



Frequently-Asked Questions

Co-ordinator [Dr Jim Rathmell](#).

Why wasn't I allocated my preferred topic?

The topic-allocation process is explained later in this FAQ. Most students have been allocated a topic from their list of preferred topics. There are several possible reasons why you are not allocated your preferred topic:

For those students choosing industry topics, the most likely reason is that you did not get (show) permission from the industry supervisor for doing the project. The only exception is with Transgrid topics (they asked for 2-4 students), for which the allocation was done by the project co-ordinator. In that case, you did not get the topic because your WAM was not competitive.

For other topics, you did not get it because your WAM was not competitive or you only specified a narrow range of topics.

Remember, every staff member supervises 16-17 students per year. When that limit is reached, no more student will be allocated to that staff member.

I did not ask for the topic, why I am allocated it?

In the case where you failed to get a topic from your list of preferred topics, you were allocated a topic whose supervisor is closest to your area of interest. If you don't like it, change it!

I am not satisfied with my allocated topic, what should I do?

Most of our staff members are flexible.

If you prefer an industry topic (or external project), you can still pursue permission from an industry supervisor. If you get the permission, you can negotiate with your supervisor to change your topic to the industry topic (under the same academic supervisor). Send the project co-ordinator an email to inform them of the change when you get it done.

If you want to change to a topic under the same supervisor, it is straightforward. You negotiate with your supervisor and send the project co-ordinator an email to inform them of the change when you get the consent from your supervisor.

If you want to change to a topic under a different supervisor, you need to get the consent of both old and new supervisors and fill-in the [change of topic form](#).

Note, however, that there is no second round of the topic-allocation process. You need to negotiate with your supervisor for a change.

I want to know the details of some projects, who should I contact?

For details of projects, you should contact supervisor of that project. For administration aspects of the project, you should contact the project co-ordinator.

How are the project topics are allocated?

Student preference forms are first sorted according to descending WAM. If the topic of your first preference is already allocated, or the number of students allocated to the supervisor of that topic has exceeded the maximum, your second preference is considered, and so on.... Students who missed all their preferred topics will be allocated a topic from the pool of unallocated topics. Click here for details of your [WAM](#). (Each academic staff member supervises 16-17 students).

How should I contact an industry supervisor?

Rather than simply saying that you are interested in their topics, it will be better to prepare a brief resume containing the major subjects you learned in the school, your marks and your other capabilities (the introduction can be less formal depending on the supervisor) so that the industry supervisor is better informed of who you are. Some topics may require working in other cities and you need to clarify these detailed requirements with the industry supervisor to ensure the projects are suitable for you.

Some projects are group projects. Can I choose my partner and submit the preference form as a group?

No. You need to submit the topic preference form individually and the topic allocation will be based on the individual student's WAM and NOT on the group. Allocating topics based on a group may unfairly give advantage/disadvantage to a student who is/isn't a group member. Also, when you start your work after graduation, it is rarely the case that you can choose your group members.

When semester 2 project topics will be advertised?

Look harder.

- **Do I have to work in a group for the project?**

No. You do not have to work in a group. However some staff members may mark their topic as a "group project". Choosing such a topic means you need to work in a group. Discuss this with the supervisor.

- **I have my own topic or I have found an external supervisor from a company or from other Schools in the Engineering Faculty. Do I still need a supervisor in the School?**

Yes. This means that you do need a supervisor from this School.

For a student who has his/her own topic, or who can find an external supervisor, you still need an academic staff member in this School to be your supervisor. This ensures that the project is appropriately managed to satisfaction of the standard of the School.

- **I do not need any equipment from the school, do I still need to fill the resource form?**

Yes. Think of it as a "Don't delete my enrolment" form.

You still need to fill in the resource form and submit it by the due date even though you do not need any equipment.

- **How hard/easy is it to fail the project?**

There is no quota on how many students should be failed each year. However the project is not a unit that you can pass easily without spending a proper amount of time on it. Every year, there is a significant percentage of students who fail the unit. Common reasons for failing are not doing anything until late in the semester, and an adverse plagiarism finding. Since this is a 12 credit point unit, the expectation is that you should spend on average half your weekly working hours on this unit: nominally 12 hours at university and 12 hours at home.

- **What if there is problem in my project or there is a conflict between my supervisor and me?**

If there is a problem (e.g. your work, family problem, lack of equipment, etc.) that impedes your progress with the project, you should discuss it first with your supervisor **as early as possible**. In most cases, your supervisor will be able to help you out. In the unlikely event that the problem cannot be solved by your supervisor, you should contact the project co-ordinator. However, it is **definitely not a good idea** to keep silent about the problem and expect to receive special consideration in marking for it. Such special consideration is rarely approved.

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