



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Joule Physics Laboratory

Final Year BSc Students

PROJECT GUIDE

2026-2027

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1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

The Objectives of the Project

There are several related objectives to project work:

1. To learn and gain knowledge and experience by working independently, with appropriate guidance.
2. To undertake practical and theoretical work to achieve a specified goal.
3. To take part in the planning and management of the project to achieve the required objectives.
4. To develop the skills and abilities defined in the strategy of approach below.

In total, these simulate the professional activities of a graduate physicist.

The Strategy of Project Studies

To meet these objectives, there is a well-accepted route to problem solving which you are advised to adopt. This route is detailed below.

1. Problem identification and specification.
2. Analysis of available knowledge, techniques, constraints and resources.
3. Synthesis of the relevant components of this information to indicate possible routes to problem solution.
4. Evaluation of these possible routes, leading to a decision on the optimum route to be adopted.
5. Production of a planned timetable of goals to be reached at various stages in the activity to meet the problem specification.
6. Execution of this plan with modifications made to overcome obstacles that were not foreseen at the outset.
7. Careful recording, at each stage of the Project, of the results achieved and evaluation of their importance.
8. The achievement of the planned goal.
9. Comparison of the achievement reached with the initial specification and the planned achievement.
10. Communication of the entire Project activity for assessment in terms of the report requirement and the project interview.

You are expected to keep a blackboard Journal log to record ALL work undertaken, results obtained, ideas, etc. This journal must be available to the supervisor(s) when required (see section [5. PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT](#) for more details).

Criteria for Project Assessment

To give you some guidance as to the level of achievement that we expect for different categories of mark, a detailed list of the criteria used for assessing all the different elements of your project are given the Marking Criteria folder on blackboard. These criteria are briefly summarised in the Assessment Guidance documents, and the overall breakdown of how assessment components contribute to the final module mark is given [later in this guide](#).

2. ALLOCATION OF PROJECT AND PROJECT SUPERVISION

Allocation

The project allocation process starts with the circulation of documents outlining the expertise of staff. Working from this list, you should decide on an area of physics that interests you and then discuss this with the appropriate member of staff. Once you have decided which project you want to do, this **must** be agreed with the member of staff concerned, who will then become the project supervisor.

To formalize this process, you will be required, in consultation with their supervisor, to fill out the **Project Specification Form**. This must be signed by yourself, by the supervisor - as confirmation that the project specification has been discussed and agreed, and finally by a second supervisor - whose role is: a) to confirm that the project is realistic and suitable, and b) to be an alternative point of contact for the student in the event that the supervisor becomes unavailable at any time.

Once completed, this form should be submitted to Dr Graham McDonald, via week 1 blackboard folder.

KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR FILES.

Supervision

The primary function of the Supervisor is to define, introduce and provide you with advice throughout the project period. This will include encouragement and aid in defining, planning, executing and reporting the project. You will be expected to make regular, weekly contact with the supervisor to discuss progress and future plans. **At least once every two weeks there must be a more formal meeting** – the date of which is recorded. A summary of the meeting must be recorded in your project journal, along with comments from your supervisor.

It is your responsibility to arrange and attend these formal meetings, and failure to do so will have implications regarding the final supervisor mark obtained.

It is particularly important that, as the project progresses, you become self-reliant and show as much initiative as possible. This includes the acceptance of self-responsibility and input of initiative and effort, since it is an assessment criterion. The Supervisor will carefully monitor this process of disengagement.

3. SAFETY AND ASSESSMENT OF RISKS IN FINAL YEAR PROJECTS

PROJECTS CANNOT COMMENCE UNTIL A RISK ASSESSMENT FORM HAS BEEN SUBMITTED ON BLACKBOARD (via the week 2 folder)

The importance of safety in both the home and work environments is reflected in legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and the Electricity at Work Act. The responsibility for safety falls both upon the employer and employee performing the work.

