Midway & Final Report Instruction for CSE 156 Winter 2025

Instructor: Lianhui Qin

Overview

The midway report should has 2-3 pages without references, and the deadline is **11:59pm PT on Feb 25**. The final report should have 4-6 pages excluding references, and the deadline is **11:59pm PT on March 20**.

The midway milestone report should serve as a preliminary version of your final report, providing a clear overview of your progress and outlining the remaining work. Since many projects may still be in development and lack complete results, this report may appear as a scaffold with placeholders. For example, if it doesn't achieve high performance yet, you should still detail the implementation steps you're working toward. Additionally, include any adjustments made to your original plan since submitting the project proposal, if applicable.

We provide a general template in the following sections for you to get started with your midway & final reports. Depending on the nature of individual projects, not all sections may apply to every team. Please feel free to include only the sections relevant to your work and add any new sections as needed. Note that there are a few mandatory sections that all teams are required to include (9 pts for mandatory sections, 1 pt for overall quality of the report and any optional sections).

1 Introduction (mandatory, 1 pt)

Some points that you can include:

- A brief problem statement about the task or the research question that you are studying.

- Your motivation behind choosing this task or research question. What makes it interesting and important? What real-world impact does it have?

- Describe your methods and findings.

- Summarize your contribution(s). Your contributions may include new datasets (including annotations for existing data), methods, theoretical results, and empirical findings.

2 Background (optional)

You are encouraged to describe the background of your project here. For example, you may discuss related work or provide background knowledge about the problem that you study.

3 Method (mandatory, 2 pts)

- **Default Project.** Introduce the task that you choose to investigate, along with an existing method that you intend to improve. Describe your understanding about the existing method, e.g., what are its strength and weaknesses. Clearly explain what improvements you plan to make, and how they can address the limitations of the existing method.

- **Open-Ended Project (NLP Research).** Describe your current method and how you're planning to improve on it in your final report. Discuss any advantages of your method (e.g., requiring fewer resources), and provide intuition about why your method makes sense for the problem you are trying to solve. Aim for your explanation to be understandable to any other student in the class.

4   Experiments (mandatory, 2 pts)

Describe the experiments you are currently running and any future experiments you have planned. Provide clear details about your experimental setup and the metrics you will use to measure performance.

For the paper reproducing project, specify which experiments replicate the original paper and which are new contributions. Be sure to highlight any design decisions you made due to missing information in the original paper or adjustments based on alternative considerations.

4.1   Model (optional)

What models do you use?

4.2   Datasets (optional)

What datasets do you use for training and evaluation?

4.3   Baselines (optional)

What baselines do you compare to? These may include methods from prior work as well as ablations of your method.

4.4   Code (mandatory)

Put a link to your code or the codebase that you use from others. If you used an existing codebase, please describe what kinds of revisions or additions you made (if any). You do not need to include this for the midway report.

5   Results (mandatory, 2 pts)

Present and discuss your results. How does your method compare to baselines? Any surprising findings? For the paper reproducing project, discuss whether your results match those from the original paper. If it makes more sense, for instance if you have multiple experiments, you may also combine your Experiments and Results section, and interleave each experiment with their results.

6   Discussion (optional)

Feel free to use this section flexibly. You might discuss the broader implications of your results for the NLP community, propose hypotheses about the trends you observe, or share any insights, challenges, and new questions that arose from your project.

For the paper reproducing project, consider reflecting on your impressions of the original paper after your reproduction process. If you were the author, what would you have done similarly or differently? Do you find the experimental setup and conclusions convincing?

7   Conclusion (mandatory, 1 pt)

In this section, you should briefly summarize your contributions, state the key takeaways, and potentially mention directions for future work.

Formatting & References (mandatory, 1 pt)

Please use the NeurIPS style for both of the reports. Make sure that you properly cite your sources.

Acknowledgement