***Project Marking Scheme***

As part of the Specification you are required to provide a marking scheme for your project (there is a space on the project specification form for this purpose). Since each MSc project is an individual work, it would be difficult to provide a general marking scheme that took into account all of the possible MSc project activities that your project could involve. Some MScs will make much use of previously published literature and a very formalized research process. Others will be more of a demonstration of your high level technical capabilities and will draw less from academic publications and more from technical specifications, manufacturers documentation and industrial data. However, regardless of the type of project you undertake, you must undertake and present a literature review but the relative importance of this will depend on what manner of project you undertake. For example, in a software development project, your literature review will probably concentrate on finding suitable approaches for solving a particular problem so that you are able to evaluate the methods you used according to established criteria at the end of the project. In comparison, case study projects tend to be more introspective than this, and concentrate on an evaluation of the actual research approach. In both cases, a literature review is essential, but in the software development project it is more likely that we will be assessing your technical capabilities based on the standards you have identified in the literature review, while in a case study we would be more interested in assessing the way you conducted the primary research given the breadth of prior research that you have evaluated. The sample marking schemes provided below are guidelines only. The person most aware of what you intend to do in your project is you, and you ought to be aware from early on what activities you will spend most time on. Therefore, you should adjust the relative marking of the range of activities according to this. The literature review is important in all projects, and so should have a minimum mark of 15%, but depending on the project you could decide up to 25% of the project marks were more appropriate. If in doubt, consult your supervisor on the allocations in the marking scheme. When you submit your project specification, the marking scheme will be reviewed, and, if the one you provide is inappropriate for the project, you will be asked to either change it or at least justify it.

**ALL MSc Masters Project marking schemes MUST include a ‘Critical Reflection’ element of 10%.**

**As a general rule, all MSc Masters Projects should be set out along the following lines:**

**Introduction:** This section should containan introduction to the project presented in the report, clearly stating the purpose or hypothesis of the work. It may be appropriate to explain the motivation for the work and the results achieved. It is a good idea to outline the structure of the report.

**Background**: In this section you should provide a background and context for the project. This will involve the presentation of a critical and evaluative discussion of the literature appropriate to your project. In setting out this context, your reader should have a clear idea of the previous work undertaken in your project area, the problems with this previous work, any conflict of ideas, and how your study makes a contribution to the area of study. (Note: this section reports your *secondary research i.e. your literature review*.)

**Description of the work undertaken**: This section may best be divided into two parts – the research design (methodology) and the implementation of the design (technical, practical work implemented). This section should also cover any ‘testing’ or evaluation of technical artefacts (e.g. software, models, designs) produced as the output of the project. (Note: this section reports your *primary research*.)

**Analysis and/or Evaluation**: This section should present and then discuss, critically, the results of your practical work (primary research) Where appropriate evaluation of the work against the original objectives/hypothesis/purpose should be presented. It is also appropriate to include an evaluation of your work against the lessons you learnt from the literature.

**Conclusion**: This section should contain concluding remarks and observations as a result of the work you have undertaken. It may also contain suggestions for future work.

**Critical Reflection:** This section should contain your reflections regarding the whole project process and your personal journey during this process. Reflection may include comments relating to: the design of the project, implementation of the project, your management of the project process, the role of the project in the development of your technical skills/knowledge, limitations of your work, unsolved problems, etc.

**Marking Scheme Examples**

*Example 1:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | **5%** |
| **Context – literature review** | **15%** |
| **Research Design** | **15%** |
| **Implementation (practical work)** | **25%** |
| **Testing** | **10%** |
| **Presentation of results** | **10%** |
| **Conclusions and recommendations** | **10%** |
| **Critical self-evaluation** | **10%** |

The weighting of marks in the example above might suit a software development and implementation type of project.

*Example 2:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | **5%** |
| **Context – literature review** | **20%** |
| **Research Design** | **20%** |
| **Implementation (practical work)** | **25%** |
| **Evaluation** | **5%** |
| **Presentation of results** | **5%** |
| **Conclusions and recommendations** | **10%** |
| **Critical self-evaluation** | **10%** |

The weighting of marks in the example above might suit a project where there is a rich and complex literature to be discussed.

*Example 3:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | **5%** |
| **Context – literature review** | **15%** |
| **Research Design** | **15%** |
| **Implementation (practical work)** | **30%** |
| **Evaluation** | **10%** |
| **Presentation of results** | **5%** |
| **Conclusions and recommendations** | **10%** |
| **Critical self-evaluation** | **10%** |

The weighting of marks in the example above might suit a project that is adopting a fairly standard research design (ie experimentation) or a well-established subject specific approach (e.g. an approach used in machine learning studies).

We allow you the flexibility to create a marking scheme that reflects your proposed project: hopefully, the three examples above will give you some ideas about how to do this and the kind of issues to consider when allocating mark weightings.

Please note: once your specification has been agreed and submitted, you may not alter your marking scheme without agreement from your **Supervisor, Moderator and the Module** **co-ordinator**. Alteration to the marking scheme will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.