



University  
of Exeter

#### **COURSEWORK SPECIFICATION**

COMM514, ECMM454, COMM424DA –  
MSc Project

Module Leader: **Prof. Solomon S. Oyelere**

Academic Year: 2024/25

---

Title: **Project proposal**

Submission deadline: **12 noon, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025**

This assessment contributes **10%** of the total module mark and assesses the following **Intended Learning Outcomes**

- Demonstrate knowledge of a research topic relevant to your programme of study, acquired through a deep and self-motivated exploration of that topic
- Design and follow systematically the steps of research project development
- Show familiarity with the background and context of a new application area
- Work in an interdisciplinary area of relevance to your programme of study.
- Conduct independent study, including library and web-based research
- Plan an extended project and manage time effectively

This is an **individual** work, and you are reminded of the University's Regulations on Plagiarism. You must avoid plagiarism, collusion and any academic misconduct behaviours. [See further resources about Academic Honesty and Plagiarism.](#)

## Use of GenAI tools in COMM514, ECMM454, COMM424DA – MSc Project Final Report

The University of Exeter is committed to supporting the ethical and responsible use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools in teaching and learning. You can find [student resources on GenAI on the Study Skills pages](#).

Direct copying of content, including AI-generated content, without proper acknowledgement falls under plagiarism and misrepresentation. [See guidance on referencing AI work](#) and [TQA section 12.3](#).

To provide clarity on uses of AI, assessments can fall in three categories:

- AI-Integrated
- AI-Supported
- AI-Prohibited

This assessment falls under the category of **AI-supported** assessment, where ethical and responsible use of GenAI tools in the development of an assessment is supported. This may include using GenAI tools to summarise literature, improve the structure of your work or quality of English language. All use of GenAI tools should be acknowledged in a statement submitted with their assessment and referenced appropriately. Students are asked to keep a record of the tools, prompts and outputs used so they are able to produce these if necessary at a viva and demonstrate how they have built on this content to ensure the work is original.

### Declaration of use (AI-supported or AI-integrated work only):

Include this declaration at the start of your work.

Select all that apply with an [X]:

-----✂----- Copy and fill in this declaration at the start of your work -----✂-----

I acknowledge the following uses of GenAI tools in this assessment:

- [ ] I have used GenAI tools to:

- [ ] develop ideas.
- [ ] assist with research or gathering information.
- [ ] help me understand key theories and concepts.
- [ ] identify trends and themes as part of my data analysis
- [ ] suggest a plan or structure for my assessment.
- [ ] give me feedback on a draft.
- [ ] generate images, figures or diagrams.
- [ ] proofread and correct grammar or spelling errors.
- [ ] generate citations or references.
- [ ] Other: [please specify]

- [ ] I have not used any GenAI tools in preparing this assessment.

I declare that I have referenced all use of GenAI outputs within my assessment in line with the University referencing guidelines.

I certify that all material in this dissertation which is not my own has been identified.

-----✂----- End of declaration – Do not include ‘scissor’ lines -----✂-----

If a declaration cannot be attached (e.g. video submission), by submitting your work, you confirm you have followed the assessment brief and guidelines on AI use.

### Instructions

You must produce an **8-page project proposal** covering the preliminary research you have done to prepare yourself for undertaking your project, together with an initial specification for the project itself. The Project Proposal is an important part of your MSc Research Project and your first summative assessment. The project proposal should define a clear project scope and a plan for completing the project. Amongst others, this requires identifying required resources, project risks, and potential ethical issues.

This document is intended for students on the University of Exeter project modules COMM514, ECMM454 and COMM424DA. In this document, we discuss the purpose of the research proposal, present several alternatives how such a proposal can be structured, and present the marking scheme used for assessing project proposals.

The project aims, objectives and deliverables should be defined explicitly. You should provide clear criteria for evaluating the final product and results, i.e., what will count as a successful outcome for your project.

### STRUCTURE OF A PROJECT FINAL REPORT

This submission collects the work you have undertaken during your project. Your submission must comprise:

1. A separate **title page** containing your name, a 100-200 word abstract, and a signed declaration stating:

☐

*I have not used any GenAI tools in preparing this assessment.*

☐

*I certify that all material in this dissertation which is not my own has been identified.*

2. The **body**, which must be no more than **8 sides of A4** and presented with **11 pt font** with **margins of 2cm** (single column, single line-spacing). A **5-mark deduction** will be applied for each page by which the length of the document (excluding the title page and references) exceeds 8 pages.
3. The **bibliography**, also in a font not less than 11 pt. It is expected that this section will take up at least half a side of A4, and is not likely to exceed three sides.