As a student you are not strictly classed as an employee, but the University does expect you to acquaint yourself with any hazards inherent in the work you do and to minimize any danger to yourself and others. In the workplace after graduation, you will certainly be expected to become familiar with and to observe safety legislation. This could easily include performing a risk assessment of your area of work. If an accident occurs, either to you or to someone else, it is vitally important to be able to prove that the question of safety had been seriously addressed and that all reasonable steps to minimize the risks had been taken.

The purpose of completing the risk assessment is to identify hazards and to quantify the level of risk they pose. The assessment then identifies what existing control measures are in place and allows for additional measures to be identified if required. ***You must include an assessment of risks as part of your project documentation.***

How to fill in the project risk assessment form

Additional information and the form can be found on Blackboard (see the week 2 folder).

The risk assessment form should be completed with the help of your supervisor. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure the risk assessment is suitable and sufficient, and that risk assessments are reviewed should any significant changes to the project be made.

Complete the cover sheet and Initial Risk Assessment, as this will help you decide which extra assessment pages may be required depending on the nature of your project.

Should this assessment return ‘Adequate’ risk ratings for the proposed work, and your supervisor agrees, then no further action is required.

If your project consists only of software development, computing, or theory, then you must make this clear on the initial risk assessment document by writing for example **SOFTWARE ONLY**. Other project students must complete all the remaining relevant sections.

Once completed, this form should be submitted to Dr Graham McDonald, via the week 2 Blackboard folder.

KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR FILES.

If, during the year, you have any queries or reservations about the safety aspects of your project, the **SEE School Health and Safety Helpdesk** (helpdesk-hsw@salford.ac.uk) will also be pleased to discuss them with you.

4. ETHICAL APPROVAL

THIS MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE THE PROJECT STARTS

See [Appendix I](#) and Blackboard for more detail and the app link.

You are required by University regulations to complete an on-line **Ethical Approval Form**, in consultation with your supervisor. This, in most cases, will be to formally confirm a review has taken place of the ethical aspects of the activity so ethical clearance can be obtained. As most physics projects do not involve human participants, human tissue/fluids/DNA, animals, or potentially hazardous material, the answers to the questions will usually be 'no'.

5. PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT

Allocation of Time to Project Work

You will be expected to spend an appropriate amount of time on project work over the two trimesters. This should average out to **not less than 8 hours per week**. You are advised to look at your teaching timetable and pre-allocate, i.e. plan, a schedule of when you will work on your project.

However, bear in mind the balance between the project and the rest of your course. The relative weighting in marks between project and examinations should also be a guide. Divide your time and effort in proportion.

Project Journal

Throughout the project period, you will be responsible for keeping a record/diary of your work. A project journal is provided for this purpose. It is found on the blackboard module site and is accessible to both yourself and your supervisor.

Your project journal should contain a proper record in a chronological format of all relevant information, recorded in appropriate detail and clarity. The project journal should provide details of: **scientific papers read, experimental details, coding design/reasons for modification, data obtained, and any other information that is deemed important to the project** (such as evidence of calculations and reasons for taking particular courses of action).

Your project journal should also include details of **each meeting with your supervisor, including date, progress reported and agreed details of future work**. Your supervisor will give you verbal and written feedback on your progress at these meetings and, where appropriate, within the project journal itself.

The project journal will be inspected: weekly by your supervisor, at the progress interview (at the end of trimester 1), and at your informal interview with the External Examiner. **Your journal and a supervisor mark will form 30% of the overall mark for the project.**

6. PROGRESS REPORTING

You will be expected to report your progress to a panel of physics staff during the last week of trimester 1 (dependent on timing of exams). Some **slides must be submitted on blackboard by the specified deadline** (5-10 slides, including a title page, is an estimate), for you to give a **5 minute overview** of your project. Do not significantly overrun this time allocation. You should describe the aims of the project, background research, progress to date and plan of work to be carried out in trimester 2 with an approximate timescale. Your talk will be followed by 10-15 minutes of questions from a panel of staff. You **must** ensure that you are available to attend your presentation and interview during this week!

