Overview of the book

Chapter 1 outlines the important change in role that all students undertake when embarking upon a major project; they become both the Worker *and* the Manager. This chapter describes each role, along with some common other (not so useful) roles that people often play. The concepts outlined here are essential for the understanding of subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2 we consider in some depth the issue of personal time management. On a solo project you are put in charge of a large block of time, and you need to use it wisely. This chapter includes some tricks and well-tried advice for making the most of the time you have available, and for balancing your work commitments with the rest of your life.

Chapter 3 takes you through the vital task of setting and refining your project's aims and objectives. We look at the process from choosing a project, then making it really yours. This chapter introduces several ideas for generating and managing creative ideas, and then communicating them to others in a clearly written proposal. We then discuss how to form the project title, the definition of aims, objectives, and a hierarchy of tasks.

Chapter 4 shows the importance of setting your work in context. We consider the different types of information source that are available nowadays, along with their relative advantages and disadvantages for research. We then discuss some of the different ways of putting together a Literature Survey.

In Chapter 5 you will see how to work towards success from the outset, by establishing in advance what makes a successful outcome at each stage of the project, and by considering how to map out the use of time over the project period. By the end of this chapter you should be able to produce a firm project specification and detailed time-plan, and have a clear idea of what the final project will deliver.

Chapter 6 deals with your communications with other people during the project period. We focus on the role of the supervision, and offer hints as to how to maximise the benefits of the supervision process. There are included some points of advice about how to relate to other people whose help you may need along the way. Finally we encourage you to think about the expectations of 'readers' and 'audiences' in preparation for talks and report-writing.

Chapter 7 looks at some commonly encountered problems (such as 'getting stuck' and 'losing motivation'), and provides practical guidance and suggestions for how to solve them.

In Chapter 8 we discuss the final Report, thesis or dissertation. This chapter explains how to establish your readership, and present information in a logically ordered way to maximise the portrayal of your ideas to the reader. There is plenty of advice about how

and when to write, and some warnings of common mistakes made at this point in the project.

Chapter 9 prepares you for the viva voce (or oral) exam. We consider what the examiners are looking for, and try to give you some insight into what it is like to be an examiner. Not everyone has to go through this process, but it is good practice to be prepared to explain and defend your work through talking about it.

Finally Chapter 10 considers how you might publish the results of a successful project, and gives hints about conferences, journals and books.