

# Student Handbook 2019-20

Faculty of Social Sciences  
School of Mathematical Sciences  
MSc Data and Decision Analytics  
MSc Operational Research  
MSc Operational Research and Finance  
MSc Operational Research and  
Statistics

## Disclaimer

This information is issued on the condition that it does not form part of any contract between the University of Southampton and any student. The information given has been made as accurate as possible at the time of publication, but the University reserves the right to modify or alter, without any prior notice, any of the contents advertised. It should therefore be noted that it may not be possible to offer all modules or components of a programme in each academic session.

*This handbook is available in alternative formats on request.*

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# 1. Welcome

## Welcome from the Faculty of Social Sciences Associate Dean (Education)

Dear Students,

Welcome to the University of Southampton and good luck on the year to come. As an incoming student on one of our postgraduate taught programmes, you've already demonstrated your ability through your undergraduate studies, and we're glad you've decided to continue your education with us at Southampton.

Within the Faculty, you may also like to know that there are numerous staff who have chosen the role of ensuring the quality and innovativeness of your experience at Southampton. My role, as Associate Dean, is to provide leadership to this group of staff, developing educational strategy and ultimately overseeing all matters to do with your education and its assessment and quality. I have a commitment to ensuring the best possible student experience and, if all is working well, I will be like the duck on the pond - calm on the surface but paddling hard underwater.

In all of our endeavours, we aim to provide a distinctive flavour to our education, both when bringing students from all over the world to Southampton, and when taking Southampton to the world. It is our hope and intention that you too will experience our different and cutting edge way of doing things, and that you will thrive and succeed in your studies and in all that University can offer you outside of your studies. Most of all, we hope that you will be happy during your time with us. This will shine through, and your positivity will be a beacon for friends, for opportunity and for achievements. Our staff are ready and willing to help you on that journey and we will be delighted to hear from you.

For now though, welcome to what we hope will be a 'home from home', and good luck for your year to come.

With best wishes,



Jim Anderson  
Associate Dean (Education)  
Professor of Mathematics  
[J.W.Anderson@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.W.Anderson@soton.ac.uk)

## Welcome from the Programme Director

Dear Students

We are delighted to welcome you to the MSc programmes in Data and Decision Analytics, Operational Research, Operational Research and Finance, and Operational Research and Statistics at the University of Southampton. You are studying in Mathematical Sciences within the Faculty of Social Sciences and we hope that you will have a fulfilling experience whilst undertaking your postgraduate studies.

The programmes aim to provide training and skills in Data Analytics and Operational Research (OR), as well as in finance and statistics in specific programmes. The OR modules will be run by the OR Group in Mathematical Sciences and other modules are run by the Statistics Group, by Southampton Business School, and by the Faculty of Electronics and Computer Science.

The handbook provides comprehensive information about these programmes, student services and university regulations and resources. In particular, the University web-links can provide you with the most up-to-date information and teaching materials. I hope that you find it helpful. If you have any questions about the course, don't hesitate to get in touch with me or your personal academic tutor and we'll do our best to help.

I look forward to getting to know you over the next 12 months and hope that you enjoy your programme.

Best wishes



Professor Houduo Qi  
Programme Director of Operational Research MSc Programmes

The information contained within your programme handbook is designed to provide key information applicable to you and your programme during the 2019/20 academic year.

It complements the University's Student Portal. You can access the Portal by logging on to [SUSSED](#), using your user name and password, and clicking on the Students tab in the top navigation bar. It is important that you make use of these resources as they support the regulations relating to your obligations and that of the University while you are a student at the University of Southampton.

It also provides helpful information on matters such as housing, finance, leisure, healthcare and support facilities.

Resource	Web link
Faculty website	<a href="#">Faculty of Social Sciences</a>
Faculty staff information	Dean of Faculty, Social Sciences: <a href="#">Professor Jane Falkingham</a> Associate Dean of Education: <a href="#">Professor Jim Anderson</a> Associate Dean of Research and Enterprise: <a href="#">Professor Sally Brailsford</a> / <a href="#">Professor Rebecca Hoyle</a> Associate Dean of International: <a href="#">Professor Sabu Padmadas</a>
School website	<a href="https://www.southampton.ac.uk/maths/index.page">https://www.southampton.ac.uk/maths/index.page</a>
School staff information	<i>Head of School, Prof Marika Taylor</i> <i>Deputy Heads of School: (Education), Dr David Gammack; (Research), Prof Jacek Brodski</i>
Programme and module descriptions	Descriptions relating to your programme can be found via the programme pages on the web, and on Blackboard.  Your programme structure (i.e. which modules make up your programme) is available in your programme specification and via the on-line programme catalogue which is accessible via <a href="#">Banner Self Service</a> .  To find links to broad generic descriptions of the programmes and modules, follow links to your programme starting from the <a href="#">Faculty web pages</a> .

## 2. General Information

### 2.1 Your student office

**Team responsibilities:** Manage and co-ordinate the delivery of key student life cycle activities within the Faculty. Provide a range of administrative services to the students and staff within the Faculty in support of enrolment, induction, student record maintenance, assessment, progression, attendance monitoring, awards and graduation.

<p><b>Business, Economics, Social Political and Mathematical Sciences Student Office School</b> Building 2, Room 2040, Highfield Campus, Southampton, SO17 1BJ</p> <p>Tel: +44 [0]23 8059 7677 Internal: 27677</p> <p>Opening Hours: 09:00 - 17:00 Monday - Friday</p>	<p><a href="mailto:maths-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk">maths-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk</a></p>
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You should visit the Student Office for all general queries relating to the administration of your

programme (this may include coursework submissions and collection of feedback, module registration changes, special considerations requests, sickness self-certification forms, suspension and withdrawal requests).

## 2.2 How we keep in touch with you

### Email

We will use your University email account to contact you when necessary. We will not use any other email accounts or social networking sites. **It is your responsibility to check your University email account regularly** and you must not let your inbox exceed your storage limit.

Notification that you are due to exceed your storage limit will be sent to your University email account and you should take immediate action as you will be unable to receive further emails once your storage limit has been exceeded.

### Written Correspondence

Formal correspondence regarding your programme of study (e.g. suspension, transfer or withdrawal from programme, academic performance (including progression/referral information), issues of academic integrity, student complaints and academic appeals) will be sent to your term-time (TT) or permanent (PM) address listed as active on your student record. You are responsible for advising the University if you change your permanent or term-time address. The University will not be held accountable if you do not receive important information because you failed to update your student record.

### Use of social networking sites

We understand that students are increasingly using social networking sites to interact with members of their student community. You should note that any behaviour that affects other members of the University community or members of the general public in ways which might damage the standing and reputation of the University may be subject to [disciplinary action](#) within the scope of the University's Regulations.

## 2.3 Confirmation of your student enrolment status

The Student Office can provide you with a certificate to confirm your status as a student (e.g. for bank account opening purposes). Please ensure that you give at least 48 hours' notice of your requirements (longer at peak times such as at enrolment or during the examination periods).

Your award certificate will be produced using the legal name data you have provided within your student record. Please make any necessary amendments to your record immediately a change occurs to ensure that your certificate contains accurate information.

In accordance with policy, a scale of fees exists for the provision of certificates, transcripts and award certificates. Please see point 11 '*Transcripts, Certificates and Award Letters*' within the [fees section](#) of the University Calendar.

Your award certificate will be produced using the legal name data you have provided within your student record. Please make any necessary amendments to your record immediately a change occurs to ensure that your certificate contains accurate information. Changes are made via [Banner Self Service](#).

