

Mathematical Institute

Mini-Projects Guidance for Students

1. What is a Mini-Project?

Mini-projects are commonly used for courses involving elements of programming, computing packages or data sets where it is felt that a timed, paper-based assessment would not be appropriate. The format of the mini-project can vary between courses and might include a computation or written report.

In the Honour School of Mathematics Part C/OMMS a mini-project is the assessment for a 16-hour lecture course which carries the weight of one unit.

2. Length, Style and Presentation of Mini-Projects

Students are expected to spend 3–4 days working on a mini-project, though further preparation and revision may be needed beforehand. Either one mini-project may be set, or you may be given a choice between two or asked to do two out of three "tasks" to be carried out. Any task will have a coherent goal, rather than be like a set of examination questions. Projects will have some open-ended aspect, rather than simply requiring solutions to some number of problems, aiming to test your understanding of more than just the standard bookwork.

Since the mini-projects have to be written within a fairly short period of time, they should be typed and submitted in the format set out below:

- Your submission should be clearly written in sentences with appropriate punctuation, display of formulae, appropriate use of 'Definition', 'Lemma', 'Theorem', 'Proof', etc.
- You should begin with a brief statement of the overall goal of the project, and finish with a conclusion of what you have achieved (or needed to assume) and comment on what other questions your work might lead to.
- Your work should be numbered on each page and provided as a PDF.
- It is impossible to give precise guidance on length since this can vary considerably from project to project, depending on how much calculation may be needed and whether such is routine. It is unlikely, however, that a project can be completed in less than five pages, and will more often be in the 10-15 pages range.

3. Qualitative Criteria for Mini-Projects

The USM mark awarded for a mini-project, is assigned according to the following qualitative criteria.

70-100 marks The candidate has demonstrated an excellent understanding of almost all the material covered with a commensurate quality of presentation, and has completed almost all of the assignment satisfactorily - further subdivided by;

90-100 marks The candidate has shown originality or insight that goes beyond a basic completion of the task set.

80-89 marks The work submitted shows a near-perfect completion of the task in hand, but does not meet the additional requirements above, or does but has defects in presentation.

70-79 marks The work submitted is of a generally high order, but may have minor errors in content and/or deficiencies in presentation.

60-69 marks The candidate has demonstrated a good or very good understanding of much of the material, and has completed most of the assignment satisfactorily.

50-59 marks The candidate has demonstrated an adequate understanding of the material and an adequate ability to apply his or her understanding.

40-49 marks The work submitted, while sufficient in quantity, suffers from sufficient defects to show a lack of adequate understanding or ability to apply results.

30-39 marks The candidate, while attempting a significant part of the mini-project, has displayed a very limited knowledge or understanding at the level required.

0-29 marks The candidate has either attempted only a fragment of a mini-project or has shown an inadequate grasp of basic material.

4. 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. When you submit the work you will be required to confirm that the work is entirely your own, except where otherwise indicated. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence. See

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1>

for further guidance on academic good practice, including referencing.