

M.Sc. PROJECTS: Marking Guidelines

Requirements for project

Students are required to identify/present:

- (1) A Client: can be project tutor, an employee of a commercial organisation, or a member of an organisation such as a charity or society. The client can be virtual, such as a research or other community.
- (2) A product: can be software, a management report, a research report.
- (3) Users/stake-holders: potential users of the product, or stake-holders with interests in it.

Deliverables:

- (i) For the Software Development pathway, the deliverables must include a software product that works and has appropriate documentation for users and for future maintenance of the system.
- (ii) For other pathways the deliverables may include a management report and/or an action/research report.

Report Contents:

Abstract: one page summary (max. 400 words) of the aims of the project, work undertaken and conclusions.

- (i) **Introduction:** overview of the problem being tackled, justification for the project and (for example) proposed methodologies;
- (ii) Research;
- (iii) Requirements Analysis;
- (iv) Professional issues;
- (v) Product description and documentation. For software products there must exist (in some form) software design documents providing at the very least a description of (a) the logical structure of the system stating how the system has been designed and how its overall function has been partitioned amongst the various components of software; (b) interfaces to define the communication channels between the various sub-systems. Software documentation should also include important/novel algorithms;
- (vi) Evaluation of product by self and by stake-holders;
- (vii) Results/Conclusions/Further Work.

Appendices:

- (i) Functional Specification and/or management report;
- (ii) Description of code implementation including some code implementation (of important or novel algorithms) ;
- (iii) Terms of Reference (previously agreed).

GUIDELINES

Here are some guidelines to the headings on the marks sheet.

DISSERTATION

- (a) **Research** Is this relevant/focused/linked to product?
- (b) **Investigation and Analysis** of the problem - is this appropriate for the pathway? Was the choice of tools and techniques/methods appropriate and justified by the student?
- (c) **Discussion/Conclusions** Outcomes of research .. significance of results..how problems were dealt with.
- (d) **Evaluation/Review** of product/process/methods/self management. Has the student provided a critical evaluation of the product and the process? For example has there been a review of deliverables against original aims and objectives in the Terms of Reference?
- (e) **Report Presentation** Manner of References and Citations/quality of writing/depth/structure and style. Is the dissertation presented in a suitable manner, and of appropriate quality and depth?
- (f) **Professional Issues** Are professional issues addressed in a relevant and an appropriate manner? These may include social/ethical/legal/safety/security considerations.

PRODUCT and PRESENTATION

- (a) **Academic Standards** Is the product appropriate and of a suitable standard for the award of M.Sc? What improvements to the product might have been considered that the student did not address? What new skills has the student developed, and what skills have been extended by the project? If the project is research-related, what has been achieved?
- (b) **Methodology/Design Issues** For software products, is the design and implementation of an appropriate type, quality and depth? Has there been sufficient and appropriate testing of the product? For example have acceptance tests been agreed between student and client/stakeholder and what is the result of these tests?

For management or research reports, is the method and result of an appropriate type, quality and depth?
- (c) **Client/Stake holder Evaluation** Has the product been evaluated by the client, and what was the quality of that evaluation?

- (d) **Functional Specification (where appropriate)** A detailed description of the sort of functional specification required is contained in the student guide:
<http://scom.hud.ac.uk/external/studysites/postgrad/projectinfo.htm>
For example Are requirements clear? Are acceptance and usability criteria provided?
- (e) **Project Management** includes client/time/resources. Has the student managed his/her time and resources well, and maintained good relationships with the client and the supervisor?
- (f) **Presentation - quality** Was the presentation clear? In the case of software did it adequately demonstrate required functionality? In the case of the product comprising a report, were the most important elements presented?

Supervisors Comments

Has the student made an effort to attend regular meetings with the supervisor?

Has the student worked in a professional manner and respected confidentiality?

General Comments and Overall Mark

Do you consider this project of sufficient quality to merit an award under the pathway? What aspects of the dissertation/product are worthy of praise? What aspects of the dissertation/product need significant improvement?

Are there any specific comments other than the above that you would like to add?

Please provide a brief justification for the grade you award - use these comments to justify overall mark. The overall project mark depends on two elements: the product and the report. For example a distinctive project meriting an A would be one which either successfully tackles a difficult problem or one which successfully tackles an average problem but uses novel methods. The report for a distinctive project should be of a high standard. If the report was of a lesser standard, this would lower the overall mark (from a straight A to an A- or B+ for example). The same criteria should apply to other grades.