

COMP3030 - Final Summary Report

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1 Conceptual & Physical Design

The project is aimed to provide a yet minimal but still functional of a management application for a education institution. The main actors that interacts to the app contains: **Administrators**, **Instructors**, and **Students**. There activities will go around the **Courses** at school.

1.1 Functional and Non-functional Designs

1.1.1 Functional

1.1.1.1 User Authentication and Authorization:

- The system must allow users (students, instructors, and admins) to log in using email and password credentials.
- Users must be assigned roles (student, instructor, admin) with role-specific access to features (e.g., students can enroll/unenroll, instructors can view/manage courses, admins can manage users and courses).

1.1.1.2 Course Management

- The system must display a list of courses with filters by course name, department, and schedule, supporting pagination (10 courses per page).
- Users can view detailed course information (e.g., ID, name, department, instructor, location, schedule, semester, availability) on a course detail page.
- Instructors and admins can add, edit, and delete courses, while students can only view course details.
- The system must track and display enrolled students for each course.

1.1.1.3 Enrollment Management:

- Students must be able to enroll in a course if availability is greater than zero and they are not already enrolled, with a confirmation dialog before submission.
- Students must be able to unenroll from a course if they are enrolled, with a confirmation dialog before submission.
- The system must update course availability automatically when students enroll or unenroll.

- The system must prevent enrollment if the course is full (availability ≤ 0) or if the student is already enrolled.

1.1.1.4 User Interface and Navigation:

- The system must provide a responsive web interface using Bootstrap for consistent styling across devices.
- Each role (student, instructor, admin) must have a dedicated dashboard with role-specific options.
- Flash messages must be displayed to provide feedback on actions (e.g., success or error messages for login, enrollment).

1.1.1.5 Analytics

- For management roles like **Administrators** they will have access to several dashboards to report about the courses at the institution .

1.1.2 Non-functional

- **Performance:**
 - Having high uptime, with all errors are being handled to prevent crashes.
 - Queries should execute within a reasonable time, with minimal complexity. Current target is 0.5 seconds for a dataset of 1000 enrollments.
- **Security:**
 - Passwords are encrypted when being stored in the database, with supports of password hashing function `bcrypt`.
 - Access control systems based on roles are designed properly, prevent unauthorized information access or disclosure.
 - Preventions or mitigations of common web security vulnerabilities as well as applications using SQL database system: SQL Injection, Cross-site Scripting, etc.
- **Scalability:**
 - The application is scalable with increasing numbers of users in an acceptable level, against around 300 users under peak time.
- **Usability:**
 - Provide easy-to-navigate interface, with responsive User Interface with **Bootstrap** library.
- **Reliability:**
 - Ensure data integrity with normalized database design (3NF) and constraints.

