



Informatics Project Proposal (IPP)

Lecture 2: MSc Project Selection Guidance

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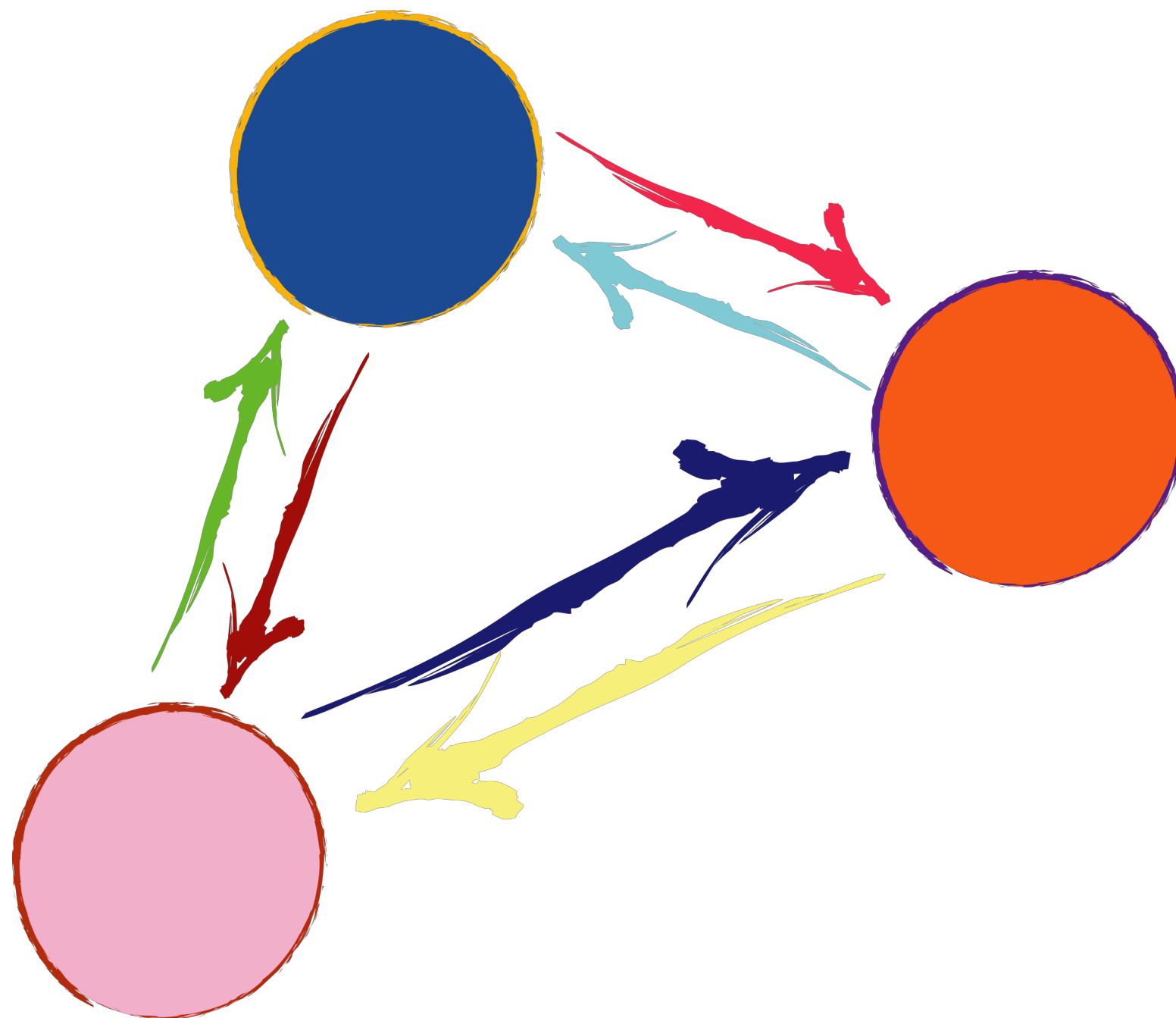
Overview

- Introduction
- Interaction of IPP & MSc Project
- MSc Project Selection Guidance
- MSc Project Allocation
- Q&A



Introduction

- MSc project is a BIG part of your degree programme
 - **Deep specialisation** in a particular area
 - Demonstration of **independent learning**
 - Exercise **research skills**
 - Culminates in a **dissertation** due in August
- Project topic is **algorithmically allocated**
 - You can express **preferences**
 - You can **self-propose** a project
- Typically students are anxious about MSc project selection at this stage of their degree programme!



Interaction of IPP & MSc Project

IPP & MSc Project

- **IPP**

- Runs in semester 2
- You prepare a plan for **YOUR** personal MSc project
- IPP supervisor is your MSc project supervisor
- IPP **marked** by **both** by IPP tutor and supervisor
 - Supervisor can **veto!**

- **MSc Project**

- Runs over the summer (June - August)
- You work on **YOUR** personal MSc project
- MSc project is **marked** by supervisor & second member of staff (potentially also by a moderator)



MSc Project Selection Guidance

Good Practice

- **Spread** your project choices widely
 - Different fields (ML, NLP, Systems, ...)
 - Different supervisors
 - Include less popular projects as backup
- **Read** the project descriptions thoroughly
- **Reach out** to project supervisors and be prepared!
 - **Questions** about project?
 - **Evidence** that you have the required background/skills!
- **Provide** reasons why you are **suitable** for the project

Bad Practice

- Select only very **popular projects**
- Select only projects from a **single supervisor**
- Select only projects from very **popular supervisors**
- Select a project **without sufficient background**
- Select only “**easy**” projects
- **Waste supervisors’ time**
 - Not read the project description
 - Not meet the prerequisites
 - Be unprepared for meeting with supervisor

Project Difficulty

- What does it **mean**?
 - easy, moderate, hard, very hard, challenging, variable
- What are “**easy**” projects?
 - May require fewer/no specific prerequisites
 - May have a lower initial passing hurdle
- Are project **grades capped** for “easy” projects?
 - No, but...
 - Requires novel additions (beyond specification) for higher marks
- What does “**variable**” mean?
 - Project has scope for adjustment (stages, objectives)

ML/NLP

- **Very high demand** for ML/NLP projects
- Albeit Edinburgh ML/NLP research groups are large
 - Staff number and project supervision workloads are **limited**
- Mosts ML/NLP projects are likely to be extremely popular
- Not everyone who selects ML/NLP projects will get one
 - Don't select ML/NLP projects only!
 - Keep less popular projects as a **backup**



Project Allocation

Project Allocation

- Allocation is done **algorithmically**
 - Supervisors have no influence on this process
- Supervisors can mark you as
 - **not suitable, suitable, highly suitable**
- You must **submit 5 projects** for which you have been marked as suitable!
- Many projects have **capacity** for >1 students

Self-proposed Projects

- Self-proposing a project is **not enough**
 - Project must also be **endorsed** by a supervisor
 - It's **your responsibility** to find a supervisor
 - If you can't find a supervisor, project will not go ahead
- Given **priority** in allocation, but...
- **No guarantee** that you will be allocated your self-proposed project
- Keep regular projects as **backup**

MSc Project Guide

- Authoritative Guide on everything related to MSc Project
- Compiled by MSc Project Organiser
 - Richard Mayr, rmayr@inf.ed.ac.uk
- <http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/diss/guide.html>

