

# COURSEWORK ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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| **Module Title:** | *Research Methods & Project Management* |
| **Module Number:** | *LD7028* |
| **Module Tutor Name(s):** | *Professor Hamid Jahankhani* |
| **Academic Year:** |  |
| **% Weighting (to overall module):** | *80%* |
| **Coursework Title:** | ***Assignment 1 - Research Proposal*** |
| **Average Study Time Required by Student:** | *80 hours of study time which includes time with supervisor* |

## Dates and Mechanisms for Assessment Submission and Feedback

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| **Date of Handout to Students:**  25/01/21 |
| **Mechanism for Handout to Students:**  *Via eLP, discussed during Lecture* |
| **Date and Time of Submission by Student:**  11 May 2021 by 15:59pm  If for personal reasons you cannot submit by that date, and you feel you have grounds for requesting an extension, you should contact [nu.london@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:ee.studentsupport@northumbria.ac.uk) |
| **Mechanism for Submission of Work by student:**  *Electronic submission via Turnitin* |
| **Date by which Work, Feedback and Marks will be returned to students:**  Within 20 working days after submission of this assignment |
| **Mechanism for return of assignment work, feedback and marks to students:**  *Formal feedback will be provided via Blackboard module site following completion of*  *all reviews and internal moderation of results.* |

# Assignment Brief

### Learning Outcomes:

### Knowledge & Understanding:

* Deploy comprehensive knowledge and understanding of appropriate techniques and tools to plan, research and manage a computing technical project

### Intellectual / Professional skills & abilities:

* Systematically identify and analyse a complex computing problem and produce a project proposal to solve it, considering professional, ethical, social and legal issues
* Appreciate and apply appropriate techniques, tools and knowledge to support effective project management, research and advanced scholarship
* **Personal Values Attributes** (Global / Cultural awareness, Ethics, Curiosity) (PVA):
* Demonstrate independent research and enquiry skills at an appropriately advanced level in the construction of a computing project proposal

### Instructions to students:

This is an individual piece of work and you must not work with others to construct your report. During the semester there are numerous opportunities to seek and get advice and support on your work, from tutors and peers but you must ensure you do not do work for others or copy work from others.

### Referencing Style:

You must use the reference style of the journal you have identified as relevant to your area of work, see page 4, “Sources and Knowledge”

### Expected size of the submission:

Be succinct - maximum 2500 - 3000 words, excluding appendices, title page, contents list, abstract, references and appendices

### Academic Conduct:

You must adhere to the university regulations on academic conduct. Formal inquiry proceedings will be instigated if there is any suspicion of misconduct or plagiarism in your work. Refer to the University’s regulations on assessment if you are unclear as to the meaning of these terms. The latest copy is available on the university website.

### Word Limit

A word limit is set out in this assignment of 2500 – 3000 word, any work presented over this number of words may not be considered. Word limit does not include the appendices.

### Introduction

For the LD7028 assignment you must produce a proposal for a short research project. This is the 60 credit project that you will study as part of your postgraduate programme on the module, LD7029 MSc Computer Science & Digital Technologies Project.

This assignment is therefore doubly important:

* It accounts for 80% of the marks for LD7028
* It is essential preparation for your research project.

As stated, the research project will account for 60 credits (one-third) of your programme of study. Typically, you will spend 600 hours on this project.

Your research proposal will be approximately 2500 – 3000 words and specify the project background, motivation and relevance to your programme of study; its scope, aims and objectives; a plan of the major activities. Your proposal should draw on current and recent research and other appropriate sources of information and cite these sources using a consistent standard referencing system. The proposal will be assessed by your supervisor and second marker in a short meeting, during which they will give feedback and provide suggestions and comments on how to improve the project.

This proposal should be based on the outcome of the meetings you must have with your potential research project supervisor. Your supervisor will provide individual support and formative feedback during the preparation of your research proposal.

### The Proposal Structure

You are advised to following the structure outlined below. A template is available on Blackboard under the Assessment tab.

### Project Details

* Module: LD7028 – Research and Project Management
* Module tutor: Professor Hamid Jahankhani
* Assignment title: MSc Research Proposal'
* Student name + university identifier (always underline the surname/family name by which you are recorded in the university systems)
  + Programme or course of study
  + The name of your potential supervisor
  + Word Count

### Aim

Produce a summary of what your project will achieve in one or two sentences, ideally construct a research question.

