BSc Speech Sciences
BSc Speech Communication
BSc (Intercalated) Speech Sciences and Communication

SPSC4901 FULL UNIT BSc PROJECT
SPSC4902 HALF UNIT BSc PROJECT

BSc PROJECT GUIDE

For projects to be completed in session 2012/2013

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INTRODUCTION

The project is a final year unit (or half unit where allowed) that you start working on in the previous year. It provides you with first-hand involvement in the process of research, and an opportunity to choose a topic that you are interested in to investigate in some detail, under the guidance of one or more members of staff.

BRIEFING MEETING for year 3 BSc Speech Sciences Students

At the initial briefing meeting (**Wednesday 23 November 1pm)** you will be given an introduction to the unit. You will also hear about the final-year "Option" half unit. **Before this meeting you should have read through the BSc Project Guide, the Project General Information booklet, and the list of Suggested Projects and Staff Research Interests.** This meeting will be an opportunity for you to have your questions about any of the information in these documents answered.

PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION BOOKLET

This BSc Project Guide contains information specific to the BSc degree. It should be read in conjunction with the **Project General Information booklet** which gives information applicable also to the MSc Speech and Language Science projects. It sets out the procedures involved in choosing a topic, finding a supervisor, and getting the necessary ethical approval for your project.

The project booklets and much other information about the project unit are available from the web at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/psychlangsci/research/speech/SPSC_4901

The information can also be accessed from the Moodle page for SPSC4901. This allows guest access so you do not need to be enrolled.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

A project can take a number of different forms. It might involve carrying out a small experimental investigation, involving the use of laboratory and/or clinical facilities and underpinned by a review of previous work in the area. It might be a single case study relying on detailed observation of particular aspects of a single subject, again supported by a critical review of the relevant literature. The project could even consist of a detailed review of the literature in a particular field - but it would need to be critical and theoretical in its approach, and involve much more research than a long essay. A literature review project is *not* an easy option. A full-unit literature review project would need to be a substantial piece of written work involving original argument and/or a new analysis of existing data. Such projects are best suited to students who enjoy and excel at academic writing.

Previous BSc projects for 2007/9 to onwards and MSc projects for 2009/10 are accessible electronically from a link on the project webpage (see above). Earlier MSc and BSc projects are held on paper in the Chandler House library. You are strongly recommended to look at a sample of these – project supervisors will be able to recommend past projects that are both relevant and that achieved good marks.

At the end of this outline you will find a sample marksheet, along with a detailed list of criteria which we consider to be features of a typical good project, and which will be considered in the marking of your project.

FULL OR HALF UNIT (BSC SPEECH SCIENCES ONLY)

Students taking the 4 year BSc Speech Sciences have the choice of taking the project as a half or full unit. If the half-unit route is chosen, students should register at the start of year 4 for an additional half-unit option. BSc Speech Communication and Intercalated BSc Speech Science students can only take the project as a full unit.

HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I SPEND?

The project should occupy approximately the same time as other full (or half) unit courses. Students doing a **full unit** project are expected to devote about 40 half-day sessions plus private study, **300 hours in total,** to their project work.

Students doing the half unit project are expected to use 20 timetabled half-day sessions plus additional private study time for their project work. The total number of hours devoted to the project **half unit** should not exceed **150 hours in total** (the maximum allowed by the University for a half course unit).

These estimates of hours are for all aspects of project work, not just data collection and analysis. Supervisors should note that the scope of the project must be scaled to fit the time allocated to the students. It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to keep a check on the hours spent on project work. **The total number of hours available for the project should be considered during project planning**.

WHEN SHOULD I START?

Preparation in the year before the project is important. For some projects it can be essential. The submission date just before Easter of your final year may seem a long way off - but the experience of both students and supervisors on this unit consistently recommends - **start early!**

WHEN DO I CHOOSE MY PROJECT?

Make use of the time between November and the start of the Spring term to look through the list of **Suggested Projects and Staff Research Interests,** think about your own interests, and start to identify some possible topics for your project. *Don't forget about the topics you have yet to study.* At the beginning of the spring term, start making contact with potential supervisors to discuss your ideas. You should spend time in January and February consulting with staff, reading, and thinking about your choices.