Each staff member will consider the following points to award their mark and the collection of these marks, along with their written comments made, will guide the determination of a final single mark. Individual staff will mark your contribution according to your coverage of the following **mark criteria**:

1. Aims, objectives, background. Visual presentation
2. Progress. Constraints. Trimester 2 workplan/timescale
3. Knowledge/understanding of subject. Ability to answer questions

A mark will be allocated forming **20% of the overall mark for the project** (see [here](#) for a module mark breakdown).

7. FINAL REPORT

A copy of your final report **must** be submitted via blackboard towards the end of trimester 2, which will be followed by a presentation and questions by a staff panel. A mark will be allocated forming **50% of the overall mark for the project**.

Remember that there are penalties for late submission!

Details for the preparation and submission of the project report are given in [Appendix II](#). You should consult your supervisor about the format of your report. But, as a general principle, a report is like a longer version of a formal laboratory report. It should be aimed at a reader with a good scientific background, but someone who knows only a little about the details of your work (such as an External Examiner). Do not include elaborate detail in the main body of the report, but you may include it in appendices if you wish (**appendices will not be included in the 6000 word limit**).

For theoretical/computational projects; calculations, program listings etc. are generally put into an appendix, although short sections of programs, for example important algorithms, may be included in the main text. ***If found necessary, don't overlook using appendices to include a full account of the work that you have undertaken!*** Appendices are often used to present further detailed results and even extended works (or analyses) that you felt unable to include within the 6000 words of main text.

Staff will mark your report according to your coverage of the following **mark criteria**:

1. 'Knowledge and understanding of subject' (40%), e.g. aims/objectives, subject knowledge and understanding and research undertaken
2. 'Analysis, discussion and conclusions' (40%), e.g. correctness, thoroughness, comparison with previous works, conclusions, future work
3. 'Presentation' (20%), e.g. fluency, writing style, structure, grammar, spelling, referencing

The project report could **typically** include the following sections, but if you are conducting a theoretical or computer-based project then discuss the layout with your supervisor:

Title page, Abstract and Acknowledgements

Contents

A listing of the remaining sections of your report.

Introduction

The background to the project, why the project was undertaken, what it set out to achieve.

Theory and Literature Review

The established theory of the subject and previous work on which the project is based. This section will generally not contain any original material.

Experimental/Procedure

The general details of what you did in your project. In the case of computational or theoretical projects, development details would go here.

Results and Analysis

This important section will present the results of your work, possibly in the forms of tables and/or graphs of data, and any analyses. In the case of development projects, especially computational, this section should indicate what the developed system does, with screen dumps wherever possible.

Discussion/Conclusions

This section should discuss, summarise and conclude what was achieved (with reference to the original aims) **and** suggest further development work that could be undertaken.

References & Bibliography

In an appropriate format.

Appendices

If appropriate, include program listings, any fine detail, large amounts of raw data, etc. If you have difficulties remaining below the 6000-word limit for the main text, then further work undertaken may also be given in the appendices. Note that you cannot assume that the examiners will read appendices in detail, but here you can provide evidence of claims made in the main text and further details of the work undertaken.

8. PLAGIARISM AND USE OF AI

THE UNIVERSITY TAKES PLAGIARISM VERY SERIOUSLY, it is very important that you do not plagiarise, inadvertently or otherwise.

What is Plagiarism?

The definition of plagiarism is the taking of work or an idea and passing it off as your own. This includes any text, diagrams, tables, graphs etc. that have been previously published (this includes information from internet). The most common types of plagiarism include (but are not restricted to):

- Copying another individual's work, with or without their consent/knowledge, and presenting this as one's own work.
- Quoting or summarizing the work of another author without acknowledgement and appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is avoided by:

- Acknowledging clearly and fully by referencing work and ideas that originate from other people. This includes the source of copied diagrams.
- Making sure that the dissertation is written in your own words.

