II2202: Written and oral opposition

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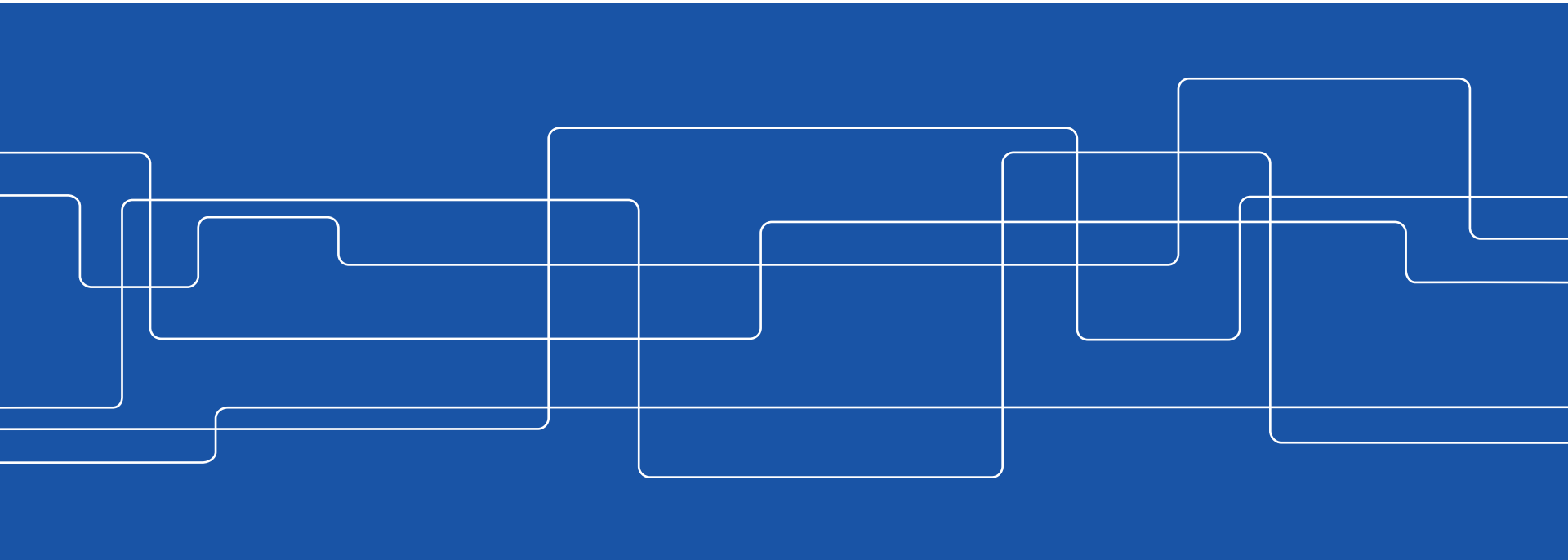

What is the purpose of an opposition?

1. Bring a “fresh set of eyes” to critically review the whole work
   a. Identifying **both** the strong and weak points
   b. Identify missing elements
2. Help the author to improve their document/presentation (remember that you are seeing a draft of the document, so with appropriate feedback the authors still have time to fix it) $\Rightarrow$ **constructive criticism**
3. Broaden your own knowledge and through self-reflection improve your own written and oral presentations

Oral opposition – beyond peer review

Often begins with a brief statement on the oral presentation (good points & suggestions for improvement) and the overall impression of the report

Lead a <u>discussion</u> following the student's presentation with a focus on the essential elements of the presentation (save detailed comments for your written opposition report)

- Is there a better title for the document?
- Is the problem clear? Is its significance clear, i.e., is it an important problem? Who can benefit from the work? How?
- Were the aims/goals/methods/… appropriately described and justified?
- Were the results presented in a logical manner that leads (via the discussion) to the conclusion?
- Was future work identified? Should it have been part of this work?
- What questions remain after reading the document and hearing the oral presentation?

Written opposition

Critique:

- organization, structure, and layout of the report
- literature study
- method (or methods) used
- conclusions: Are they relevant, meaningful, and follow from the discussion? Who should act, based upon these conclusions, and what should they do?

Are the references appropriate, complete, and used properly? Are there any obviously missing references?