FORM A - PROJECT CHOICE

By Monday **February 20 2012** you must submit FORM A. This specifies the supervisors of your 3 preferred projects. Because some supervisors receive more first choices than they can handle we cannot always allocate your first choice, and the second and third choices allow us to provide for alternatives. We also need to ensure that all students have the best possible chance of securing one of their three choices. For this reason, the projects on offer are divided into different groups of staff, and in your choices, you cannot select more than two supervisors from any one of these groups of staff, nor can you select any supervisor more than once. You can, if you wish, indicate two alternative projects with a supervisor, but this only counts as ONE of your three choices.

These staff groups correspond to different research departments that you see listed on the project list.

Please note that you **must** discuss with the supervisor beforehand any choice that you enter on your form.

The project unit web pages will have a link to an electronic FORM A. Instructions on the use of the form will be provided on the projects web page. An example of the form is printed at the end of this booklet.

We plan to confirm your project choice and the supervisor for your project by the end of the spring term. The BSc and MSc project coordinators will work together in the allocation process.

Final project decision: FORM B and Ethical Approval

After you have met and planned your project in outline with your supervisor, you and your supervisor should complete FORM B. FORM B is due to be handed in by **June 11.** This deadline is quite late in the term, and you are advised to complete the outline in the first weeks of the term before clinical placements if at all possible.

Ethical approval is almost always required for projects except where existing data is being used. However this may already be in place. You should consult with your supervisor to check whether ethical approval is required for your project, and work with them to apply for this approval if it is required. Although such approval is formally seen as the supervisor's responsibility rather than yours, it will almost always be helpful for you to get involved and ensure the application goes in early. It is always a good plan to make sure that ethical approval is in place if needed well before the Autumn when you start work on the project, as it can take a significant time for the application to be processed (at least 3 months if the NHS is involved - see project guide for more details).

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

All students and supervisors are advised to discuss the mechanics of project supervision as early on in the supervision process as possible so that both parties have clear and realistic expectations. Remember that your supervisor acts as a facilitator, not a director, so you should not expect to be told what to do every step of the way.

The exact number of hours spent with the supervisor will vary depending on the nature of the project, the individual supervisor and the needs of a particular student, and they will change during the course of the project. You may expect to have quite regular contact with your supervisor in the formative stages of the project. Depending on the project, this contact might taper off during data collection, and resume when you are ready to discuss the analysis of your findings in the spring term.

The student is solely responsible for writing the final draft of the project. Any direction given by the supervisor should not be so detailed as to interfere with student autonomy in presentation. As a guide, supervisors should give detailed feedback on the first draft of each section of the report, and thereafter leave the student to write up the final draft.

If you run into difficulties with your project, the first course of action is to discuss this with your project supervisor. If this does not resolve the problem, then you may want to discuss the matter with the Unit Co-ordinator (Andrew Faulkner). You could also talk to the Area Co-ordinator for the subject area of your project. The Area Co-ordinators are:

Developmental Science – Caroline Newton
Language and Communication – Anne Edmundson, Christina Smith
Speech Hearing and Phonetic Sciences and all other areas - Andrew Faulkner

HELP WITH MANAGING THE PROJECT

Some optional sessions are timetabled for the BSc Speech Sciences students to help with managing the project. Dates are in the handbooks for year 3 and year 4 as appropriate.

An optional session on "Using the library for research", which will help you with learning how to make literature searches etc., will be offered by the Chandler House library staff in year 3.

In your final year there will be a session on "Project management" early in the autumn term, and a session on "Report writing" later the same term.

You might want to think about working in pairs on related projects. Two students might work with the same supervisor on larger project - each taking a different aspect of the work as their own project. This gives you some mutual support. Another way of supporting one another is to get together in 'topic groups', to exchange ideas, references and tips on data analysis, and perhaps to comment on one another's written work. When project allocations are made, these will be published so that you can see who may be doing a project that is related to your own.