# 3. Supporting you through your studies

## 3.1 The role of your Personal Academic Tutor

The University operates a tutor system to help support and advise students in their academic study. As a student, you can expect to be allocated a [Personal Academic Tutor](#). Your Personal Academic Tutor may or may not be one of the teaching staff you see in the course of your studies,

but their role in this context is to provide advice and support to you throughout your study, and to help review your academic progress. You can expect to see your Personal Academic Tutor at key points through your University career and, if you need to, you can contact them more frequently. Sometimes, your Personal Academic Tutor may refer you to other areas for support. They may refer you to individual support services, or to your student office for information, or to a Senior Tutor. The Senior Tutor will have a more specialised understanding of supporting students, and may support you if you have a particular problem. You can also contact the Senior Tutor if you wish to change your allocated Personal Academic Tutor.

School of Mathematical Sciences	Honora Smith (Operational Research) Houduo Qi (International Student Tutor)	<a href="mailto:Honora.Smith@soton.ac.uk">Honora.Smith@soton.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:H.Qi@soton.ac.uk">H.Qi@soton.ac.uk</a>
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The University expects that you will engage with your Personal Academic Tutor, attend the scheduled meetings, respond to messages from your Personal Academic Tutor, and notify your Personal Academic Tutor (or Senior Tutor, if you prefer) if you are experiencing problems which are affecting your performance, attendance or progress in your studies. In particular, you should contact your Personal Academic Tutor if you feel your performance in any forthcoming examinations will be affected by ill health or other special considerations, and check with your Personal Academic Tutor if you plan to cite him/her as a referee for job applications.

### 3.2 What to do if you are ill

It is important that your doctor (as well as your Personal Academic Tutor) is immediately informed of any illness that is likely to affect your studies. If appropriate, your GP may inform your Personal Academic Tutor that you are experiencing some health difficulties that may affect your academic performance. This will be done with your consent and you may wish the details of your illness to be withheld from your Personal Academic Tutor, although you should think carefully about this (your tutor will, in any case, respect your privacy).

More information can be found in the [General Regulations - Attendance and Completion of Programme Requirements](#).

### 3.3 External factors affecting your attendance or performance in your studies

We expect you to take responsibility for your studies to ensure that your full academic potential can be realised. However, sometimes difficulties can arise that can affect you.

If you are absent from an examination or other assessment or have other grounds for believing that your studies have been affected by external factors you must bring this to the attention of your Personal Academic Tutor or to the Student Office immediately. Whilst we recognise that students can sometimes be reluctant to discuss cultural, sensitive or personal issues, it is essential that you bring problems affecting you to our attention immediately so that we can determine how best to help you.

### 3.4 Special considerations

If you believe that illness or other circumstances have adversely affected your academic performance, this is known as [Special Considerations](#). If you wish for these to be considered you must complete a [Special Considerations form](#). **It is important that you submit this in a timely manner and prior to the Board of Examiners. You will need to submit any Special Considerations forms to your Student Office.**

All claims must be substantiated by written documentary evidence, for example a medical certificate or GP/consultant letter, self-certification (although self-certification will not be regarded as evidence in relation to your examination performance) or a statement from your Personal

Academic Tutor. The purpose of asking for supporting documentation is for you to be able to corroborate the facts of your submission.

All claims will be reviewed by the Special Considerations Board which meets regularly throughout the year. The Student Office will contact you via your University email account to let you know once approval has been made.

### **3.5 Student Support Review**

The [Student Support Review Regulations](#) are in place to support students if concerns are raised about their health, wellbeing or behaviour which may be impacting on their academic progress and/or general management of life at University or on placement. The regulations seek to be both supportive and to actively engage with students prior to decisions made about their fitness to study. The regulations and supporting documents identify the procedure and support available to both students and staff when a student becomes unwell and/or presents a risk to self and/or others.

### **3.6 Suspending your studies**

Should you feel that you need to take some time out from your studies, known as [suspending your studies](#), you should first discuss this with your Personal Academic Tutor. A Suspension Request form should be obtained, completed and returned to the Student Office. Please note that, if you wish, you can suspend your studies in order to undertake an internship or period of industrial training outside of normal vacation time.

### **3.7 Withdrawing from your studies**

If you no longer wish to continue with your studies, a Withdrawal Notification form should be obtained, completed and returned to the Student Office. Further information can be found in the [General Regulations - Transfer, Suspension, Withdrawal and Termination](#)

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

## 4. Your safety

### 4.1 University/Faculty/School Health and Safety Policy and further information

The University's Health, Safety and Risk website, covering the Health and Safety Policy Statement and Management System, which defines commitment, governance, responsibilities and management of health and safety is available here:

<https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/teams/HealthSafetyRisk>

Ensuring student health and safety is a major goal of the University. As a new student you will have received information on Personal Safety and H&S/Fire Safety as part of your 'Southampton Welcome'. Both new and existing students should also take a look at the following links for further information:

[The Faculty of Social Sciences H&S sharepoint pages:](#)

<https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/teams/FacultyofSocialSciences/SitePages/Health-&Safety.aspx>

[You can also receive support from the Students' Union - SUSU at](#)

<http://www.susu.org/support>

### 4.2 Local arrangements

Key local Health and Safety arrangements are as follows. If you have questions relating to any of the following information please contact a member of the Faculty Health and Safety team, details of which you will find at the end of this section.

### 4.3 Action in the event of a fire



If you notice or suspect that there is a fire you should immediately raise the alarm by operating the nearest fire alarm call point (one will be located on the wall as you leave the building). The fire alarm is a continuously ringing bell.



On hearing the fire alarm you should immediately stop what you are doing and make your way out of the building by following the green emergency exit signs to the nearest exit, shutting doors behind you as you leave. Do not stop or return to collect personal belongings. Lifts will not operate when the alarm sounds.

**NOTE:** If you have a permanent or temporary mobility impairment that affects your ability to use stairs to exit a building then you should have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). If this is not the case, please contact your personal tutor for further assistance.

In any event, should you be isolated when the alarm sounds, please call 3311 from an internal telephone or 02380593311 from a mobile phone.



On leaving the building make your way to the assembly point. Ensure any car parks or roads are kept clear for emergency vehicles. Do not re-enter a building until you are told it is safe to do so by the Fire & Rescue Service, the senior Fire Warden or Security staff.

Fire extinguishers are provided in buildings but should only be used by those trained in their use and only if it is safe to do so.

Evacuation alarms are tested weekly. The times of these tests are detailed near main entrances to buildings. When tests take place the bell will ring for no more than a few seconds.

### 4.4 Assembly points

Building	Assembly point
B2	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B4	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B6	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B32 (Education)	South of Building 32 on the Jubilee Plaza area before the Service Road and the Library.
B34 (Education)	Area around flag pole in front of University library.
B39 (S3RI)	Car park in front of B54
B44 (Geography / Psychology)	Grassed area in front of University Health Service Building (North end of Physics building).
B44a (Psychology)	Car park in front of B44 (Shackleton)
44 Chamberlain Rd (Psychology)	Car park in front of B44 (Shackleton)
B54 (Mathematics) and B56	Grassed area adjacent to Turner Sims Concert Hall
B58 (Social Science)	Grassed area adjacent in front of University Health Service
Other buildings	Check the emergency information that should be displayed on a noticeboard in teaching rooms.

#### 4.5 First Aid



In the event of an accident causing injury, the nearest first-aider should be contacted. Their details are displayed on signs in corridors. Alternatively, contact security on 3311 using an internal phone and they will assist. Following treatment, the incident must be reported to your line manager/supervisor and the Faculty Health and Safety team.

#### 4.6 Incident Reporting



If you are involved in an accident or incident, spot a hazardous situation or are concerned that you are being asked to do something without the necessary information, instruction or training that would ensure your safety, please report this to your supervisor and the Faculty Health and Safety team. The circumstances can then be investigated and measures put in place to minimise

future risk.

Incidents can be reported online at: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthandsafety/incident-report.page>

#### 4.7 Induction and Training



As a new student you should have the following expectations with regard to Health and Safety:

- To be made aware of local emergency arrangements and H&S contacts on your first day.
- To receive a local induction before using any laboratory or workshop area. This will identify hazards and make you aware of particular procedures in place to help ensure your safety.
- That risk assessments and other written arrangements that maintain good H&S in all your activities will be brought to your attention by your supervisor.