### Background, Motivation and Relevance – literature review

* Set out and justify, using supporting literature, where your work will fit in the computing body of knowledge.
* Outline and critically discuss what relevant research has been undertaken, in the past, in your area of interest and why this project is necessary.
* Outline and critically discuss why the research will be of value, in the future, and what the anticipated impact of the outcomes will be.
* Outline why you want to undertake this work, some areas to consider are, personal motivation, skills set and career choices.

### Scope, Objectives and Risk

* Outline and justify the scope of your project – what you intend to do, what you will not include but might be expected by others to be incorporated.
* Outline numbered steps (SMART Objectives) you will have to complete in order to achieve the aims. After each objective outline the deliverable or outcome that will be produced. Outline how you will assess and or measure the quality for that objective. Outline what research method/design you will adopt for each objective and how each method will support one another.
* Produce a task list for all objectives, that defines, task, deliverable, resources (all types) required, skills required, time required.
* Produce a risk log (see example on your Blackboard Assessment tab) for you project.

### Sources and use of Knowledge

* Identify and justify a journal where your work would be relevant for publication.
* Identify aspects of the standards for publication in the target journal that you can incorporate into your project proposal, so for example the referencing system, font style and pitch etc.
* Identify, justify and critically discuss any authors, journals where previous relevant research has been published within the last 5 years. There is no fix number, it is your judgement to scope this listing.

### Ethics, Legal, Social, Security and Professional Issues

Write out a section that discusses, explores and defines all of the ethical, legal, social and professional issues associated with your project, including how you will consider security issues. If you think an area of this section is not applicable to your project, you should justify why this is the case.

### Schedule of Activities

Using your task list, construct a Gantt Chart and a Monitoring and Control table (see examples given your Blackboard Assessment tab.

**References:** these should be primarily used to support your background section and include the latest relevant research in your chosen topic area. All references in the reference list must also appear within the body of the report. There is no ideal number of references recommended but a guide might be no less than 10 – 15 sources should be used.

**Ethics Form: y**ou should include a completed online ethics form and upload a copy on to the assessment section/ ethics Submission section of BB. You should take a hard copy of this form to your project review meeting, after discussions it may need changes.

Ethical approval must be obtained for all MSc research projects prior to the commencement of your dissertation research. In the case of your LD7028, Research Methods and Project Management, The ETHICS approval is required as part the assignment 1 (research Proposal 80%). Without the Ethics approval your assignment 1 submission is not complete.

Online Research Ethics form can be found on the **"ethics and governance**

**Northumbria**" website or just simply follow the steps below:

* Access the system at https:/[/www.northumbria.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-) governance/
* Then go to the **Ethics Online - research ethics approval system**
* Then go to the **Online Research Ethics and Governance Approval: Access the system at** [**Ethics Online**](https://np-k2runtime.northumbria.ac.uk/Runtime/Runtime/Form/My%2BDocuments/?_ga=2.253568011.300865144.1523871625-2142938167.1523871625), where this link will take you to the page to sign in with your Northumbria University username and password.
* At the welcome page, please start with "Create a New Submission"
* On the submission page, please complete all sections, for note,
  + Faculty is Engineering and Environment,
  + Department is Computer and Information Sciences.
  + Submitting as PGT.
  + Module code is LD7028.
  + Module Tutor is Professor Hamid Jahankhani
  + Named co-ordinator is Professor Hamid Jahankhani

### Please make sure that your Ethics risk level is only GREEN (LOW).

### You need to consult your tutor and potential supervisor for advice before submitting ethics approval form. If your ethics is AMBER or RED, it will not be approved and as a result you will not be allowed to carry on your dissertation until you make sure that your research methodology and data collection is within GREEN risk.

* + Then Create and Save to move to the next page where you input all the required necessary details. This is where you need to make sure that your data collection is within the GREEN (LOW) risk.
  + Once complete please submit.

### Presentation Guidelines

The front sheet must include:

### Notes on presentation & submission:

The research report must be written and presented to an appropriate academic standard for a postgraduate programme of study.

* The proposal will be assessed in terms of style, meaning, and the accuracy of spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.
* Correct and thorough referencing of your sources of information is required. You should follow a consistent referencing system, and provide a full reference list and brief references in the text of your answer. ‘Cite them Right’ advises direct quotations should be indicated by quotation marks or indentation, and referenced. Failure to acknowledge your sources or to indicate when you are quoting constitutes plagiarism. You are encouraged to work with each other to discuss the challenges encountered, but you must not work with each other to construct your answers. Action will be taken in accordance with the University regulations if plagiarism or collusion is suspected. This may result in a loss of marks for the assignment or module.