1.2 Entity-Relationship Diagram

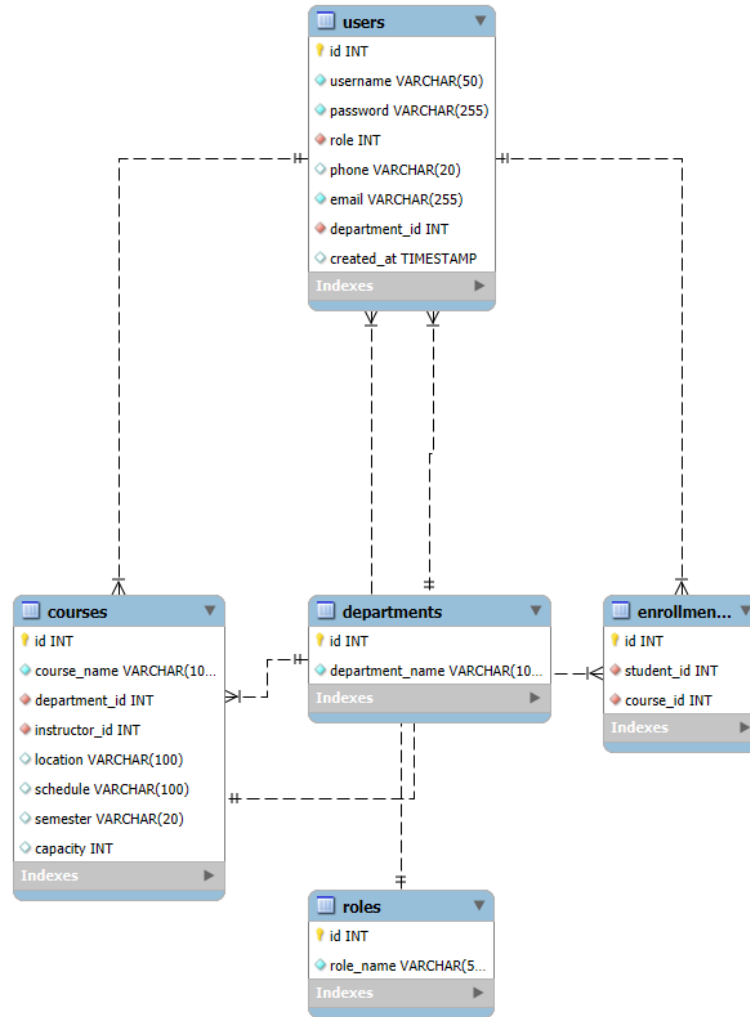


Figure 1: Entity-Relationship Diagram of the project

1.3 Proof of Normalization Form

1.3.1 First Normal Form (1NF):

- All tables have primary keys
- All attributes are atomic
- No repeating groups

1.3.2 Second Normal Form (2NF):

- All non-key attributes are fully functionally dependent on their primary keys
- No partial dependencies exist

1.3.3 Third Normal Form (3NF):

- No transitive dependencies
- Proper use of foreign keys for references
- Related data is properly normalized into separate tables

2 Implement of DB Entities

2.1 Database schema

The full script is in our GitHub repository at this [link](#).

2.2 Views

Currently, there is one view `view_course_details` in the database. It provides a simplified and denormalized view of course information with instructor details. This view joins `courses` and `users` tables to provide course information along with the instructor's name, making it easier to retrieve complete course information without writing complex joins in application queries.

```
CREATE VIEW view_course_details AS
SELECT
    c.id AS course_id,
    c.course_name,
    c.department_id,
    c.instructor_id,
    u.username AS instructor_name,
    c.location,
    c.schedule,
    c.semester,
    c.availability
FROM
    courses c
    LEFT JOIN users u ON c.instructor_id = u.id;
```

2.3 Stored Procedures

There are 04 stored procedures within the database, which are used as quick reference for most used queries within the lifecycle of the application:

Stored Procedures	Purposes
<code>get_user_role_counts()</code>	Collect number of users across roles within the databases, adaptive with future new roles.
<code>get_course_department_counts()</code>	Collect number of courses across departments, adaptive with future new departments & courses in the institute.
<code>get_student_department_counts()</code>	Collect number of students across departments, adaptive with future new departments, or changing numbers of students
<code>get_course_count_by_semester()</code>	Filtering number of courses in each semesters

Stored Procedures	Purposes
-------------------	----------

Table 1: Stored Procedures used in the application

2.4 Triggers

In the functionalities of the application, there are features that automatically update available slots in each course after enrollment. To efficiently operate this feature, we introduced two triggers:

- **before_enrollment_insert()**: This trigger is used to check if there are enough seats left in the course. Whenever a student registered a course, this trigger will reduce the available slots by one. When there is no seat available, it will raise an exception for the business logic to know and handle.
- **after_enrollment_delete()**: In several cases, student may want to drop the course. This trigger simply increase one seat for the course whenever a student unenroll it.

Due to the atomic nature of a trigger in MySQL, there are no race condition error within the the app lifecycle, within the scope of the database itself.

3 Performance Tuning

From our default schema, by design of MySQL, several indexes are automatically created (based on UNIQUE keyword, or using INTEGER).

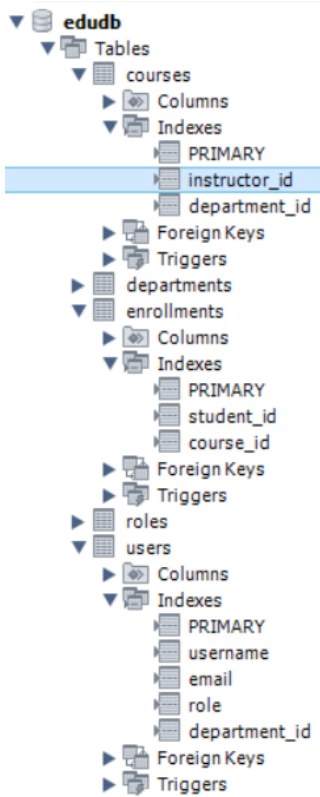


Figure 2: Default indexes in the database

Without any new indexes, normal operations in the database is very fast. For example, the query for a user in the database by email

```
1 • EXPLAIN SELECT * FROM edudb.users WHERE email = 'instructor_77@gmail.com';
```

Result Grid

Filter Rows:

Export:

Wrap Cell Content:

	id	select_type	table	partitions	type	possible_keys	key	key_len	ref	rows	filtered	Extra
▶	1	SIMPLE	users	NULL	const	email	email	1022	const	1	100.00	NULL

Figure 3: Performance of email matching to user

3.1 Problem with filter

In the application, there is a function to allow users to filter courses based on its schedule. Due to schedule could be any combination of dates within a day, the query could be very slow as there is no current index on **dates**.