#### 4.8 Building Access

Most University buildings are open to all from 08.00-18.00 Mon-Friday excluding University and public holidays.

**ALL undergraduate students** - must leave buildings by 18.00.

**Postgraduate students** - Access by ID card may be available by approval of your Head of School, to postgraduate students (depending on student status and/or circumstances) from 06.00-23.00. If permission is granted, buildings are to be clear by 23.00 and remain so until 06.00 (Closure Period).

#### 4.9 Out-of-Hours Policy

The Out-of-Hours Policy covers the Closure Period from 11.00pm through to 6.00am the following day and applies to every day of the year, including weekends and Public Holidays. You must have received approval to work during the closure period from your Head of School and this must be documented using **Form 1.5** available from the link <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/estates/what-we-do/security.page>

You are required to present a completed copy of the form, together with your University ID when requested by Security Staff.

#### 4.10 Further information

More detailed information, forms and links to other sources of advice are available via the links provided in part 1.1 of this document.

#### 4.11 Contact Information

A student's primary contact should be their supervisor. However, the following contacts may be used if necessary:

Health and Safety Contacts				
Aloma Hack	Health and Safety Liaison Officer	4/3063 63A/1013	023 8059 3025	<a href="mailto:A.J.Hack@soton.ac.uk">A.J.Hack@soton.ac.uk</a>
Gary Griffiths	Health and Safety Co-ordinator	63A/1013	023 8059 4994	<a href="mailto:G.B.Griffiths@soton.ac.uk">G.B.Griffiths@soton.ac.uk</a>
Health, Safety and Risk Directorate				
HSR general and specific enquiries	Please contact HSR directorate if local contacts are not available	26 University Road	023 8059 3951	<a href="mailto:m.k.ridley@soton.ac.uk">m.k.ridley@soton.ac.uk</a>
Security – Central Control Room (CCR)				
CCR	023 8059 3311 (Emergency)	023 8059 2811 (Enquiries)		<a href="mailto:unicc@soton.ac.uk">unicc@soton.ac.uk</a>

## 5. Your Academic Programme

### 5.1 The academic year and the programme structure

The structure and modular content provided within the programme specification is specific to your own programme.

You can view the most up to date version of the programme specification [SUSSED](#).

### 5.2 Registration and amendment to optional modules

Most programmes will have a number of optional modules. If applicable, you will need to select a certain number of optional modules to complete your portfolio of modules and fulfil the credit points as required for the programme.

When choosing your options, you are strongly advised to ensure that you have a similar total number of modules in Semester 1 and Semester 2, to maintain a balanced workload throughout the year. Once you have registered your options, it is possible for you make changes but there are restrictions. The substitution of modules is not allowed (i.e. you cannot take an extra module in semester 2 to replace a semester 1 module in which you failed to perform well).

You may request a change to your optional module choice up to the **end of week 2** in each semester. You should complete a Change of Module form to specify your request (forms can be obtained from the Student Office). If your optional module choices clash in your timetable, then you will need to amend your optional choice accordingly by contacting the Student Office immediately.

You should regularly check your online student record for details of your registered modules. This is particularly important after you have made any changes and will help to maintain the accuracy of your student record. It will also save time and confusion during the examination period.

### 5.3 Attendance

The [University attendance regulations](#) details the University expectations relating to attendance.

### 5.4 Additional Costs

You may incur additional costs because of your programme, for example for materials, field trips or books. General programme costs are located in the programme specification. Modules that are optionally available to select also include information on module specific costs.

### 5.5 CORMSIS Business Advisory Board

The Operational Research MSc programmes are supported by the CORMSIS (Centre for Operational Research, Management Science and Information Systems) Business Advisory Board whose external members' names are given in the [CORMSIS website](#).

It is expected that you will have the opportunity to meet members of this Board over a buffet lunch on several occasions during the year.

### 5.6 Facilities for Operational Research MSc Students

*MSc Study Room, Computing Facilities, Benson Collection, Post*

Operational Research MSc students have use of Room 3009, which they will share with the other PGT students in Mathematical Sciences. The room can be accessed using a keypad for which the code is C1459Y. Please ensure that the door is locked and the windows are shut when the room is empty. Students should note that, for safety reasons, they should not be in the building between the hours of 11pm and 6am, and disciplinary action may be taken if they are.

The room contains computer workstations and a printer supplied with paper. These machines are run by iSolutions, and any problems should be reported to them. You can contact them at 023 8059 5656 or from internal phones at 25656. A paper supply can be found outside the Maths Faculty Operating Service (MathsFOS) office on level 5 of Building 54.

An email alias will be set up to give access to all Operational Research MSc students.

Post can be collected from baskets in the Post Room (Room 5023 - opposite the lift) on Level 5 of the Mathematical Sciences Building (Building 54).

## 5.7 Research Ethics

The University of Southampton is committed to carrying out its research, teaching, enterprise and other activities within a comprehensive ethical framework (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ris/policies/ethics.html>).

Principles of ethical research include the expectation that studies are undertaken with integrity, quality and transparency. Participants in research must be fully informed about the research and participate voluntarily. They need to know what will happen with the information they provide, and that they can withdraw from the study subsequently (wherever possible). Risks from participation in research must be explained and minimised. Participants' anonymity and/or confidentiality should be protected, for example by removing information that could be used to identify them and by storing confidential information securely.

All research on human participants, their tissue or data requires ethical approval via the University's Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO2) system. This includes, but is not limited to, studies of the following kind:

- analysis of existing secondary data at an individual level, even where such data have been anonymised and/or the datasets exist in the public domain;
- collection of data using questionnaires and online surveys;
- collection of data using interviews, observations, focus group discussions or similar qualitative approaches; and
- experiments involving human participants.
- research on animals is governed by separate procedures.

The University believes that ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and that ethics approval might also be needed for research where other factors could be present including:

- a risk of damage to the environment;
- political or social sensitivity; and
- impact on culture and cultural heritage.

If you are in doubt about whether the research for your dissertation requires ethical approval, please contact your divisional 'ethics champion', or a member of the Faculty Ethics Committee via [risethic@soton.ac.uk](mailto:risethic@soton.ac.uk).

To obtain ethical approval for your research, please apply via the ERGO2 system. Detailed guidance on how to apply and what documents to upload can be found on the Researcher Portal (<https://intranet.soton.ac.uk/sites/researcherportal/>) and in the Downloads section on the ERGO2 page.

Please note that the University does not permit mass emailing for the recruitment of research participants.

Your supervisor will need to approve your ethics application before it is reviewed by the Faculty Ethics Committee. There are no submission deadlines; instead applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. You can expect a decision within 10 working days. Please allow extra time in case

you are asked for revisions. **You must not begin your research before you have obtained approval via ERGO!** Retrospective approval is never granted.

Failure to obtain ethics approval or to comply with the University's Ethics Policy will be investigated under the University's regulations governing Academic Integrity (<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/academic-integrity-regs.html>).

## 5.8 Project Allocation

Dissertations written during the summer term are based on projects. The duration of a project is from an official starting point (normally in the middle of June) until the deadline for dissertation submission, usually mid-September for full-time students, or mid-December for part-time students.

Projects are classified as external or internal. An external project involves working with a sponsor organisation external to the OR Group at the University of Southampton or their agents; an internal project involves working on a project instigated by a member of the OR Group, with no external involvement. The Industrial Liaison Officers, Peter Becque and Julie Hickman, seek out external projects from contacts in business, industry, the National Health Service and Government.