*Further advice on these issues, can be found on:*

* + *Northumbria University (2016) Skills Plus help guides, Online. Available at:*

[*http://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library/skillsplus/index.html*](http://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library/skillsplus/index.html)*.*

* + Pears, R. & Shields, G. (2013) Cite Them Right: the essential referencing guide, 9th edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Online. Available at:<http://www.citethemrightonline.com/> available from the university search facilities: -[http://librarysearch.northumbria.ac.uk/primo\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=](http://librarysearch.northumbria.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid) northumbria.

In general:

* + Your proposal written to a **professional standard** using MS Word and show appropriate and consistent use of **type**, **fonts** and **line spacing** (**for this assignment use Arial 12 and single spacing**) and **page layouts**.
  + Give each page a footer that includes your name, the module code, and a page number.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

You must adhere to the university regulations on academic conduct. Formal inquiry proceedings will be instigated if there is any suspicion of plagiarism or any other form of misconduct in your work. Refer to the University’s Assessment Regulations for Northumbria Awards if you are unclear as to the meaning of these terms. The latest copy is available on the University website.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/academic-registry/quality-and-teaching-excellence/assessment/guidance-for-students/>

**Formative Feedback**

There will be an opportunity for formative feedback during the semester. You are advised to start working on this assignment as early as possible so that you can seek clarification from the module tutor regarding any questions you might have during the semester. Note that tutors will not predict your grade, and you should not take the lack of comment on any aspect of your work as indicating that it is correct. You should make every effort to take advantage of formative feedback as tutors will not comment on draft work at other times. Remember that you will get more useful feedback from us by asking specific questions.

**Penalties for Exceeding Word Limits:**

The actual word count is to be declared on the front of the assessment submission. If a given task has a word limit, the following penalties will be applied after any reductions in mark due to late submission have been made, Penalties will be applied as defined in the University Policy on Word Limits Policy.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/academic-registry/quality-and-teaching-excellence/assessment/guidance-for-students/>

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**Late Submission Policy:**

For coursework submitted up to 1 working day (24 hours) after the published hand-in deadline without approval, 10% of the total marks available for the assessment (i.e.100%) shall be deducted from the assessment mark. Penalties will be applied as defined in the University Policy on the Late submission work.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/academic-registry/quality-and-teaching-excellence/assessment/guidance-for-students/>

For clarity: a late piece of work that would have scored 65%, 55% or 45% had it been handed in on time will be awarded 55%, 45% or 35% respectively as 10% of the total available marks will have been deducted.

Failure to submit: The University requires all students to submit assessed coursework by the deadline stated in the assessment brief. Where coursework is submitted without approval after the published hand-in deadline, penalties will be applied as defined in the University Policy on the Late Submission of Work.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-services/academic-registry/quality-and-teaching-excellence/assessment/guidance-for-students/>

**LD7028 Project Proposal - Feedback and Marks (80% for module)**

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| **Student:** | **Identifier:** | |
|  | **Max obtainable** | **Actual** |
| **Background, Motivation, Relevance, Sources**  **of Knowledge**   * ***Computing context*** *and previous research areas*   *of interest and possible impact*   * ***A diagram*** *outlining the relevant body of knowledge* * ***Why*** *you intend to do it, i.e. why the project is*   *worthwhile and relevant to the student and to computing*   * ***What*** *you intend to do, i.e. a brief summary of*   *what activities will be undertaken in the project*   * ***How*** *you will proceed, i.e. what research method/design you will use in order to achieve the aim and each objective.* * ***Identification*** *of relevant authors and journals,* * ***Selection and justification*** *of one relevant journal*   *for possible publication of your work.* | 35 |  |
| **Scope, Objectives and Risk**   * *The aim summarises what the project should*   *achieve overall.*   * *The SMART objectives, with outline of deliverables*   *and measurement criteria for quality*   * *The project plans (Gantt and Monitoring and*   *Control Table) and task lists should link back to the objectives and highlight, deliverables, resources, skills, time, millstones, methods to be used, costs of time and resources.*   * *Risk management log using template provided* | 30 |  |
| **Ethics, Legal, Social, Security and Professional Consideration**  A discussion which explores all of the issues that have to be considered covering each item in the above section title**.** | 25 |  |
| Presentation  Academic style, spelling, grammar, punctuation and  syntax Standard of referencing style | 10 |  |
| Confirmation of ethics forms authorisation or comment on authorisation pending. (delete as appropriate and if necessary extend the section for further comments. ) | Low/ Green  (signed and agreed)  Medium/ Amber  (signed and agreed)  High/ Red  (Pending approval) Other comments: | |
| **Total** | 100 |  |
| **Feedback: (extend as needed)** | | |
| **Marked by:** | | |