Information regarding the **formatting of references** and bibliography is given in the T1 week 3 Library Workshop Talk and within the T1 week 3 Project in Physics blackboard folder. The university's standard referencing style can be used, but it is not commonly used in physics publications. Details of this university-adopted style can be found at: <https://www.salford.ac.uk/skills>

The blackboard submission sites include a declaration confirming that the work submitted is your own, with all sources duly acknowledged.

Assignment 1

By submitting my work here I declare that:

- this work is my own
- the work of others used in its completion has been duly acknowledged
- experimental or other investigative results have not been falsified
- I have read and understand the University Policy in the Conduct of Assessed Works (Academic Misconduct Procedure).

Anyone suspected of plagiarism will have his/her report run through the plagiarism detection software: **Turnitin**. If you are found guilty of plagiarism, the University will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may result in expulsion from the University. The **Policy on the Conduct of Assessed Work** (Academic Misconduct) is available at the main University website at:

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/topics/admin-essentials/academic-misconduct>

Use of AI for assessed work

The general **Physics GenAI Guidance** document is included in the blackboard Module Information folder. While use of AI tools is encouraged for learning purposes, the Physics GenAI Guidance document details:

- How you can use GenAI
- Constraints on checking outputs
- What you must not do

In the course of your project work, you may thus use GenAI – but only in the manners stated within the Physics GenAI Guidance document. A key point is that GenAI must not be used to generate content that you pass as your own original work – see also the University GAI Policy for further clarifications: [download here](#).

The University does not permit any *unauthorised or undirected use of AI* (e.g. large language models such as ChatGPT) in your work; This is clearly defined as academic misconduct. The University defines a range of examples of types of academic misconduct. These include **Falsification of Authorship**, such as:

1. Unauthorised use of Gen AI. Using Generative 'Artificial Intelligence' (Gen AI) or another computer-based process to generate work which is then submitted in whole or in part towards credit or award. This could include work which is written using AI where that use is not permitted (even when subsequently edited by the student). It could include the use of paraphrasing software and technology that rewrites text - even

when subsequently edited by the student.

2. Using means to disguise or alter the content of an assessment. This might include the use of 'text in an image' (that is text in an image file which may disguise it from text matching software), paraphrasing software or other means used to disguise part or all the content of an assessment in any way which could give an unfair advantage. These actions are aggravating factors in other forms of academic misconduct and could be considered misconduct in their own right.

9. VISIT OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER

The External Examiners may visit individual students to discuss their project work towards the end of the second trimester. This is not a formal interview or an examination. Its purpose is for the External Examiners to familiarise themselves with the subject, aims and some of the results of your project. This will help them in making their assessments of the final reports in preparation for the final Examining Board in June.

You will be expected to provide an abstract (of approximately 300 words) in advance, that gives an overview of your project. At the interview you may bring any other information that you feel will be of use when discussing your project.

10. THE PROJECT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Formal oral presentations on the work of the project and the project report will take place very shortly after the end of the final examinations. You **must ensure that you are available to attend your presentation and questions during this week!** This event will play a major part in the assessment of your project.

Presentations and questions involve a project panel that will include your supervisor and other members of academic staff (who will not have come into contact with you during the course of the project). In this way, a more objective assessment can be achieved of your effort and performance.

You should approach this presentation in a professional manner, as though you were promoting a product or idea, or attending a job interview. Approximately, 15-20 minutes are allocated for the event. You will be expected to give a **5-minute presentation (video or 'live')**. You will then be asked questions by members of the panel. The questions will not be designed to trip you up, but merely to determine your depth of understanding of the project topic.