Students will not be eligible for an external project if they fail the examinations listed in the table below in the Semester 1 examinations.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Ineligible if:</b>
MSc Data and Decision Analytics	Fail more than two out of MATH6161, MATH6164, MATH6166 and MATH6170
MSc Operational Research	Fail both MATH6002 and MATH6004
MSc Operational Research and Finance	Fail both MATH6002 and MATH6004
MSc Operational Research and Statistics	Fail more than two out of MATH6002, MATH6004, MATH6152, MATH6170

The Industrial Liaison Officers arrange a series of talks by OR/data analysis practitioners in Semester 1, as a "warm-up", or pre-requisite, to the summer projects. Attendance at these talks, scheduled in MATH6167, is compulsory, and anyone not attending a MATH6167 talk without prior notification to Peter Becque and Julie Hickman may be considered ineligible for an external project.

The process of matching students to projects is a rigorous one. The Industrial Liaison Officers will arrange a series of briefings in Semester 2 to discuss details of the process and how students should prepare. They will also post a list of projects and a set of Project Briefs (describing project scope and objectives) on the University's electronic "Blackboard" system as they become available during April and early May.

In the first week of May, students eligible to proceed to external projects will be asked to indicate their preferences from the available projects. Based on student preferences, the Programme Directors will assign each student a short-list of up to six external projects. Because of the complexity of fairly matching students to projects, the process is aided by a computer allocation program. You should not expect to be short-listed only for your most preferred projects as there are likely to be conflicts with the preferences of other students.

The process will culminate in the project allocation 'Open Day', likely to be in the middle of May. Representatives of the external organisations sponsoring projects will be available to meet students in short informal interviews. This is an opportunity for students to confirm their understanding of their short-listed projects, and for the sponsors to assess the match of student capabilities to their project(s). At the end of the open day, students will have the opportunity to comment on their previously expressed preferences, and sponsor representatives can comment on how the short-listed students would fit with their project(s) being offered.

After the Open Day, the OR and Business School staff will arrive at an allocation of students to projects taking into account the feedback received from students and sponsors. The allocation will

be completed by the first week of June. Students unsuccessful in being assigned to an externally-sponsored project will be allocated to an internal supervisor according to their project preferences.

Students who wish to arrange their own projects with an external organisation may do so, but this must be coordinated through the Industrial Liaison Officers, before the project Open Day.

**Full-time students should expect to work full-time on the project, and not plan to take a holiday during this period. Part-time students should follow the same working pattern for the project as during the taught part of the course.**

You will receive a sum of money to assist with external project expenses over and above your normal day-to-day expenses whilst studying at Southampton. The amount will depend on the level of expenses you are likely to incur such as additional accommodation (if the project is not based in Southampton) and travel.

To ensure your health and safety during the project period:

- o all students will receive a briefing from the Faculty Health and Safety Officer shortly before the projects start;
- o all students must complete a simple Risk Assessment form and provide contact details and an itinerary before any off-campus work is undertaken;
- o external sponsor organisations hosting students are required to confirm that their health and safety procedures in respect of that location comply with University expectations and requirements.

When the allocation of projects takes place you will be asked to submit online forms at ERGO2.soton.ac.uk so that any possible ethical considerations can be followed up: typically these affect research involving interviews, questionnaires or surveys; analysis of personal or corporate details (e.g. bank records, personnel records, test results) that are not already in the public domain and participant observations. Any issues identified will be followed up through the Faculty's Ethics Committee.

You will also be asked to complete a form signing up to a "learning contract" in terms of commitment to the project and your responsibilities (see below): this is also signed by the project supervisor.

## 5.9 Project Supervision

A University supervisor will be assigned to each student project. The supervisor will provide guidance about the conduct of the project, but the final responsibility for the content of the dissertation is the student's. The supervisor may comment on the structure, content and the depth of discussion of written chapters but such comments, or their absence, should not be taken by the student as an indication of a satisfactory dissertation.

Responsibilities of the supervisor include:

- (a) giving guidance about the nature, and scope, of the project and the standard expected;
- (b) providing technical expertise and literature sources (if appropriate);
- (c) establishing close working relations with both the sponsor and student, and providing an independent point of contact for both. The supervisor should visit the sponsor at least twice; once towards the beginning and once towards the end of the project. If necessary, more visits should be made. The student and supervisor should maintain regular contact (face-to-face, telephone or email).
- (d) suggesting completion dates for successive stages of the project so that the dissertation is submitted on time;
- (e) monitoring the progress of the student and providing necessary feedback;
- (f) being a member of the internal examining panel.

Responsibilities of the student include:

- (a) agreeing a schedule of meetings with the supervisor and sponsor. In normal circumstances it is expected that the student and supervisor will communicate regularly during the first

month. Subsequently, the frequency of meetings may be adjusted to suit the progress of the project;

- (b) discussion with his/her supervisor regarding the type of guidance s/he finds most helpful;
- (c) acquiring any necessary skills for the project, as suggested by the supervisor;
- (d) ensuring that the student, sponsor and supervisor all share the same clear understanding of the scope and objectives of the project. Any changes to the focus of the project should be agreed with all parties;
- (e) preparing a plan of work for completion of the project, to be agreed with the sponsor and supervisor. The plan should allow for:
  - (i) regular Progress Reports to sponsor and supervisor. Note that a formal Progress Report will be required at the 5-week point. This should be accompanied by a detailed description of the planned approach to the project, and explaining the OR/MS tools and techniques to be used;
  - (ii) the drafting of written material in sufficient time to allow the supervisor to make suggestions;
  - (iii) a presentation of findings and conclusions to the sponsor;
- (f) working steadily according to the agreed plan;
- (g) maintaining the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information. The approach to be taken to the writing up of sensitive issues in the dissertation should be discussed and agreed with the sponsor and supervisor at around the mid-point of the project;
- (h) taking the initiative in raising any problems and indicating if the guidance provided is inadequate;
- (i) developing the content of the dissertation and ensuring that it is prepared and submitted in accordance with the relevant University Regulations.

Responsibilities of the Sponsor include:

- (a) ensuring the health and safety of the student while working on-site;
- (b) providing practical guidance regarding the business issue(s) to be addressed in the project;
- (c) supporting the student in gaining access to the data, systems and personnel necessary in order to undertake the project;
- (d) **being available for consultation on a regular basis.**

## 6. Teaching and Learning Skills

### 6.1 Time management

It is your responsibility to manage your time in order to ensure that you keep up to date with the material presented and with the requirements of the programme. Deadlines for work submission should be adhered to otherwise marks will be deducted via the imposition of a [late submission penalty](#).

The framework of when lectures and classes occur and deadlines for submission of work will be made available to you well in advance, but if you are unclear about any aspect of your module you should talk this through with your module lead or programme lead. This knowledge will allow you to plan your life based on how you know you work best. Effective use of your time will allow you to perform well on your course and to enjoy student life.

One of the work-place skills you should aim to acquire at University is the ability to manage multiple priorities. If you have problems in this area please discuss them with your Personal Academic Tutor.

### 6.2 Lectures

A single lecture slot lasts 45 minutes. It is therefore vital that you arrive promptly in order to gain maximum benefit from the time. Each lecturer will present material using either handouts or require you to make your own notes. Transcribing lectured material into a form that you find most useful is an important part of the learning process. You should ensure that you understand the material and, if you have difficulty in understanding or applying the knowledge, use recommended textbooks or the assistance of teaching staff during tutorials to gain understanding.

It is your responsibility to develop your ability in a given subject. How well you have acquired that ability and the associated knowledge is gauged by the assessment process. Lectures are provided for your benefit and you should take full advantage by ensuring you attend all of the lectures in a given module. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend, ensure that you get hold of a copy of the notes or handouts from your module lead.

### 6.3 Use of electronic recording devices or mobile phones in lectures or classes

Out of courtesy to staff and other students, please ensure that mobile phones are switched off in lectures and seminars. You are advised that lectures are the copyright property of the lecturer and permission to audio-record a lecture must be personally sought from the lecturer before proceeding.

If you wish to use an electronic device to take notes in a lecture, you should do so in a way that does not cause disruption to those sitting near you.