Now is the time to identify *anything* which is false, incorrect, misleading, or unclear.

[In an appendix] go into detail – including the spelling, punctuation, grammar, inappropriate size of fonts/colors/…, missing labels in figures/graphs, … .

Evaluation criteria for the degree projects at KTH

Criteria	Process	Engineering-related and scientific content	Presentation
Excellent	• Independently plan and carry out the project within agreed time frames, show good initiative and be open to supervision and critique • Independently identify one's own need for new knowledge and acquire this knowledge • Show a good ability to adopt the perspective of another's work and formulate relevant and constructive critique	• From problems/inquiries and methodology, show a very good ability to apply engineering-related and scientific skills like problem formulation, modelling, analysis, development and evaluation in a systematic way • Where this is relevant, show awareness of societal and ethical aspects, including economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable development	• Show a well disposed report, with clear accounts of the project and the results, clear analysis, and well founded argumentation, as well as good language usage, format and scientific accuracy • Show a good ability to orally present with clear argumentation and analysis, and also a good ability to discuss the work
Good	• Plan and carry out the degree work within agreed time frames, show initiative and be open to supervision and critique • Show the ability to acquire new knowledge • Show the ability to adopt the perspective of another's work and formulate relevant critique	• From problems/inquiries and methodology, show a good ability to apply engineering-related and scientific skills like problem formulation, modelling, analysis, analysis development and evaluation in a systematic way • Where this is relevant, show awareness of societal and ethical aspects, including economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable development	• Show a well disposed report with clear accounts of the project and the results, and argumentation, as well as good language usage and format • Show a good ability to orally present and discuss the project

Evaluation criteria (continued)

Criteria	Process	Engineering-related and scientific content	Presentation
Sufficient	• Carry out the project work within agreed time frames, show certain initiative and be open to supervision and critique • Show a sufficient ability to acquire new knowledge • Show a sufficient ability to adopt the perspective of another's work and formulate critique	• From problems/inquiries and methodology, show a sufficient ability to apply engineering-related and scientific skills like modelling, analysis, development, and evaluation • Where this is relevant, show a certain awareness of societal and ethical aspects, including economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable development	• Show a written report with acceptable structure, format and language usage • Show the ability to orally present the report
Insufficient	Insufficient respect for agreements, severe lack of independence, or disregard for supervision. Lacks the ability or desire to acquire new knowledge	Significant lack of engineering-related or scientific skills or lack of methodology despite the request	Lacks important elements in the written report despite the request, or lack of the ability to orally present or discuss the project

In order to pass the project work, all three criteria must be met with a grade of sufficient or better.

http://intra.kth.se/polopoly_fs/1.141839!/Menu/general/column-content/attachment/Evaluation%20criteria%20for%20degree%20project.pdf

Common mistakes

Attacking the person – it is not the person that you are an opponent for, but rather the work being presented

Failing to press the individual (or co-authors) to really show what they know and do not know

Failing to follow the citations and reading the original text to see if it really supports what the author(s) states

Failing to prepare adequately

Failing to mention positive aspects and focusing only on the negative aspects

Special attention to Abstract(s)

The opponent can be particularly helpful with regard to the abstract(s):

- The opponent sees the whole thesis once in a nearly finished state – hence generally has a better *holistic* view of the thesis than the student (and even the examiner), therefore the opponent can help the student to refine their abstract(s)
- As all theses at KTH must have both English and Swedish abstracts, if the opponent is capable – it is very nice of them to help the student refine the actual language used in the abstract

References

Self-evaluation with respect to The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) goals - http://people.kth.se/~maguire/Riktlinjer_bedomning_kvalitet_exjobb_cing_chalmers_with_English_translation-as-spreadsheet-20140610.xlsx

Maguire's Exjobb opposition report instructions (with some examples): http://people.kth.se/~maguire/maguire-exjobbs.html#oppositionreport

See Chapter 12 of:

Mikael Berndtsson, Jörgen Hansson, Björn Olsson, and Björn Lundell, *Thesis projects: a guide for students in computer science and information systems*, 2nd ed. London: Springer, 2008, ISBN: 978-1-84800-008-7.

¿Questions?