Courses

Search by Course Name
Enter course name

Filter by Department
All Departments

Filter by Schedule
All Schedules

Apply Filter

ID	Course Name	Department	Id	Day	Room	Schedule	Semester	Availability
3	Mobile App Development	CBM	19	Monday	8	MTR	Spring 2023	-
10	Data Structures	CAS	26	Tuesday	102	MTR	Fall 2024	-
13	Database Systems	CBM	19	Wednesday	102	MTR	Summer 2024	-
16	Web Development	Unknown	111	Thursday	Room 102	MTR	Fall 2023	35
24	Cloud Computing	CBM	85	Friday	Room 104	MTR	Fall 2031	40
52	Introduction to Python	CHS	105		Room 101	MTR	Fall 2030	-
63	Mobile App Development	CAS	54		Room 101	MTR	Summer 2035	-
75	Data Structures	CBM	166		Room 101	MTR	Spring 2024	-
77	Operating Systems	CHS	74		Online	MTR	Summer 2026	43
81	Operating Systems	CAS	132		Room 103	MTR	Summer 2025	12

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Figure 4: Filtering function of the course search

For example, this query on dates required traversal of all 200 courses in our test database, with no potential keys are used.

1 • `EXPLAIN SELECT * FROM edudb.courses WHERE schedule = "M"`

Result Grid | Filter Rows: | Export: | Wrap Cell Content: |

	id	select_type	table	partitions	type	possible_keys	key	key_len	ref	rows	filtered	Extra
►	1	SIMPLE	courses	NULL	ALL	NULL	NULL	NULL	NULL	200	10.00	Using where

Figure 5: Sample date query

3.2 Selecting over partitions/indexes

To minimize the overhead and complexities of adding more columns, we selected to add an index on table `courses`, over the field `schedule`.

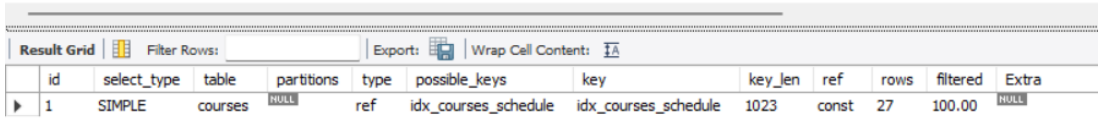
```
CREATE INDEX idx_courses_schedule ON courses(schedule);
```

3.2.1 Failed attempts

1. At first, we tried to use hash partitions, by introducing an user defined function to map the schedule as a bitmask for hashing. However, MySQL do not support custom hash functions.
2. We also tried to use list partitions on the string (as there are only 32 combinations of sorted calendar). However, we found out that the InnoDB engine of MySQL do not support partitions for tables that contains foreign keys.

3.2.2 Performance after tuning

```
1 • EXPLAIN SELECT * FROM courses WHERE schedule = "M";
```



	id	select_type	table	partitions	type	possible_keys	key	key_len	ref	rows	filtered	Extra
►	1	SIMPLE	courses	NULL	ref	idx_courses_schedule	idx_courses_schedule	1023	const	27	100.00	NULL

Figure 6: Performance after adding the index

With the introduction of this new index, the query performance boost significantly. For example, the database now only needs to filter 19 rows, which are also shared the date is “M”. The reason behind this behavior is that, the index introduced created a hash map from newly created `schedule` value. However, compared to represent the schedule as a bitmask, this is slightly slower; but required a much smaller complexity.

4 Security Configuration

4.1 Access Control & Authorization

- The system allow users (students, instructors, and admins) to log in using email and password credentials.
- Users must be assigned roles (student, instructor, admin) with role-specific access to features (e.g., students can enroll/unenroll, instructors can view/manage courses, admins can manage users and courses).
- Code References:
 - [auth_service.py](#): Handles registration, password validation, login, and password hashing.
 - [role_required.py](#): Defines a decorator to restrict route access based on user roles.