Marks will be given as described in the proforma in Section [11. Allocation of Marks](#). If a video presentation is prepared, this should be in MP4 format and can be recorded with voice over in Microsoft Powerpoint. For help on this, see the Library Skills subsection "[Narrated Presentations and Video submissions](#)".

Briefly, staff will mark your presentation according to your overall coverage of the following mark criteria:

1. **'Understanding of Project Content'**, e.g. contribution to subject, use of background literature, consistency and organisation, completeness/ appropriateness of detail
2. **'Visual Presentation'**, e.g. structure organisation/layout, grammar/ punctuation/ spelling, easy to follow?
3. **'Ability to Answer Questions'**, e.g. confidence, quality of answers, relevance of responses

Full details of Oral Presentation marking criteria appear on blackboard within the 'Mark Criteria' folder. The same folder also details the marking criteria breakdown of Progress Reporting, Final Report and Supervisor marking.

11. ALLOCATION OF MARKS

The marks available for Project work are allocated in particular ways as outlined by the example proforma below. A Panel will be formed from physics staff, two of which will be designated 'Readers' of your final written report. Note: this is only given as a guide to show how marks are allocated.

		Supervisor	Readers	Panel	Overall
Progress Report	Progress Reporting			/100	
	TOTAL %				/20%
Supervisor mark	Journal record (written)	/20			
(informed by entries in Journal)	Initiative	/20			
	Effort	/20			
	Progress made relative to apparent difficulty	/40			
	TOTAL %				/30%
Dissertation	Written report		/60		
	Oral presentation and questions			/40	
	TOTAL %				/50%

12. FURTHER INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

This document has attempted to outline what is required to successfully complete your final year project. If you have any questions relating to the operation of the module ask your supervisor or contact the module coordinator Dr Graham McDonald.

APPENDIX I – Ethical Approval Process

The ethical approval online process should be completed with the help of your supervisor. The link to the app is found [here](#).

Note that taught projects/dissertations are classified as either Type 1, 2 or 3 in terms of their ethical implications. These categories are defined as follows:

- Type 1:** routine project work. No further ethical approval beyond this form required following Supervisor sign-off.
- Type 2:** routine project work involving human/animal subjects/tissue where ethical issues have been considered and appropriately addressed. Ethical approval will be required from both the Project Supervisor and a member of the Ethical Approval Panel for Taught Programmes.
- Type 3:** projects where there is a significant ethical dimension. Ethical approval will be required from both the Project Supervisor and two members of the Ethical Approval Panel for Taught Programmes. This process is managed by the R&E Research Centres team.

All students must complete all the following before starting a project:

- Project Specification Form
- Risk Assessment Form
- Ethical Approval Application (on-line)

REMEMBER: YOU CANNOT START YOUR PROJECT BEFORE THESE FORMS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED/SUBMITTED

