Maths and Statistics: Part C and projects

October 2017
Part C and Projects

http://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/current_students/bammath/course_handbooks

- *Maths and Statistics Syllabus and Synopses for Part C.*

http://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/current_students/bammath/projects

- *Part C Dissertations in Statistics: Guidance Notes*

  The notes include: information about how much work, how much supervision, submission information, where to look for writing guides, referencing, **the need to avoid plagiarism**, …

  We’ll go over some of these things in this talk.
Projects

Part C = 8 units in total

Dissertation = 2 units
16 lecture course = 1 unit

So the project is \( \frac{2}{8} = 25\% \) of Part C.

So approx 25% of your effort in your 4th year should be on your dissertation.
Projects

A project

- is good for your education – a chance to do a substantial piece of work
- is a contrast to a written exam
- shows you what it is like to work on something which doesn't have a short answer
- is valuable if you plan to do research (PhD/DPhil)
- is valuable if you plan to get a job – employers will want the skills you develop during project work
- is something you may be asked about in an interview.
How much supervision?

“How much supervision? Students can expect to have 6 hours of project supervision with their supervisor spread across Michaelmas and Hilary terms. You and your supervisor can agree how best to arrange the six hours. Supervisors may strongly prefer that this supervision takes place during full term, so students should take this into account when planning their work.

Supervisors are only expected to read and comment on the draft dissertation once. It is reasonable to allow a week or so for work to be read, so it is particularly important that students take this into account when planning final writing.

Part C dissertations are independently double-marked, normally by the dissertation supervisor and one other assessor. The two marks are then reconciled . . . ”
Submission

- Two paper copies of the dissertation
- and an electronic (PDF) copy, which must be identical

must be submitted to

*The Chairman of the Examiners*

*Honour School of Mathematics and Statistics (Part C)*

*Examination Schools*

*Oxford*

by 12 noon on the Monday of week 10 of Hilary Term.

These copies should be identified by candidate number only.

Every candidate must complete and sign a declaration of authorship saying that their dissertation is their own work, except where acknowledgement is made.

The 2 paper copies, the pdf copy (on CD, or USB stick), and the declaration should be in the same envelope.
'Both copies of the dissertation should be bound. Hard bindings are not required and cheaper forms of soft binding, such as thermal binding or comb binding, are in most cases perfectly adequate. Loose leaves in ring binders or held together by paper clips, are not acceptable.'

'It's length should not exceed the equivalent of 10,000 words (excluding diagrams, ...).'

With an average number of figures (graphs), and a fairly standard page layout, 10,000 words probably corresponds to a maximum of about 40 pages.
Organisation

Supervisors may want to meet you only during term (so not including MT week 9, nor HT week 0).

But you should be doing some project work over Christmas, so you need to plan accordingly.

The submission deadline is at the start of HT week 10, so

- if you want all of week 9 to make final adjustments, and
- if your supervisor takes about a week to read your draft dissertation

then you would need to give them your draft in week 7 at the absolute latest to give them time to read and comment . . .

. . . aim for week 6! (at the latest).
Organisation

You need to:

- think ahead and plan your project work carefully
- discuss possible plans with your supervisor at an early stage.

Remember that your supervisor may not be able to fit in with your preferred timetable – they have lots of other work to do – so it is important that you discuss with them.

You should have contacted your supervisor already: if not, you should do this as soon as possible.
Writing

It is the dissertation which is read by the Examiners – writing it is a substantial part of the work involved in your project.

You should put effort into presenting your work as clearly as possible.

If you have not explained your thinking clearly, then you cannot expect the reader (examiner) to understand what you are writing about.
Writing

Writing guides:
- Ehrenberg, *Writing Technical Papers or Reports*
- Katzoff, *Clarity in Technical Writing*
- Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*

Writing maths:
- London Mathematical Society, *Writing Mathematics*
- Knuth, Larrabee and Roberts, *Mathematical Writing*

See the guidance notes for full details of these references.
Libraries and other resources

In connection with your project you are welcome to

- use the departmental library
- apply for a departmental computer account.

For either of these, you need to contact

the Academic Administrator (Jan Boylan, boylan@stats.ox.ac.uk)
hannah.harrison@stats.ox.ac.uk
Libraries and other resources

I would recommend that you write your dissertation using \LaTeX:

- Intro lectures early in term – in Maths – see lecture list
- The MiKTeX distribution of \LaTeX is excellent
  http://www.miktex.org/
- You might also like the TeXworks, or Texmaker, or TeXstudio editor for preparing your \LaTeX documents.
- Guides on the web: Oetiker et al., *The Not So Short Introduction to \LaTeX*, and many others.

There are also many books, e.g. Kopka and Daly, *A Guide to \LaTeX*.

Bodleian Libraries: http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk
Information skills session in week 2 – at RSL.
Correct referencing

You must always acknowledge other people’s work or ideas in your own work.

In particular, you must do this in your dissertation.

Referencing other people’s work or ideas does not diminish the quality of your work, it enhances your work and is essential.
Plagiarism

Plagiarism is something that you must avoid.

plagiarise. take someone else’s writings or ideas and use them as if they were you own. [Oxford School Dictionary (2002)]
Plagiarism

See http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism

“Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.”

You should read the above webpage carefully, including the section on unintentional plagiarism. [More in the “Writing a dissertation” talk later this term.]
Part C candidates must submit an electronic version of their dissertation which will be screened by the program “Turnitin” for plagiarism.

In your dissertation, it must be clear what is your own work and what is someone else’s work. If you have used someone else’s work, it must be clear how you have used it.
“By the end of week 1 of Hilary Term (or earlier), it is strongly recommended that you give a sample chapter of your dissertation to your supervisor and ask them for feedback on your work. In particular, this would be a good time to have a discussion about avoiding plagiarism (unless you have already discussed this).”