COSTS of carrying out the project

Some projects can incur minor costs, such as for photocopying and postage of data collection materials. You should think about this at the design stage of your project, and ensure that your supervisor's department is able and willing to meet such costs *before* the expenditure is incurred. Discuss this with your supervisor in the first instance.

THE WRITTEN REPORT

A full unit project report has a maximum word count of 10,000 words, and would not normally be shorter than 8,000 words.
A half unit project report has a maximum word count of 7,000 words and would not normally be shorter than 5,000 words.

As with other course work, penalties in accordance with the Faculty of Life Sciences Regulations may be applied if reports exceed the maximum word count by more than 10%.

You **must** include a statement of the number of words used. Writing to a specified maximum length is an important skill to develop.
Appendices, data (tables, transcripts etc.) and the list of references are excluded from the word count.

There is no rigid format to adhere to in the presentation of your report, but you should refer to the Project Marksheet and marking criteria attached to this Outline. This indicates some features that should be included, and explains the criteria by which your report will be evaluated. There will be a model structure for the report available at the "Report Writing" session, but this cannot be expected to cover all of the elements of the wide range of possible projects. The slides for this session are available on the project web pages. You are encouraged to look at previous projects, housed in the Chandler House library, to guide you. Ask your supervisor to direct you to good project reports whose structure would suit your own report.

You are entitled to submit one draft version of your report to your supervisor for comment. Most students submit their draft in sections so that drafts of later sections can benefit from comments made by the supervisor on sections that they have seen previously. At the supervisor's discretion, you may be able to get further comments on second drafts of sections of the report.

Computer facilities for word processing and printing are available in UCL cluster rooms. It is best to avoid the need to use colour printing in the report, although this can be very helpful for complex figures. Text should all be in black.

Your project report needs to be submitted electronically as a single document. Details on the electronic submission process will be made available during your final year. According to current planning there will be no requirement to submit a printed copy of your report.

SUBMISSION OF THE WRITTEN REPORT

The hand-in deadline is not yet set, but it will be shortly after the end of the second term of 2013. **Projects handed in after the deadline without prior arrangement with the Unit Co-ordinator MAY INCUR A PENALTY MARK (in accordance with the Faculty of Life Sciences Regulations).**

Please ensure that the project report carries your name (a course work code is not needed). Your project cannot be marked blind as the markers are always likely to know who has written a given report.

SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR THE PROJECT

November 2011
You are given the BSc and general project guides, and the list of Suggested Projects and Staff Research Interests, so that you can read through them and think about topics before the **Project briefing session**

December 2011 to February 2012:
Make use of the time between November and the start of the Spring term to look through the list of Suggested Projects and Staff Research Interests, think about your own interests, and start to identify some possible topics for your project. Don't forget about the topics you have yet to study. At the beginning of the spring term, start making contact with potential supervisors to discuss your ideas. Email is usually the best way to contact potential project supervisors. Some members of staff offer individual appointment times, others offer times when they are available to meet with groups of students to discuss possible research projects in their area. Please note that, although projects are NOT allocated on a "first come, first served" basis, it is a good idea to make contact with potential supervisors in good time. Your timetables are very full, and many staff have restrictions on the days/times they can be available to meet with students, so it can sometimes be quite difficult to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. You are therefore strongly advised to have made initial contact with staff offering projects in areas you think you might be interested in by the end of January.

You might have a number of discussions with different members of staff while you sort out your options. **At this discussion stage you do not need to commit to a particular project. Nor should you ask a supervisor to commit to supervise you – the final allocations are made by the project unit co-ordinators and not by the supervisors**

There will be one or more timetabled sessions containing presentations of specific projects by supervisors or area-coordinators. This is a good opportunity to hear about the range of projects available, including the less clinically based ones. The main session will take place **between 2 and 4 pm on Friday 13 January 2012.**

By 20 February 2012 Complete FORM A - PROJECT CHOICE, outlining your three choices of project. Remember that you **must have discussed each of your choices with a potential supervisor** before entering them on the form and that you cannot enter any supervisor more than once.

March 2012: By the end of the spring term you will be given confirmation of your topic and supervisor.