4.2 Password Storage

- For user password, we are not using native functions in SQL. There are two main reasons:

4.2.1 Lack of custom hash functions

MySQL only offers plain cryptographic hash functions, and a lot of them are deprecated like MD5 or SHA1. Also, it only supports AES-256 for symmetric encryption, but it is not are in the scope of our usage for password storage (else, we need to introduce mechanism for user’s secret key)

4.2.2 Lack of salt before hashing

For plain usage of cryptographic hash function, user’s password is still at risk of rainbow search attack, which attackers attempts to brute-force for the password (for matching hash), or looking up in public database.

- Therefore, passwords in the database are encrypted when being stored in the database, with supports of password hashing function `bcrypt`, which provides the mechanism for a easy to implement password hashing scheme.

4.3 Prevent SQL injection

A crucial component of the application is making sure that database interactions are secure. All functions that communicate with the database are grouped under the `app/db/` directory in order to prevent SQL injection attacks. These functions are implemented to only run SQL queries that are parameterized, which significantly reduces the possibility of malicious SQL code injection. By separating SQL code from user input and guaranteeing that input data is handled as data rather than executable code, parameterized queries improve the system's overall security posture.

```
cursor.execute("SELECT id FROM roles WHERE role_name = %s", (role_name,))
role_id = cursor.fetchone()[0]
cursor.execute(
    "INSERT INTO users (email, username, password, role, phone, department_id)
    ↪ VALUES (%s, %s, %s, %s, %s, %s)",
    (email, username, password, role_id, phone, department_id)
)
```

5 End-to-End Testing & Web Integration

The website provides both the data visualization for analytics, as well as CRUD functions on the objects: users (admin, instructor, student), courses, student enrollment, etc.

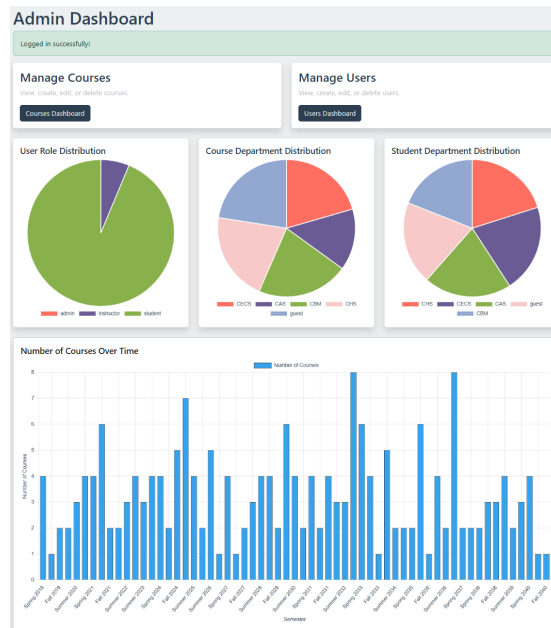


Figure 7: Analytic visualization in the application

Courses Dashboard

Search by course name All Departments All Schedules

ID	Course Name	Department	Instructor ID	Location	Schedule	Semester	Availability	Actions
1	Big Data	Unknown	180	Room 104	MF	Spring 2020	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
2	Software Engineering	CHS	32	Online	TR	Fall 2022	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
3	Mobile App Development	CBM	199	Online	MTR	Spring 2023	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
4	Database Systems	CHS	58	Online	M	Fall 2025	12	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
5	Operating Systems	Unknown	152	Room 102	F	Summer 2025	8	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
6	Networking	CHS	172	Room 101	M	Summer 2022	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
7	Cybersecurity	CAS	133	Room 105	M	Summer 2028	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
8	Cloud Computing	Unknown	188	Room 101	M	Summer 2030	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
9	Database Systems	CBM	3	Room 102	TW	Spring 2023	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
10	Data Structures	CAS	26	Room 102	MTR	Fall 2024	-	<input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>

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Figure 8: CRUD operations in courses

Course Detail - Big Data

Course Details

Course ID: 1

Course Name: Big Data

Department ID: 5

Instructor ID: 190

Instructor Name: instructor_189

Location: Room 104

Schedule: MF

Semester: Spring 2020

Availability: 0

Enrolled Students

ID	Email	Username	Department	Action
516	student_315@hotmail.com	student_315	CAS	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
881	student_680@gmail.com	student_680	CAS	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
893	student_692@example.com	student_692	CAS	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
1605	student_1404@gmail.com	student_1404	CAS	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
263	student_062@hotmail.com	student_062	CBM	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
570	student_369@hotmail.com	student_369	CBM	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>

Figure 9: Manage students in courses

More detailed application interaction will be provided in the final presentation.

6 Presentation & Material

- [Presentation's slide deck](#)
- [Final report](#)
- Source code: <https://github.com/Thanh-WuTan/edu-flask-db-project>