CSW Assessment: further information
FACP October 2004

October 12, 2004

This document gives further information, including guidance on the assessment and its marking. The cover-sheet for the assessment is reproduced in figure 1, below.

1   The Content Criteria

Marks will be in relation to (a) conformance to the structure given in the assessment, following the given numbering; (b) conformance to the following requirements. Failure to conform to the requirements will result in marks being deducted.

2   Penalties for exceeding length limits

There are limits on the number of words and pages of the assessment. (This reflects the requirements of the PR5 project.)

- These limits **exclude** the bibliography: students are never penalised for the words and pages taken up by references.

- The pro-rata word limit per page (450) is relatively low for this assessment; this is to encourage good page layout.

Failure to observe the page or word limits results in automatic mark deductions, according to the following guidelines.

- For over-run of strictly less than one page or up to 450 words, there will be a deduction of 10% of the achieved mark.

- For each subsequent full or part page overrun, or each subsequent word excess of up to 450 words, 20% of the achieved mark will be deducted.

  For example, the achieved mark for a submission of seven-and-a-half pages (including the one-page bibliography) and 3000 words (excluding the bibliography) would be reduced by 30%, because it had more than one but no more than 2 extra content pages, but was within the pro-rata word limit for that many pages; if the seven-and-a-half page submission had 3500 words (excluding the bibliography), it would exceed the pro-rata word limit for 7 content pages, but not that for 8 content pages; the achieved mark would be reduced by 50%.

There is no lower length limit on the submissions, and no specific penalty for achieving the goals of the assessment in fewer pages or words.

3   Selecting a topic and aspect

The topic of the review must be selected from the list on the accompanying website,

http://www-course.cs.york.ac.uk/csw/assessment/topics.pdf

The appropriate topic heading must be used in the title of the assessment submission.

Any academic aspect of the chosen topic could be used as the subject of the review; the aspect must be clearly stated as a subheading to the submission. In particular, note that the aspect chosen need only relate to the general topic; it does not need to relate to any of the references listed with the topic.

  Thus, if there had been a topic, **A43 Database Transaction Modelling**, and the references had related to meta-modelling and security, the review could none-the-less select the topic of transaction isolation as its aspect. The title of the submission might be,

A43 Database Transaction Modelling:
modelling and the design of transaction isolation

Unless an aspect were completely inappropriate for a (masters level) review assessment, there are no marks associated with the choice of topic and aspect. However, submissions that do not give a listed topic and a chosen aspect in the title will have marks deducted.

4   The Introduction section

The introduction section introduces the topic and the chosen aspect of the topic, and identifies the selection of literature to be used. It should be addressed to an academic computer science audience that is not specialist in the chosen topic.

> For example, if there had been a topic on database transaction modelling, one could have assumed (and stated) that general database architectures and relational theory were familiar, but not that the audience would be knowledgeable on the exact definition of database transactions, or current database modelling approaches.

The introduction must include a short description of the aspect of the topic that is the subject of the literature review.

5   The Review section

The review section should select no more than four (two or three should normally suffice) specific sources related to the chosen aspect. The selected sources should have some common theme that can be used as the basis for critique. The review must cover both the relevant content of the sources, and the way in which the content relates to the chosen topic; it needs to present a critique of the sources, in the context of the chosen aspect, rather than a simple précis of the content. Points in the critique must be supported with specific references.

For example, continuing the transaction modelling theme, specific aspects might concern modelling notations, and sources be selected in relation to meta-modelling (eg. defining notation semantics), or domain-specific modifications of standard notations (i.e. profiling, in UML terms). If the domain-specific modifications aspect were chosen the sources might, for example, cover two or three applications to other areas (security, real time and concurrent spring to mind in the UML context), or historical approaches (eg. SSADM). The review would present a critique of the chosen sources, and the context would be to consider how the domain-specific approaches considered might contribute to the modelling of database transactions.

The review sources should not be taken only from those listed in the appendix (under a specific topic, or in general — some topics contain sources that are also relevant to aspects of other topics). Literature searching should reveal sources such as papers published in journals, conference proceedings, web pages, technical reports etc. These are all potentially acceptable, but the literature must be research-oriented (that is, reporting theory, or novel applications, whether in an industrial or academic context): popular press articles are not acceptable for this assessment. If in doubt about the suitability of a paper, email fiona@cs.york.ac.uk with full publication details, and check the assessment web page for a response.

From the above, it follows that it not necessary to review all the content of every source that is selected; the point of the exercise, and of the literature review in the PR5 project, is to construct a review that sets the chosen aspect of the chosen topic in some sort of context, not to simply re-iterate the contents of the sources.

6   The Conclusion section

The conclusion section should draw some conclusion, but should not introduce new material in relation to the review and its sources. It must relate back to the introduction and topic, as well as to the aspect and review. A succinct summary of the points from the review should be presented, with a comment which might be characterised as a proposal or a "further work" issue. In some cases, the comment might be thought of as a tentative proposal

for a full project, but in general it will reflect a relevant issue that is not resolved by the review, or a suggestion of how an omission or disagreement in the reviewed sources might be taken forward — for example by a case study, further literature searches, or a research project.

> For example, if the database transaction meta-modelling aspect had been reviewed, the summary might re-iterate the main commonalities and differences among the reviewed approaches, perhaps in terms of different levels of formality or rigour; the comment might indicate how the problem of modelling database transactions could be taken forward in the light of the findings of the review — which elements were relevant, how they might be used, and what needs doing.

7 The Bibliography

All sources used in the assessment must be properly referenced in a final **bibliography**. The entries must be concise, but provide sufficient detail that the paper can be unambiguously identified. Styles to achieve this are suggested in the lecture notes. Unpublished material (eg drafts of papers to be submitted or awaiting acceptance etc) must clearly state "unpublished", and give enough information to allow the reader a chance to assess the source's importance, reliability etc.

For this assessment, it is not appropriate to use sources such as email and personal communications; these would amount to collusion in the assessment. (This is, of course, not the case for the PR5 project report.)

In relation to the annotation requirement for the bibliography, **general sources** are those used to introduce the specialist elements of the topic to a general academic CS audience, in the introduction section. You may cite these sources in the later review section, but general sources should not be among the (at most four) sources used in the critique — that is, general sources can only be used as the sources of facts about the topic and aspect. **Specific sources** are those used in the critical review. They should not normally be cited in the submission before the review section. You should cite these specific sources if required in the conclusion section of the assessment, but should not use the specific or general sources as part of the commentary provided in the review — that is, in the conclusion, the sources should only be used as citations of facts.

Note that you are also asked to include a list of other sources that were consulted for the assessment, but not cited in the submission. If there are no such sources, you should state this explicitly in the bibliography, as marks will be lost for bibliographic omissions.

Marking of the bibliography will be in relation to the accuracy and adequacy of the references; marking will not relate to the number of references in any part of the bibliography, though marks may be gained or lost on the quality and appropriateness of the references included among the cited references.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

MEng,BSc, 2004–2005

COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
Part A/B

COMPUTER SCIENCE WRITING
Open Examination

Issued at:
3 November 2004
(Autumn/4/Wed)

Submission due:
26 January 2005
(Spring/3/Wed)

Your attention is drawn to the Guidelines on Mutual Assistance and Collaboration
in the Student's Handbook.

All queries on this assessment should be addressed to
Dr F. A. C. Polack (fiona@cs.york.ac.uk) by email
No questions will be answered after Monday 10 January 2005.
Answers will appear only on the website,
`http://www-course.cs.york.ac.uk/csw/assessment/QandAs.html` .

Your examination number must be written on the front of your submission.
You must not identify yourself in any other way.

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