April/May: After your exams, some optional library sessions will be arranged, to help you with literature searches, etc. Meet with your supervisor to make plans, and complete FORM B - PROJECT DECISION. Discuss plans for ethical approval.

By 11 June 2012: Submit FORM B.

Summer vacation: Read relevant references suggested by your supervisor, and plan further. Send in your ethics committee forms if needed.

Autumn term 2012 Prepare materials for the project. Once you have obtained ethical approval (if required) start collecting your data. Start to write up your literature review.

January - February 2013: Complete data collection. Work on the analysis of your data, and write up parts of the project as you go.

March 2013: Finish writing your final draft

End of second term 2013: Submit your report

MARKING CRITERIA

Below is a breakdown of the marking criteria. These represent features of a good project. Students should attend to this list in planning and writing up their projects, and markers should refer to it when marking. Some indication is given of areas where full and half unit projects might be expected to differ. An excellent full-unit project would normally be expected to make an original contribution to knowledge in the area.

Presentation
All good projects, whether full or half unit projects, should show the following features:
- a clear and useful abstract
- clarity of expression throughout
- good and logical structure
- coherence in arguments
- appropriate style, spelling and punctuation
- thorough and accurate referencing
- appropriate use of clearly labelled appendices

Presentation of design and student contribution to design and data collection.
All projects should have a design appropriate to their scope. All good projects should show an understanding of the relationship between design, methodology and theoretical issues.
On the following points, more might be expected of a full unit project:
- relative contribution from student, rather than supervisor, to design of project
- depth and complexity of methodology (e.g. one test or more)
- new or adapted tests vs. existing, standardised tests/assessment or questionnaires (NB where new materials are devised, students are advised to make this very clear, so that it is readily apparent to all markers)
- Innovation in design and methodology
- **The mark agreed between supervisor and 2nd marker should take account of the student's contribution to the design. Students would normally be expected to contribute to but not to be solely responsible for the design of the study.**
- **The effort of collecting data in an organized and accurate manner is an important part of the work involved in most projects. The student's performance here should be considered in the agreed mark. Where projects involve data that was not collected by the student, the mark should reflect this, and a very high overall mark should only be awarded to such projects where there is clear evidence of excellent work in other aspects of the project.**

Literature review
All good project reports should show the following:
- critical appreciation of the literature (not just a catalogue of existing work)
- identification of relevant theoretical issues and putting your work in context

Full unit projects might be expected to show more initiative in searching for previous work and in the development of a critical argument leading to the main question(s) asked by the project.

Results/analysis
All good projects should show:
- thorough analysis (quantitative and/or qualitative)
- insightful analysis

The supervisor should also indicate the extent to which the student carried out the data analysis and was responsible for the interpretation of the outcomes.

Discussion
All good projects should show:
- evidence of relevant inference making in the interpretation of results
- post hoc critique of methodology and an ability to pin-point areas for further research

Project management
All good projects should show:
- good use of feedback (e.g. second draft better than first draft)
- increase in responsibility so that the process shifts from supervisor-led to student-led. Full unit projects might be expected to show more independence in arranging and carrying out data collection

A NOTE ON FULL VS. HALF UNIT PROJECTS

The difference between a full unit project and a half unit project is one of scope, not of standard. A full unit project is not expected to be 'better' than a half unit project. It can be seen from the preceding list that the same standard of scholarliness is expected from both. The area where most difference might be expected is in design and effort in data collection/analysis. A full unit project represents more hours of effort, and so can accommodate a more extensive study. It can also allow a greater degree of student initiative. This difference in scope is reflected in the longer report for a full unit project. A half-unit project based on previously collected data could readily attain a high mark as long as the work shown in the report is of a commensurate standard.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS ABOUT TO START THIS UNIT FROM A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

(mostly from personal experience, with some thoughts on what I wish I had done')

1. Sit to have a good think about the project you want to do. This project is your own. Some of your colleagues would already have theirs planned in advance but don't be put off by them.

2. Have a good look through the carefully prepared project booklet. It is meant to help you, not confuse you more. Highlight the important portions.

