Advice on 4th Year Computer Science Projects
For Examination in Trinity Term of 2014

Master of Computer Science
Master of Mathematics & Computer Science

Computer Science candidates are required to undertake a project in the fourth year. Mathematics and Computer Science candidates are required to take either a Computer Science project or a Mathematics dissertation; a Mathematics dissertation can either be a whole unit or a half unit. This document describes Computer Science projects; please refer to Mathematics for details on Maths dissertations.

Fourth year Computer Science projects are similar in style to third year projects although we would expect students to provide a greater contribution and show a greater depth of understanding and accomplishment. These informal notes are intended to supplement, but not to replace, the formal regulations in the grey book, and to amplify the advice given in the Course Handbook. Questions can be addressed to the project coordinator, David Kay (david.kay@cs.ox.ac.uk).

Amount of work
The project amounts to about one third of the work in the fourth year of the course, and one third of the examination credit, and so should be thought of as occupying about a term's work in total. For the project to go smoothly without your feeling under time pressure, it is important to settle on your project and find a project supervisor in Trinity Term of your 3rd year, and make good preparation over the Long Vacation. The norm is that the first draft of your report is finished during the Easter vacation of the fourth year.

Choosing a project
You should begin by discussing your choice of project and the list of potential supervisors with your tutor. A project might involve the specification, design and implementation of a piece of software or hardware, or the use of existing computing tools to develop some proofs or similar pieces of mathematics. A list of outlines for suggested projects is published by the Department of Computer Science at

http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/studentprojects/undergraduate.html

Projects need not be drawn from this list, but it may serve both as a guide to drawing up proposals and as a help in finding supervisors. Many supervisors are willing to discuss variations on the project topics they have suggested, or to consider different projects within the same general area that are suggested by candidates themselves. If you want to suggest your own project, then you should discuss the possibilities with your tutor and with potential supervisors. Your tutor may be able to supervise the project, or it may be better to choose another supervisor whose interests fit the project better. Note particularly that the Regulations require that the project be on a topic in *Computer Science*; this means that projects whose main focus is business or economic aspects of the use of computers are not likely to be accepted. Certain supervisors are more popular than others, and supervisors may decide that they cannot take on any further students.

Proposing a project and registering

A project proposal must be approved by the Teaching Committee for Computer Science; in practice this responsibility is delegated to a Projects Committee. Whether you choose a project from the published list or propose your own, it is best to make contact with a supervisor and get his or her agreement before submitting your proposal. Supervisors are normally expected to be a member of the Faculty of Computer Science or Faculty of Mathematics or the Faculty of Engineering Sciences. If you are unable to find a supervisor, please indicate at least three projects from the list (from at least two different possible supervisors) and the Projects Committee will endeavour to find an appropriate supervisor.

Proposals should be delivered to Ms. Jennie Charlton at the Department of Computer Science, Wolfson Building, Parks Road, by **Friday of week 3 of Trinity term of your third year**.

Reporting

Please find further information about how to report on your project in the handbook supplement for 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, which can be found at:

http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/handbooks.html