If you have a health condition for which additional support is needed, you may, following assessment by the University's educational support services, make appropriate arrangements with staff for recording lectures.

### 6.4 Tutorials/supervisions

Group tutorials/supervisions are timetabled for some modules. These sessions are intended for you to develop your problem solving skills as well as for you to discuss further with an experienced member of staff any particular lecture material you are finding difficult to understand. It is essential that you come well prepared for these sessions. These sessions are one of the most effective ways of reinforcing the lecture material.

## 6.5 Independent or Self learning

Independent study or self-directed learning involves using libraries, data retrieval systems, internet, etc, or in a group working on coursework, reading the lecture material or reading around the subject. This should also develop your investigative and problem solving skills in furthering understanding of the subject, creating links with other modules - past and present - and providing a broadening of your educational experiences and knowledge base.

Self-learning is your personal responsibility and your commitment to the programme. It requires discipline, motivation and focussing on achieving individually set targets. It enables you to reach your full potential academically, develops your personal skills and helps establish a successful professional career.

## 6.6 Key skills

Key skills are those skills which can be applied to other disciplines and fields of work. Employers are increasingly seeking to employ individuals with well-developed key skills. More can be found on the Academic Skills pages of the [library website](#).

## 6.7 Faculty/School Policy on referencing

In Social Sciences degree programmes, the Harvard referencing system is preferred. Speak to your module lead before using any other referencing system. Details about how to use the Harvard referencing system can be found through the following library link:  
<http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash/referencing>

## 6.8 Academic integrity: the University Policy

The University expects that all students will familiarise themselves with the [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#).

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

## 7. Assessment and Examinations

### 7.1 Coursework assessment and submission

A number of modules include coursework assignments as part of the assessment. Coursework can often occupy a large amount of time. It is worth noting that getting a few extra marks on an assignment may not justify the extra time spent. Conversely, students who forget or do not bother to hand in work can make it very difficult for themselves to achieve their full academic potential.

Normally, all coursework should be accompanied by a completed Coursework Submission/ Feedback form and submitted to the Student Office by no later than the published date and time. If both paper-based and electronic submission is required, you should note that your submission will not be considered complete until both formats have been submitted. If other arrangements are in force for submission of a particular piece of coursework, this will be advised by your module co-ordinator.

### 7.2 Penalties for late coursework submission

When coursework is set a due date for submission will be specified and there will be associated penalties for handing in work late. The University has a [uniform policy for the late submission](#).

### 7.3 Coursework extensions

If you know there will be a valid reason why you cannot submit the work at the given date you must contact the Student Office as soon as possible. You should complete a Special Considerations form, which should provide adequate detail of the reasons why you are seeking an extension. Your completed form should be submitted to the Student Office who will arrange for your request to be reviewed. The Student Office will contact you via your University email account to let you know once approval has been made. **It is your responsibility to request an extension in a timely manner and prior to the original deadline.**

See paragraph 3.5 above.

### 7.4 Examination preparation (also see Appendix A)

You will know yourself how best you prepare for examinations. It is always worth remembering that the sooner you start your preparation the better and that one of the aims of each module is to help you prepare for the examination. Make sure that you have a complete set of notes; that you understand their content; that you can apply the material by solving the example sheet questions; and that you have practiced questions from past papers under examination time constraints. The University's online archive of previously set examination papers is available to assist with your learning and preparation for forthcoming examinations.

[Past Exam Papers](#) are available via the library.

Remember that if you get into difficulty during your revision process on a particular subject ask someone to help you. This may be either one of the lecturers or teaching assistants on the module. For helpful hints on revision strategy and examination techniques, please refer to Appendix A.

### 7.5 Examinations

The dates of University examination periods are published annually on the [SAA Exam timetables webpages](#). However, Faculties/Schools that have extended academic years, may have assessment periods outside of these times.

## 7.6 Illegible exam scripts

If your examination script is considered illegible, the [Illegible Examination Scripts Policy](#) will be instigated. You will be asked to come in to dictate your script so that it can be transcribed. The cost of this work will be met by you. If your script is not transcribed then it will receive a mark of zero (0).

## 7.7 Coursework and examination feedback

Feedback comes in many forms and you must learn to recognise the merits of all of these. The [Student Feedback Policy](#) provides an overview of formal feedback.

Formal feedback is well documented and the following paragraphs identify ones that you are officially entitled to.

Informal feedback is just as important and comes in the form of individual chats with your Personal Academic Tutor, module leaders or project supervisors, or group meetings with academics after a lecture or practical session. Also tests and quizzes on Blackboard, which are available for several modules, can provide valuable feedback on how you are progressing.

All coursework will be marked and returned to you, accompanied by feedback which will relate to the standard of your work and the reasons for the mark/grade given. You should note that all marks are considered provisional until they have been reviewed and confirmed by the Board of Examiners. This feedback will typically be returned within four weeks following your submission. Large assignments (e.g. your dissertation/project work) may take slightly longer to be returned. Bear in mind that if you hand in work late, your feedback may be delayed.

Where appropriate, for example with smaller problem-solving exercises like calculations, the lecturer will decide if feedback should be given individually or reported back to the whole group. You are, however always free to ask the lecturer personally how you are progressing.

The feedback you receive will be:

- **timely** - allowing you to learn from your work
- related to the **learning outcomes** for that piece of work
- **constructive** and **honest** – allowing you to take the comments on board, learn from your mistakes and understand why you did well.

For the feedback to be effective, it is important that you work with the feedback given and identify how you can improve your work in the future. Should you need further information about your work, get in touch with whoever marked the coursework.

Feedback may be made available online or can be collected from the Student Office. You will be contacted when feedback is ready. For some kinds of assignment, other arrangements will be made and the module lead will explain those to you.

Although individual feedback on examinations is not automatically given, you may request a meeting with the marker of the exam (or lead of the module in question) to discuss your performance (see 8.8 below). In addition, feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the performance of the whole group that took an examination will be available via Blackboard.

## 7.8 Access to coursework/examination scripts

Students are entitled to view their examination scripts on request (your Student Office can advise on the process to be followed). You are only permitted to view an examination script to enable you to see how you can improve your future performance and no mark or other annotation on the script is negotiable or open to alteration. The absence of annotation on a script does not mean that it has not been marked.

## **7.9 Release of results**

Students will be given, as a matter of course, the marks they obtain in each individual module of study after they have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. More information can be found in [the Release of Marks procedure](#).

You should note that the official transcript of your marks would normally show the latest mark obtained in each subject with a note, where appropriate, that it was obtained at repeat or referral attempt.

## **7.10 Prizes**

School of Mathematics prizes are awarded each year to those gaining the highest marks in the Operational Research MSc programmes in the taught part of the courses. In addition, the Centre for Operational Research, Management Science and Information Science (CORMSIS) awards several prizes to those awarded the highest marks for their dissertations. These prizes include a Boeing Prize.

## **7.11 Final assessment**

At the end of your programme, your overall performance will be assessed.

If you satisfy the academic standards necessary, the Board of Examiners will recommend you for award.

## **7.12 Writing Dissertations**

Some guidelines on writing dissertations are provided in Appendix B.

## **7.13 Project Assessment**

The project is assessed by two internal examiners, normally the first and second supervisor. See Appendix C for the assessment criteria for dissertations. A report is written by the first internal examiner and the recommendation discussed with the second internal examiner. The internal examiner's report and recommendations are then sent to the External Examiner.

The regulations require dissertations to be submitted by Friday 11 September 2020 (full-time students) or Friday 11 December 2020 (part-time students). If you submit your project after this date, you will fail unless in very exceptional circumstances you have obtained permission to submit later. Applications for extensions (well in advance of the deadline) should be made to the Programme Director.

Candidates who fail the project have one opportunity to revise the dissertation and resubmit. Resubmission deadlines are set by the Maths Student Office.

## **8. Staff/Student Liaison: getting your voice heard**

### **8.1 Module Survey**

The Faculty/School aims to consult with and to provide opportunities for all students and staff to make their views known. You are encouraged to offer your comments/suggestions to members of staff and feedback is requested for each module undertaken.

### **8.2 Module Reports**

Your feedback to module surveys will be reflected upon by the module leader and will be included in the Module Report. Modules reports are available via SUSSED under the “programme specific information’ tab.

### **8.3 Staff Student Liaison Committees**

Staff-Student liaison committees have representatives from across each programme. These committees have the role of monitoring the organisation and management of the student programmes, to note any difficulties that students may be encountering, and to take advice about ways of improving the programmes.

### **8.4 Student Representation**

Through the [Students’ Union](#) you will be invited to elect your Faculty/School representatives who co-ordinate the student voice on Faculty/School committees to enable your voice to be heard.

More information on the Students’ Union officers and their roles is available on the [Students’ Union Representation webpages](#).

## 9. Careers and Employability

The [Careers and Employability Service](#) provides support to students at all levels of study and has a range of opportunities on offer. Research<sup>1</sup> shows that graduates with no previous work experience are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and over 30% of positions will be filled by graduates who have already worked for that organisation. We provide drop-in advice, 1:1 guidance, workshops, skills sessions, Careers Fairs and employer led events to support your career planning as well as the following opportunities:

### 9.1

Details of events and opportunities are set out below:

- Tailored undergraduate employability workshops and/or talks linked to your programme of study, including drawing your attention to career opportunities relating to your degree.
- The “Your Future Career” event has been specifically designed for those students studying your subject. This comprises employer talks, workshops and a networking event. Career areas covered as part of this event are some of the most popular for students studying social sciences degrees, including Civil Service Faststream, Office for National Statistics, Teaching, Marketing, Banking and Finance among many others.
- Employer Talks - A comprehensive programme of employer talks and presentations runs throughout the academic year covering a wide range of career sectors. These are a really great way to discover more about a particular organisation or career, and to receive some key advice on how to do well in the recruitment process. Booking a place on these events will be through the Event Calendar <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/events-workshops-fairs/calendar.page>
- Business Innovation programme – a unique opportunity to work in a team of four students on a real-life business issue of a local business or not-for-profit organisation. You will receive some dedicated training from IBM to support you. See: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/work-experience/business-innovation-programme.page>
- Career mentoring programme -An opportunity to gain invaluable knowledge and expertise from a mentor especially chosen for you to support your transition into the graduate job market. See: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/mentoring.page>
- Volunteering - can develop many of the skills employers are looking for, such as leadership, teamwork and organisation. You can try out different career ideas by volunteering which may help you decide if the voluntary sector is right for you. See: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/work-experience/volunteering.page>
- Student Enterprise - is a creative and rewarding field. Engaging in its activities will offer you opportunities which you may otherwise never encounter. Southampton students have created businesses on the east coast of Africa. Other students have created start-ups which are operating in the heart of London. Excluding business start-up however, countless students have gone to employers as entrepreneurial agents with experiences which make them uniquely employable. See: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/enterprise/index.page>
- Advice, Information and Guidance - Our Drop-in Service provides an opportunity for you to have a conversation with one of our advisers to assess how the service can best meet your present needs. We may refer you to appropriate resources, activities or information, including small and large group sessions, talks, campus events and individual help sessions. See: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/talk-to-an-advisor.page>
- MyCareer - is our online careers site, which allows all University of Southampton students and graduates to easily find out about everything we have to offer, including finding jobs and opportunities – see: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/students/mycareer-user-guide.page>

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<sup>1</sup> [High Fliers 2016](#)

You are expected to attend the MATH6167 seminars given by operational researchers/data analysts working in industry, which take place weekly at lunchtimes in Semester 1, time and venue to be announced.

The Analytics careers fair and networking event is organised annually by the Centre for Operational Research, Management Science and Information Systems (CORMSIS), to which all Maths postgraduates and final year undergraduates are invited.

## 10. Further study opportunities

Perhaps you are considering postgraduate research study. The first thing to realise is that you need to make a well-informed decision and therefore the key is to obtain all the information you need. The Faculty/School always aims to retain its best and brightest students for research. However, when collecting information about postgraduate research studies, you should cast your net wide. You need to select an area that interests you – a difficult task in itself, because you will also seek an area that has good employment prospects.

Further details on the programmes offered by the Faculty/School can be found on the Faculty's/School's website.

## 11. Regulatory Issues

We hope that you will be satisfied with your experience during your time as a student at the University of Southampton, but we do recognise that, on occasion, things can go wrong. If you have a concern about any aspect of your experience at the University, we encourage you to raise it as soon as the concern arises.

It is always better to let us know that you feel there is a problem as soon as possible so that the matter may be resolved quickly. You may alternatively wish to consult with your student academic president if it is an issue in common with other students. Please be reassured that you will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of raising a genuine concern, student complaint or academic appeal.

### 11.1 Academic appeals

Provided you have grounds, you may appeal against any academic decision made by the University. There are some exceptions and you should note you cannot appeal against a decision that has been made in the proper exercise of academic judgment. The [Regulations Governing Academic Appeals by Students](#)) outlines the regulations and procedure that should be followed should you wish to make an academic appeal.

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

### 11.2 Student complaints

The [Regulations Governing Student Complaints](#) sets out the process that should be followed should you wish to raise a complaint about a matter relating to either the facilities and services provided by the University, its academic programmes, and the conduct of University staff, and which has materially affected you.

### 11.3 Dignity at work and study

The [University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#) applies to the conduct of staff and students, in the context of their University work of study, or which otherwise affects the working, learning or social environment of the University. Fair criticism of staff or student performance or conduct will not be considered to be bullying or harassment provided that those involved are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Any allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation will be treated seriously, regardless of the seniority of those involved, and anyone found to have behaved unacceptably may be the subject of disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion.

### 11.4 Student Non-academic Misconduct

As members of the University community, all students are expected to conduct themselves with due regard for its good name and reputation and are required to comply with the University's Regulations at all times. Any allegation of misconduct will be considered within the [Student Non-](#)

[academic Misconduct Regulations](#), in accordance with the evidence and circumstances presented. Information for students on non-academic misconduct is available from the [Student and Academic Administration web pages](#)

# Appendix A - Revision Strategy and Examination Techniques

## A.1 Revision strategy

Revision should be an on-going process which starts very early in your programme. The amount of knowledge to be accumulated and the variety of skills and techniques to be developed are large and they are best assimilated gradually and consolidated as you go along. Regular revision is really a part of the learning process but, of necessity, becomes more concentrated as the examination approaches. "Re-vision" means looking again at things you have already seen – it is not about learning for the first time.

### A.1.1 Final revision programme

At the start of your final revision schedule (during the Christmas Vacation for Semester 1 exams, and during the Easter Vacation and at the end of the taught element of the programme for Semester 2 exams) you must get organised, and the best way to do this is to devise a revision timetable. Plan your time carefully, give yourself definite objectives for each session, revise actively, test yourself regularly, make notes, and practise problem solving. Use revision sessions to study topics you have worked on before, as revision is simply the process of reminding you of topics and techniques previously understood. You will appreciate how well-organised notes will help you during your revision. Write out important definitions, proofs, formulae and equations, checking them against your notes. Re-work previously solved problems without looking at your previous solution, then attempt questions that you have not looked at before. Make special revision notes for quick reference on cards to keep in your pocket and charts to hang on the wall of your study room. Practise your examination technique.

### A.1.2 Examination practice

You should be familiar with the modules and syllabuses you will be examined in at the end of Semesters 1 and 2. Analyse recent examination papers. Work out how long you have for each question and become familiar with the style of questions.

During your ordinary study periods you will no doubt have attempted many questions but will have seldom given yourself strict time restrictions. In examinations the timing of your answers to questions is vitally important. Practice answering examination questions in mock examination conditions, allowing yourself only the normal available examination time and the equipment you are permitted to take into the examination room. To obtain 'mock examination' practice save one or two complete examination papers so that you can use them as final test papers 'against the clock'.