3. If you find nothing on offer and have an original idea of your own, approach one or more tutors to discuss the possibility of designing your own project. Most supervisors welcome this initiative.

4. Approach a fourth year for advice if you can find one who's not up to his/her neck with work.

5. Think about the pros and cons of a project that

   - is part of a larger scale, on-going study, that has been undertaken by previous students under the same supervisor.

   - could be shared with a colleague, looking at different aspects of one investigation.

6. If you choose to be a part of a larger scale project, it would be wise to read the previous reports to get yourself motivated.

7. Give thought to whether you want to do a half or full unit project. If you're likely to work as hard for a half unit as you are for a full unit, choose a full unit one.

8. It is probably a good idea to do your research in something that really interests you. Half the battle will be won if you are passionate about your project. It would be a bonus if your potential project supervisor is someone whom you like/get along well with. Remember, you're likely to see him/her quite a few times through the year!

9. Approach your potential supervisors and try to look really keen to do your project with them.

10. If you're interested in a project 10 others are interested in, submit that project as your first choice anyway. However, be prepared that you might not get your first choice. DON'T only submit one project title on Form A.

11. Once you know your project supervisor, contact him/her. Don't expect him/her to contact you. They always have lots to do. Be nice and start the 'supervisor-supervisee' relationship on the right foot.

12. In your first meeting with him/her, have ready a list of questions ready to ask him/her. These may include the amount of time he/she is likely to be around, how much help you're likely to need, where to get references, your concerns about the nature of the project, etc.

13. In your subsequent meetings with him/her, have a plan of points to discuss ready. At the end of each meeting, spend 5 minutes recapping the things discussed so that you are sure that your supervisor and you are talking about things from the same angle. Clarify anything you're unsure of and then make another time to meet.

14. Be good to your supervisor. Get to know them but don't take offence if they keep you at arm's length. Some supervisors are as keen to know you as a person as you are to know them. Others are more formal and like it that way.

15. If you need to apply for ethical approval for your project, do it ASAP. These things take time to come through. If you're sure of getting it, start your preliminary readings at once. If you're not, think of another possible project title quickly.

16. Don't be deceived - a project that does not need ethical approval does not necessary mean an *easier* project. It probably means that someone else has applied for it in the past. However, not needing ethical approval does mean that you're able to get your project going sooner than some of your colleagues.

17. In all your readings, be critical. Read round the subject and mark out the papers that seem most pertinent. Read these papers at least three times (it gets easier the next time round).

18. Attend all the sessions planned to help you to manage the project. Take heed to any advice offered. It will help later on, even if it doesn't make sense to begin with.

19. Flip through some of the 'How to Research' books. Surprisingly, they make rather good resources.

20. The spell check is simply not good enough, so read and re-read your project drafts.

21. If you're likely to do a fair amount of statistics for your project, think SPSS sooner rather than later. Learn to be comfortable with the data you've collected and think about how you can best analyse it.

22. Throughout the project, keep in contact with your supervisor, even if it's via e-mail. Let him/her get drafts of your work. DO NOT let him/her read your entire project for the first time on the day the projects are to be in - if you did, the shock is very likely to be yours, not your supervisor's.

23. Be aware that some supervisors are more clued into your project as a whole. Others just aren't, so it's your responsibility to let them know what you feel is important for them to know. Also, some projects generally do not need as much supervision and independent working for such a project is imperative.

24. For certain parts of the project you might need to recruit the help of other tutors. At such times give these tutors time to help you. They might not be clued into whatever you're investigating - it's best not to assume any knowledge, so be prepared to give a clear and concise account of your investigation.

25. As far as possible, set mini datelines for yourself and write them down. It would help to time these datelines so that they do not coincide with datelines from other course units.

26. Share your planned time scale with your supervisor and ask him/her to give you a GENTLE push when/if you slack. Though you might not appreciate it, it does help. However, supervisors vary as to the amount of 'push' they are willing to give you. So motivate yourself if possible. If you don't happen to complete your task(s) in time for the next meeting with your supervisor, meet up anyway, even for a brief meeting.

