve the right to call a student for a viva voce examination for any reason
  - In Cambridge, on 26th June
Remember severe penalties for missing deadlines

- Coursework penalty = \( \frac{n}{10} \times \text{mark} \)
  - where \( n \) is the number of days late, rounded up to the nearest integer
- Take-home tests: no submission, zero marks
- **Project: no submission means outright failure**
- *No deadline extensions save for exceptional circumstances (illness or other grave reason)*
  - Your college tutor can help ...
  - ... it is essential to keep us informed and keep records

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Questions?

IAN WASSELL
ACS COURSE DIRECTOR
IJW24@CAM.AC.UK