

Final Year Project (FYP) guidelines for students



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As a student at the University of Leeds, you will be encouraged to develop skills that will enable you to carry out self-directed research activity. All undergraduate students will use these skills to carry out an independent, but supervised, piece of research in their final year.

This self-directed piece of work is seen as the pinnacle of your academic achievement, and gives you the opportunity to consolidate the skills you have acquired throughout your programme of study. It will also have an effect on your own employability, giving you experiences and skills that are valued by employers.

The Final Year Project (FYP) allows you to further your interest in a particular topic by developing your own research question in discussion with a supervisor, and then designing and reporting on your own research and its outcomes. It gives you the opportunity to manage your own project, and make a contribution to the research in an area of your choice.

Your project may take many forms, e.g. a website, a community-based project, an empirical study involving data collection, a dissertation or an artefact, but will be referred to in this document as the Final Year Project (FYP).

Below you will find details describing the main characteristics of an FYP, followed by more specific information about supervision and assessment.

General characteristics of the Final Year Project:

The FYP is a significant part of your degree course and this is generally reflected in the number of credits it represents; this is indicated within the module catalogue and also in the programme and module handbooks provided by each school.

You will receive research methods training to prepare you for your FYP; this will be appropriate for the different type(s) of project provided by your school. As part of this, you will be made aware of any ethical or health and safety implications of undertaking your project. Check with your supervisor as they will be able to provide you with advice on ensuring the necessary provisions are in place. You may be required to apply to a relevant Ethics Committee to undertake research involving data collection; this too will provide valuable skills for the future.

Your school will provide advice on how to select the type of project you will undertake, and on choosing a topic. You will be provided with a transparent and fair process for selecting your project, which may include selecting from a pre-determined list or generating your own ideas and developing those into a project in discussion with a supervisor, typically a member of the academic staff team teaching on your programme of study. In many cases, FYPs will be conducted independently, though there may be examples in some schools where students would undertake an FYP as a group. However, in such cases, each student would have an independent contribution to make, perhaps focusing on their own research question, particular aspects of the method or elements of data analysis. Each student will generate their own report, dissertation or other output that demonstrates achievement of the FYP's learning outcomes.

If you are a student who is returning to the University (for example from a year abroad or industrial placement), make sure you are aware of the processes for the FYP within your school, and check with them to find out what you need to do before you return to your final year.

If you are a Joint Honours student, then you will have a choice as to how you approach your project; that is, if you wish to focus on a project in one or both disciplines, or even a project that integrates both areas of study. You will then be advised on which school(s) will supervise your project.

Final Year Project supervision:

Your school will allocate you a supervisor who is familiar with the field of your research. The role of your supervisor is to act as an advisor; to help you carry out your own, independent, research project. They will expect you to make initial contact with them and to maintain this contact throughout your project, and for you to take ultimate responsibility for your research project.

There are different ways in which your supervisor may support you, including: monitoring the development of your project; providing advice on how to develop your initial ideas; recommending relevant introductory literature; and providing guidance on how to carry out your research.

You should expect to see your supervisor a minimum of four times (to discuss the project's aims and research methodology; to confirm the project plan; to monitor progress at the halfway point; to review draft sections of the final report). Schools vary in how they approach supervision and the allocation of supervisors, depending on the nature of projects available in those schools; some will expect more meetings, for example, but four meetings over the course of the project will be the minimum.

Make the most of your supervisor by adequately preparing for your meetings – have a clear idea of what you want to discuss at each meeting, and send any work or questions in advance. It is an expectation that every student will maintain a log of supervision meetings. One way to do this would be to keep a supervision diary, to note down what was discussed and agreed upon.

Final Year Project assessment:

The FYP forms an important part of your degree, and this is reflected in the number of credits it represents and therefore its potential to influence your final degree classification. Two members of academic staff will normally mark your work and then agree on a final mark. Your school will provide you with the marking criteria for your FYP; use these criteria to see what the markers will be looking for and on what basis the marks will be awarded.