27. Allow ample time for the project to go wrong. It is very likely to! Therefore, identify in advance what might go wrong and have contingency plans. Some things include

- illness - you or your supervisor
- supervisor leaving suddenly
- supervisor on sabbatical
- data collection taking longer than expected
- analysis of data taking longer than expected
- write-up taking longer than expected
- subjects involved in your study fall out halfway through
- personal problems

- other datelines at the same time
- many many other things

28. Should you for any reason fall out with your supervisor, resolve your differences ASAP before things get out of hand. DO NOT go to another tutor to complain behind your supervisor's back although sharing "supervisor woes" with your colleagues is acceptable. Even then, consider who you speak to and when - the walls do have ears!

29. During the write-up of your project, remember to create back-up files of every single piece of work. Save the work on as many drives as possible- when it comes to computers. Leave NOTHING to chance.

30. Look through past projects in the library to gain a better idea of the style of writing if you haven't got a fixed one of your own. Also look at the layout, type and size of font, line spacing etc. Better yet. Ask your supervisor for his/her preference!

31. Leave plenty of time to do the 'menial' parts of the project, e.g. the 'Table of Contents', 'Reference list' These take a lot longer than you think.

32. Re the references for your project. Know that there IS a time to stop reading, even if it doesn't feel like there is. Too much reading will end in confusion.

33. Get together with your colleagues to discuss the development of your project. It helps to use each other as sounding hoards.

34. Keep separate folders for the various parts of your project so that you could work on each one separately, e.g. Literature Review, Method, Results etc.

35. If you don't know what a Literature Review is, write one anyway and your supervisor will quickly tell you if you've gone wrong. When the project is typed up in its entirety, get a good friend to read it (a colleague, if possible). The most obvious mistakes are likely to elude you but won't escape someone else's critical eye.

36. Decide beforehand where the bulk of work on your project lies and how many hours of work will he needed for that part. *300* hours or 150 hours per project does not mean very much to most people.

37. Although there will inevitably be times when the project seems overwhelming, try to keep the project in perspective. Do not neglect other work. You should be putting as much work into the other units of the course. The project is one unit. You have three other units to think about.

38. During the 'quiet' moments of the project, e.g. when waiting for data to he collected, waiting for feedback from your supervisor etc., go through the work you've already done and do as much of the other parts as possible, including parts like the 'Acknowledgements' 'Appendices' and 'Cover sheet'.

39. If you have a word limit, stick to it. Don't get penalised unnecessarily.

40. Throughout the year. Find time to unwind, go shopping. Have a drink (tea/coffee!) or whatever it takes to take your mind off things pertaining to the project.

41. Don't only go to your supervisor when there are problems with your project. Tell him/her when things go well too. It will do good to think that he or she needs as much encouragement as you do. So encourage him or her in return when you can.

42. Enjoy your project. You have waited four years to do something you that has not been 'prescribed' to you, so do it well by viewing it as a challenge and an experience you are unlikely to forget. If you so happen to have a strong dislike for your project, see it as a means to an end, not an end on its own.

FORM A - PROJECT CHOICE
to be completed by the student

NAME:

DEGREE:

CONTACT E-MAIL ADDRESS OR PHONE NO.:
_____

FIRST CHOICE SUPERVISOR

Project topic (you may list more than one)

HALF OR FULL UNIT PROJECT (BSc only)
_____

SECOND CHOICE SUPERVISOR

Project topic (you may list more than one)

HALF OR FULL UNIT PROJECT (BSc Only)
_____

THIRD CHOICE SUPERVISOR

Project topic (you may list more than one)

HALF OR FULL UNIT PROJECT (BSC)
_____

FORM B - PROJECT DECISION

this part to be completed by the student:

NAME:

DEGREE:

HALF OR FULL UNIT PROJECT (BSc ONLY):

PROVISIONAL PROJECT TITLE:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

Does the project require a new application for ethical approval? Yes/No

this part to be completed by the supervisor:

SUPERVISOR   NAME   SIGNATURE:

SECOND MARKER   NAME   SIGNATURE: