

DOCUMENT GUIDELINES

Introduction

Unless otherwise indicated in the guidelines for a specific document, the written documentation will conform to the instructions found in this guideline. Failure to conform may result in penalties, particularly where this indicates non-professionalism (including lack of foresight).

Format

Marks will be lost if documents do not follow the following instructions.

Sections

Details on each section are found later.

- Evaluation form(s).
- Cover page (1 page)
- Executive Summary (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)
- Body
- References
- Appendices

Note, that the electronic copy **must** be submitted as a single PDF file

Pages

- 8½" x 11" paper size
- 0.75" margin minimum for binding and at top, 0.5" margin at bottom and other side.
- 12 point font. This can be reduced for some tables and other structures to improve appearance provided clarity is not lost. (Remember, not all of us have young eyes!!)
- 1.5 line spacing for body text. Single line spacing can be used for tables and lists.

The lengths of the document body are:

| <i>Document</i> | <i>Target</i> | <i>Maximum</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Proposal Draft A | na | na |
| Proposal Draft B | na | na |
| Proposal Final | 7 | 10 |
| Individual Progress Report | 4 | 6 |
| Final Report | 16 | 30 |

These lengths do NOT include figures, diagrams or pictures. Number of pages will not be very closely monitored, but the information in the body must be complete, justified and concise. Pages exceeding the maximum length may be ignored.

Page Numbering

- Pages in the Body, the References and the Appendices will have page numbers
- The other sections (Evaluation forms, Cover page, Executive Summary and Table of Contents) should not have page numbers
- The first page of the body will be Page 1.

Submitting

A hardcopy and electronic copy of the document in Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF) must be submitted. The due date and location for submitting the hardcopy can be found [here](#). A description of how to convert an electronic document into a PDF can be found [here](#). The instructions for electronically submitting a document can be found [here](#). Beforehand, you should determine if your supervisor will want a separate hardcopy.

The electronic version must be submitted as a single PDF file.

Section Details

The following sections provide details on each section of the document.

Evaluation Form and Cover Page

Use the table below to find the appropriate Evaluation form/Cover page for your document. The evaluation forms should be placed at the front of the document and student **must** fill out their personal information at the top of the form.

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Proposal Draft A | Word | PDF |
| Proposal Draft B | Word | PDF |
| Proposal Final draft | Word | PDF |
| Progress Report (Individual) | Word | PDF |
| Final Report – eval page | Word | PDF |
| – front material | Word | PDF |

In some of these evaluation forms are two fields relating to contact hours. Fill in the approximate average number of contact hours per month that you have met with your supervisor (as a group), excluding the exam and holiday period. Under “optimal # contact hours per month”, enter what you feel would be ideal amount of time. This will help your supervisor understand what you feel the supervision needs of your project are. Typically, you should be meeting regularly with your supervisor, between 1 to 3 hours per month, although the meetings may be less frequent as the project enters the later stages.

In some cases, the supervisor has delegated the supervision to a graduate student or a postdoctoral fellow (support staff). In this event, the support staff member should provide the number of contact hours he/she has had with your group since the last reporting period. This should be conveyed by the support staff member to your supervisor so that your supervisor can fill in the correct information on the evaluation form. This can be accomplished in the following way: you should attach a single page at the end of the completed document (hardcopy only), and have the support staff member responsible for guiding you (other than the supervisor) provide the following information on this page:

- his or her full name,
- the nature of the guidance provided by the support staff,
- the average number of contact hours per month the support staff had with your group and how often the support staff relayed the student's progress to the supervisor
- the signature of the support staff member along with the date that the page was signed.

Executive Summary (max. 1 page)

This section summarizes the overall document, and should include the important highlights from the document. It should be concise, professional and must stand alone. It is NOT an introduction, it is a summary.

The target audience for this section is a person who can appreciate the technology, but is not well-versed in the details or in the project itself.

The one page limit is a hard limit; you might well use less than a page.

In order to stand alone, the Executive Summary should not make any reference to other parts of the document.

NO: "A preliminary budget is included in the report."

YES: "The estimated budget for this project is \$300."

The Executive Summary should not have a page number.

Table of Contents (Usually 1 page)

List all the sections (Do not include the Table of Contents or cover pages in this listing!) and their corresponding page numbers, including sub-sections when appropriate.

Body

The body is document-specific. Details on what information should go into the body are given in the descriptions for the individual documents. You should adjust the content and the formatting of the content to suit your project.

References

Good references are an important part of documenting your work, and must be included for any quoted or essentially-copied material. Use original sources such as books, journals, and standards publications wherever possible. Minimize your use of web references, which are generally unreliable. References should be listed in the order they appear in the text, in IEEE form. Refer to <http://www.ecf.utoronto.ca/~writing/handbook-docum1b.html>. An excerpt from the IEEE author information kit is included [here](#).

Appendices

Some documents will ask for specific information in appendices.

You may also use appendices for all material that is supportive to the main body of the report and that you feel a portion of your readership may find useful to be convinced of your positions, but that is background, that is too bulky for the body of the report, or which is not your own work. The appendix material must be referenced in the main body of the report, and not just “tacked-on”. Examples of relevant materials are: manufacturers' data sheets, a lengthy computer program or part thereof, subject consent forms, primary data (when it is too voluminous), “dead ends” that you nevertheless think are important for the record. By putting material into an appendix you may improve the flow of thought in the main body of the report. Note, that irrelevant appendices detract from a report.

General Notes

1. You should not overstate your points. Remember, this is not a marketing piece, it is an engineering document. Claims and support for those claims should be the basis of your document. Unsupported statements, particularly those claiming universal or general knowledge or opinion, should be avoided.

Examples of bad statements (assuming there is no reference involved):

Software engineers want....

For years people have needed....

This interface is easy to use....

Note that you can have comparisons where the claim is obvious to even people not involved with the technologies. For example “A car is faster than a horse on most roads.”

2. Avoid clichés often seen in the popular press, such as “This cutting edge design...”
3. Use acronyms sparingly. Some are in common use (FPGA, GUI, etc) and need not be defined. Others are less common, and must be spelled out the first time used. A report full of custom-made abbreviations and acronyms not only is hard to read, it also comes across as the work of dilettantes.

Your own acronyms should be employed only when they are used more than once

- per page on average, and should be redefined once per chapter. (In some cases a glossary will exempt you from the redefinition, but remember the object is clarity.)
4. If you have a large number of acronyms and application-specific vocabulary, strongly consider using a glossary, and draw the reader's attention to the glossary at first opportunity.
 5. Watch the formatting. These are professional documents, so the formatting should be clear, neat but not overpowering.