APPENDIX II – Preparation of Project Report

1. A copy of your report (in .pdf format) must be submitted via blackboard. It should have a header page prepared according to the template available on blackboard with your name, project title, year of study and the name of your degree programme. The template will appear within the “T2 Weeks 12,13 - Your final Report & Presentation” blackboard folder. Note also that the report is examinable material and becomes the property of the University.
2. The length, **not** including abstract, references and appendices, should be not greater than **6,000 words**. It must be stressed that this is an upper limit, not a target; there will be no advantage in submitting a report that is longer than is necessary to fully describe your project work.
3. Each copy should be typewritten (**12 point Times New Roman, Aptos, Calibri or Arial font for body of text and 14 point for titles, section headings, etc**) on plain A4 size portrait pages. The report should be presented in clear and well-constructed English, written in the 3rd person (similar to laboratory reports).
4. The first page should be a **Title Page**, including the date and the words: “This report is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of B.Sc. with Honours in Physics.” The second page should comprise an **ABSTRACT** (maximum 250 words) that concisely states the objectives and results obtained. This may be a revised version of the one submitted earlier for the External Examiners’ visit.
5. The third page may contain an **Acknowledgment** of the part played by those who assisted with the progress of the project.
6. The **MAIN REPORT** (maximum 6,000 words). This should be a self-contained document that chronicles the work done and the achievements of the project. In addition to an introduction and statement of the aims of the project, it should contain a discussion of the possible methods of achievement of those aims and a description of the proposed solution including, for example, the equipment needed and used. The complete software or experimental design of the work undertaken should be described, the results obtained evaluated, and conclusions drawn and expressed, and you should make clear what part of the report refers to your own work and what is summarising previously available data or theoretical derivations.
7. The report is recommended to be **1.5 or double line spaced** for easy reading. The appendices and supplementary material can be single spaced if you wish.
8. Include a list of **REFERENCES** to previously published work or other communications. Each research paper, book, diagram or other source of information (e.g. manufacturer's data) that has been referred to in your report **must** be referenced in the text. Remember to give credit to all previously available data on your topic. References should be listed in order of their appearance in the text, at the end of your report. Full details of referencing styles are given in the **T1 week 3 Library Workshop Talk** and within the T1 week 3 Project in Physics blackboard folder. Further information on getting to grips with the core academic skills needed in assessment can also be found on this site: [Supporting students to develop academic skills](#).
9. Pages must be **numbered**. Figures, graphs, tables and photographs should be **numbered** and placed at the appropriate point in the report. With the advances of technology, recent reports have tended to include an excess of photographs and diagrams (often in colour) that do not add materially to the presentation. Do not get carried away with technology unless it adds significantly to your report.

APPENDIX III – Project Dates and Deadlines

IMPORTANT PROJECT DATES**w/c Monday 14th September 2026 (week 1)**

Confirm project details and supervisor. Start completing the following documents:

Project Specification form (available in blackboard) + **Risk Assessment** form (available in blackboard) + **Ethics App** (available on-line) + **Project Plan**

Friday 18th September 2026 16:00 (end of week 1)

Deadline for submission of **Project Specification** form (to confirm project and supervisor)

w/c Monday 21st September 2026 (week 2)

Meeting with supervisor to check the following:

Ethics Application submitted.

Risk Assessment form to be completed and submitted to blackboard.

Project plan to be discussed.

Friday 25th September 2026 16:00 (end of week 2)

Deadline for submission of **Ethics and Risk Assessment**.

w/c Monday 5th October 2026 (week 4)

Formal meeting with supervisor to discuss draft **Full Project Plan**, including timescales, full set of aims and objectives, and synopsis of background work done to date.

Friday 9th October 2026 16:00 (end of week 4)

Deadline for submission of **Project Plan** to Journal.

Wednesday 9th December 2026 16:00 (week 13)

Deadline for submission of **Progress Presentation** slides to blackboard Assessment folder **and** **Trimester 2 Action Plan** to your Journal.

w/c Monday 7th December 2026 (week 13 – after submission of slides)

Oral Presentation of Progress and Questions - marks will be allocated. You will be expected to demonstrate progress made; your project Journal must be up to date. You **must** ensure that you are available to attend your presentation during this week!

Friday 12th March 2027 16:00 (T2 teaching week 8, timetabling week 26)

Deadline for **Project Abstract** to be submitted to blackboard (for External Examiners' visit).

w/c Monday 22nd March 2027 (provisionally T2 teaching week 10, timetabling week 28)

Formal meeting with supervisor to discuss **draft copy of project report. Visit of External Examiners** (*week of visit to be confirmed and schedule provided once date is agreed*).

Monday 19th April 2027 16:00 (T2 teaching week 12, timetabling week 32)

Deadlines for: submission of **Project Report** to blackboard Assessment folder **and** submission of completed **Journal** for marking.

w/c Monday 26th April 2027 (T2 teaching week 13: anticipated as Thursday and Friday, exact dates to be determined when examination timetable is known). Oral Presentation & Questions.

You **must** ensure that you are available to attend your presentation during this week!