Examination nerves are common and understandable but will be lessened if you have followed a sensible course of study and revision. You may not do yourself justice if you have a poor examination technique. The hints on the next page should help you to tackle the examination with greater confidence.

## A.2 Examination techniques

### A.2.1 Before the day

Before the actual day of your examination, make sure you know:

- the date, day, time and venue of each paper for your course;
- how to get to the examination venue if it is not well known to you;
- your candidate number;
- the telephone number of the Student Office.

Prepare any equipment you will need for your particular examination:

- pens which are comfortable to use;
- sharp pencils, a pencil sharpener and rubber;
- drawing instruments such as a ruler, compasses, protractor, set squares;
- University approved calculator (if allowed) and spare batteries (check that you know how to replace them quickly);
- an accurate watch or small clock.

## A.2.2 On the Day

### *Before the examination:*

Check that you have all the equipment you will need before setting off for your examination with plenty of time to spare. If you are delayed, contact the Student Office (have the telephone number with you) to explain what has happened. Arrive at the examination room early; a late start to an examination cannot be a good start and you will not be permitted to enter the examination room later than 30 minutes after its scheduled start time.

### *Just before the start:*

Listen carefully to the invigilator. There may be some changes or special instructions which you were not expecting or some errors in the paper. Fill in any details, such as your candidate number, when the invigilator instructs you to do so.

### *Reading the instructions:*

When the invigilator says that you may begin, read the instructions on your examination paper very carefully. Make sure that it is the correct examination paper and, in particular, note:

- the number of sections and questions you have to do;
- how much time you have to do them in;
- which questions (if any) are compulsory;
- what choice of questions (if any) you have;
- how to present your answers.

### *Planning your time*

Quickly calculate the length of time you should spend on each question. You will have practised doing this for past papers but make sure that you use the instructions on your actual examination paper, rather than making any assumptions. Try to allow about 10 minutes at the end for checking your paper.

### *Choosing the questions*

Read through the whole examination paper carefully, checking that you have read each page. If you have a choice of questions:

- cross out the ones you can't do;
- tick those you can definitely do;
- choose the correct number to do;
- mark the order in which you are going to attempt them, attempting your best question(s) first.

### *Answering the question*

Before you attempt to answer a question, read it all again carefully, jotting down points such as formulae and information relating to that question. These hints should help you when writing an answer.

- Plan before you write – the stress of working under time constraints in the exam room can make all your good study intentions disappear. However, this is when it is more important than ever. Take a few minutes to think and plan.
- Think about what the question is actually *asking*. What are you expected to include in your answer. What material will be *relevant*?

Underline the key words in the question; identify the main topic and discussion areas; choose a few points/arguments about which you can write; make a mini plan which puts them in order before you start writing. You can cross it through afterwards.

- Make sure that your writing is legible.
- Present your answer in a neat, logical and concise way.
- Show all your working; marks are often given for methodology as well as your answers. You should be able to refer by name to the main theorists/researchers in your topic, giving the year of their major works. You do not need to give page numbers of lengthy quotes, except in an open book exam. You do not need a reference list.
- Do not do things you are not asked for.
- If relevant, state any principles, results or formulae used and indicate your reasons for using them.
- Check any formulae you use with the formula sheet, if provided.
- Always do a rough estimate of any calculation to check that your answer is sensible.
- When using a calculator, make sure that each calculation is shown clearly in your answer and give your final answer to the required degree of accuracy.
- If you get 'stuck', re-read the question carefully to check that you have not missed any important information or hints given in the question itself.
- When you have completed your answer, re-read the question to check that you have answered all parts.

### *Examination discipline*

It is important that you try to keep to the times you have allocated to answering a question or section and that you answer the correct number of questions. If you answer less than the number of questions required you are limiting the number of marks available to you.

### *At the end*

Before handing in your examination script check that:

- any 'front sheet' is completed according to the instructions;
- every loose page is clearly marked with your candidate number, etc;
- every answer is numbered correctly;
- pages are numbered clearly and in order.

# Appendix B Guidelines for Writing Dissertations

This appendix contains guidelines on how to write a dissertation. Both Word and Latex thesis templates can be downloaded from the library website (<http://library.soton.ac.uk/thesis/templates>) and these will help to ensure that you have the correct formatting and all of the necessary elements.

## B.1. Dissertation Structure

In general, every dissertation must define the problem that motivated the project, explain why the problem is important, review previous relevant work by others (if any), describe your approach and findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations. There is no standard structure suitable for all MSc dissertations; each is unique. However, a good dissertation structure will have the following.

- A natural and logical order that leads the reader from an explanation of the problem to your conclusions and recommendations. It is not a chronological story of what you did.
- A contents page that makes clear the order and nature of discussion.
- Sections and sub-sections that reflect accurately and concisely the discussion they precede.
- Discussion and analysis that develops progressively through the dissertation. In many cases a "hierarchical" structure is appropriate, with early chapters giving a general overview and later chapters giving a more detailed discussion of specific topics.
- Minimal repetition of points.

Any detailed discussion of technicalities, for example, a description of each line of a computer program, or the listing of large amounts of data, should be placed in an Appendix (if required at all).

## B.2. Overview of Dissertation Layout

The dissertation should contain the following elements.

### 2.1 Title Page

The title page must conform exactly to the style given at the end of this document.

### 2.2 Acknowledgements Page

This is where you can thank your supervisors and sponsors for their help. You should also acknowledge anyone else who has had input to your project.

### 2.3 Contents Page

Microsoft Word can automatically create and update a table of contents (TOC). To use this you have to use heading styles for your section and subsection headers. You then create the TOC by clicking on the Table of Contents icon on the References tab.

### 2.4 Table of Figures

A table of figures or illustrations can be created in the same way as a TOC.

### 2.5 Summary Page

The summary should be no more than 300 words long.

Checklist for summary:

- Could it be understood by a non-specialist in the subject?
- Have you avoided use of technical jargon?
- Does it outline the area on which you focused?
- Does it explain the problem or issue you investigated?
- Does it explain what you did and what you found?
- Does it explain what conclusions were drawn?

## *2.6 Body of the Dissertation*

See Section 3 for suggestions on how to organise the main part of your dissertation.

## *2.7 Glossary*

If you are writing about a project that uses a large number of technical, non-standard terms or acronyms, it can be useful to include a glossary at the end of the dissertation. A glossary should contain a list of terms/acronyms and their definitions.

## *2.8 References*

References must be made to **all** the sources of information you have used. The **Harvard** style of referencing should be used, with an alphabetical reference list. There is a good guide to Harvard referencing published on the Library Website: see

[http://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content\\_id=4660789](http://library.soton.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=4660789)

Checklist for references:

- Have you indicated all sources used in your text?
- Have you included in your list of references all the references which are cited in your dissertation?

## *2.9 Appendices*

Appendices must be numbered in Roman numerals, i.e. I, II, III ...

## **B.3. Organisation of Main Body of Dissertation**

As explained in Section 1, above, there is no mandatory structure for the main body of a dissertation. Each is unique and the structure should be reviewed with your supervisor at an early stage. It could contain the following elements.

### *3.1 Introduction*

The introduction should provide some brief background information about the project sponsor organisation and the general area in which you carried out the study; a statement of the problem(s) being addressed and objectives of the project; and an indication of how your dissertation addresses the objectives (usually indicating what is included in the main chapters, including the conclusion). Normally the introduction should be fairly short.

Checklist for introduction:

- Does your introduction begin by explaining the general background to the organisation where you carried out your study and to the subject of the study?
- Are the objectives clearly stated?
- Is there a statement of the main contributions of your dissertation?