You must submit your work to ELE2 by the submission deadline provided on the cover of this document. Please see overleaf for marking criteria.

Please see overleaf for marking criteria.

## MARKING SCHEME

The project proposal is a summative assessment, accounting for 10% of the module mark. In the following subsections, we will describe the four marking criteria against which your proposal will be assessed.

Criteria:

- Introduction, Background, and Context (25%): This criterion assesses the proposal's ability to clearly introduce the project, contextualise it within its broader field, and provide relevant background information.
- Rigour (25%): Rigour evaluates the quality of the methods, research design, and implementation plan, assessing whether the proposal demonstrates thoroughness and precision in its approach.
- Contribution (25%): This criterion assesses the potential impact, originality, and relevance of the proposed research, as well as its contribution to the field.
- Discussion (25%): This criterion evaluates the ability to critically engage with the research topic, reflect on implications, and identify potential challenges or limitations.

	<b>Introduction, Background, &amp; Context (25%)</b>	<b>Rigour (25%)</b>	<b>Contribution (25%)</b>	<b>Discussion (25%)</b>
<b>Distinction (70-100%)</b>	The introduction provides a compelling and structured overview of the research problem, clearly defining its significance within the broader academic or practical field. The background section is comprehensive and well-researched, demonstrating strong familiarity with the topic. The research gap is explicitly identified, with a well-supported rationale for why the study is necessary. High-quality academic sources are cited appropriately.	The research methodology is thoroughly explained and justified, demonstrating a deep understanding of appropriate research methods. The methods align with the research objectives and are feasible within the available resources. The proposal provides a clear and logical research design, explaining data collection, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Feasibility and potential risks are addressed effectively.	The proposal clearly defines an original and significant contribution to the field. The research question or hypothesis is innovative, filling a well-articulated gap in the literature. The potential impact of the research is well-explained, whether theoretical, practical, or societal. The proposal convincingly argues how the findings will benefit the field.	The proposal demonstrates critical thinking by acknowledging potential challenges and limitations. The feasibility of the research is carefully considered, with a clear and realistic timeline. Ethical considerations are explicitly addressed, showing awareness of data privacy, research integrity, and participant protection (if applicable).
<b>Merit (60-69%)</b>	The introduction is clear and structured, providing a good overview of the research topic and its relevance. The background covers relevant literature but may lack some depth in identifying gaps or justifying the need for the study. Some areas could be expanded or better supported with references.	The methodology is sound and well-described, with minor gaps in justification or clarity. The research design is reasonable and mostly aligned with the study's aims, but some details may be underdeveloped (e.g., data sources, analysis methods, ethical concerns).	The research has a clear contribution, but some aspects of originality or significance could be better articulated. The research question is relevant but may lack a strong connection to an existing gap in the literature.	The proposal considers feasibility and ethics, but some aspects may be underdeveloped. The research plan is mostly realistic, though minor concerns about time or resources remain. Ethical considerations are addressed but may lack detail.
<b>Pass (50-59%)</b>	The introduction presents a basic overview of the topic, but lacks clarity or depth. The research problem is not fully articulated, and the background section is somewhat superficial or missing key references. The literature review does not sufficiently justify the research.	The proposal outlines a research methodology, but it is not fully justified or lacks depth. Key aspects, such as how data will be collected or analysed, may be vague or incomplete. Ethical considerations may be overlooked. Feasibility may be questionable.	The proposal presents a relevant topic, but its contribution is weak or unclear. The research may replicate existing work without significant innovation. The importance of the findings is not well justified.	Feasibility is unclear or weakly justified. The proposal does not sufficiently discuss challenges or risks, and the research plan may be unrealistic. Ethical considerations are mentioned but not well-developed.
<b>Fail (0-49%)</b>	The introduction is unclear or missing. The research problem is not defined, and there is little or no engagement with relevant literature. There is no attempt to justify the study's importance.	The methodology is poorly defined or absent. There is no clear plan for data collection or analysis, making the research infeasible. Ethical considerations are not addressed.	The research contribution is absent or unclear. The proposal does not identify a meaningful gap in knowledge, making the project appear trivial or redundant.	The proposal lacks any meaningful discussion of feasibility, risks, or ethical concerns. The research plan is unrealistic or impractical. Ethical issues are ignored or not acknowledged.