### *3.2 Background*

In order for the reader to understand the subsequent chapters, it may be necessary to describe in more detail the workings of the sponsor organisation or the problem/issue at hand (the introduction will probably only provide sufficient information to define the objectives).

Checklist for background:

- Is the background understandable to the reader with no knowledge of the organisation?

### *3.3 Review of Previous Relevant Work/Literature Review*

Your work should be put in context by including a review of relevant literature, or previous work including, where appropriate, a critical analysis of the studies described. In many cases, the methodology you choose will be based on an analysis of the alternative approaches you have found from searching the literature.

### *3.4 Methodology*

A note on your ethics approval should be included in a section entitled “Ethical approval” in the Methodology chapter. Suggested wording is either:

“Ethics approval for this research was granted, with ERGO approval number xxxxxxxxxx.”

or that

“Consideration was given to ethics approval for this research and no application to ERGO was found necessary.”

Checklist for methodology:

- Do you explain the methodology used and the reasons for choosing it?
- Are all details of your study included, such as assumptions made, data required, how data was obtained and limitations of the data?

### *3.5 Results*

Checklist for results:

- Do you explain how you treated your raw data?
- Do you explain, in clear English, what you found in your study?
- Do you provide appropriate summaries of your results, using tables and graphs wherever this is useful?
- Are all tables and graphs clear and properly labelled, and are they included only when relevant?

### *3.6 Discussion*

Checklist for discussion:

- Do you start by explaining, in clear and simple terms, what you found in your study?
- Do you discuss whether the results are as you expected, or whether they contradict previous research?
- Do you provide reasoned explanations for inconsistencies in your results, and for unexpected findings (except possibly when these differences are statistically insignificant)?

### **3.7 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Checklist for conclusions:

- Do the conclusions address the objectives listed in the introduction?
- Do they follow naturally from the discussion of findings?
- Do you draw well-reasoned conclusions from your study, and suggest further areas of research?

### *3.8 Final Checklist*

Checklist before submission:

- Have you checked spelling and page numbering?
- Have you checked that all chapters, sections and subsections are numbered?

You might ask another student to read through your report to ensure clarity of exposition.

## **B.4. Written English**

Every statement in a dissertation should be supported either by a reference to published literature or by original work (unless it is really obvious or common sense!). Where possible you should not rely on Internet sources, as they are generally not subject to a review process. You should write everything in your own words, even if you are struggling with written English, to avoid plagiarism.

A dissertation should be in formal academic style, which means:

- complete sentences
- no contractions, e.g. "it isn't"
- avoid sensational and over-descriptive language, e.g. "nice", "terrible", "stupid"
- avoid colloquialisms and slang, e.g. "okay", "right as rain"
- no imprecise statements, e.g. "Hopefully,..."

The present tense should generally be used. Do not use "I" or "you".

Good styles are "We propose ..."; "Preliminary analysis suggests ..."; "Franklin and Boyd (1998) describe..."

(N.B. this document is not written in a formal style!)

Spelling should be in UK English. Words to watch out for are: centre, behaviour, travelling (and similar doubled letters).

An excellent reference on punctuation is "The Penguin Guide to Punctuation" by Trask RL (Penguin Reference, RRP £6.99).

## **B.5. Length of the Dissertation**

The length of the dissertation will vary, but the standard will normally be in the range of 15,000 to 20,000 words, excluding appendices. This is about 45-50 typed pages using Arial size 12 font and 1.5 line spacing. You are likely to be penalised for significantly exceeding the above limit, and in any case there is no merit in making the dissertation longer than it should be.

The length should be commensurate with presenting a systematic, readable, but concise account of the work done. Superfluous material and verbiage will attract minimal marks whatever the length of the project.

Conversely, it is not advisable to submit a dissertation which is significantly shorter than 15,000 words, as you risk not including enough quality material in your dissertation to achieve a pass.

## **B.6. Formatting Requirements**

All dissertations reports must be in Calibri 11 font typescript at 1.5 line spacing, using both sides of the paper. Double spacing may be used at a candidate's discretion for parts involving formulae. The paper should be A4 size (210 x 297 mm) of 80gsm or higher. Exemption from the use of this size paper can only be granted by the Faculty in cases where the subject matter of the project renders the A4 size unsuitable.

Sufficient margins should be made on both edges to enable a binder to guillotine the pages if necessary - the left-hand margin being not less than 38 mm (1.5").

Pages should be numbered consecutively. Chapters and sections within each chapter should be numbered to help with cross-referencing. Tables and diagrams must be numbered serially in typescript. Pencilled diagrams and page numbers are not acceptable.

Any diagrams, tables, or exhibits on oversize sheets should be folded so that they are least 7 mm (0.25") from the right-hand edge of the text sheets. Large diagrams, pamphlets etc., unsuitable for binding in the text, may be accommodated in a pocket in the back cover of the dissertation.

## **B.7. Submitting Your Dissertation**

An electronic copy of your dissertation should be uploaded to the Blackboard site MATH6001. The electronic copy will be processed by Turnitin, to check for plagiarism.

### **B.8. Late Submission**

If you are having trouble meeting the deadline for submission, you should contact your project supervisor and Programme Director as soon as possible, and definitely BEFORE the deadline. You should also complete an Extension Request form.

### **B.9. Example Title Page for dissertations**

See below for an example of a title page. Brackets are used to show where there is information that you need to enter and should be removed when this has been done.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The University of Southampton</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Academic Year (20XX/20YY)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Faculty of Social Sciences</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>School of Mathematical Sciences</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MSc Dissertation</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Dissertation Title)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Your name)</p> <p>A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the MSc in (your degree programme)</p> <p>This project is entirely the original work of (your name). Where material is obtained from published or unpublished works, this has been fully acknowledged by citation in the main text and inclusion in the list of references.</p> <p>Word Count: xxxxx words</p>
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## Appendix C- Assessment of Mathematical Sciences MSc dissertations

MSc dissertations are to be awarded a mark according to the Common Assessment Scale summarised below. The scale consists of marks, from 0 to 100, and a scale, corresponding to Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail. This scale will be applied to various aspects of the dissertation using the overall criteria, 'Content' and 'Exposition' as appropriate.

**Table 1 Common Assessment Scale**

Mark	7.14 Scale	Description
80- 100	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>  <b>Distinction</b>	Presents novel models/methods and quantitative/qualitative analysis logically and coherently; contains original/critical thoughts; shows outstanding modelling/analytical skills, shows evidence of extensive literature review. Presents material that adds a new perspective or new knowledge or a significant practical value. Draws an appropriate conclusion from modelling and analysis. The writing style is excellent.
70 - 79	<b>VERY GOOD</b>  <b>Distinction</b>	Presents appropriate models/methods and quantitative/qualitative analysis logically and coherently; contains original/critical thoughts; shows a thorough grasp of concepts, and uses numerical/simulation/statistical results or examples which are much beyond the references to illustrate points and justify arguments. Draws an appropriate conclusion from modelling and analysis. The writing is clear and grammatically correct.
60 - 69	<b>GOOD</b>  <b>Merit</b>	Presents correct models/methods and quantitative/qualitative analysis; shows good use of references and additional reading; shows appropriate and interesting use of examples, with material competently organised and presented; draws a correct conclusion from the modelling and analysis. The writing is reasonably clear and does not contain serious grammatical errors.
50 - 59	<b>PASS</b>	Models and analysis are mostly correct but contain some minor errors which do not affect the conclusion; uses reading material and references correctly but there is a tendency of presenting facts without critique or logical structure and without development of the argument. The writing is basic but mostly clear, it contains grammatical errors but not seriously affect the reading.
0 - 49	<b>FAIL</b>	Models or analysis contains serious errors. Work lacks cohesion and flow. Demonstrates some knowledge of modelling/statistics but concepts and techniques are not explained sufficiently well to convince assessor that there is full understanding. Some attempt at tackling the question or topic but seriously lacking in content and/or ability to organise thought. Writing is unclear and ungrammatical.