
Thesis: Interim Report

Overview:

The thesis interim report serves to document your progress to date in your thesis research/work: it should allow supervisors to assess your understanding of the project and its background, as well as any experimental or design work performed in the period covered by the report. More specifically, the thesis IR should provide:

1. An **Introduction** that concisely presents the context for the work that you are doing in your thesis, clearly identifies the research question or design problem that your work is addressing, and identifies the central objectives. If the scope and nature of your work has not changed substantially, your introduction will likely be a revised version of your thesis proposal, expanding on and clarifying components from that document. If your work has changed significantly, your introduction should reflect those changes, and describe context, gap, and goals related to your revised thesis project.
2. The **Literature Review** (or Background) will likely constitute the majority of the thesis IR (unless you have already done significant experimental work, other primary research, or design work). In this section of the IR, you should explain any concept or theory that is important to your thesis (including prior and current approaches to your problem) and summarize relevant research in the field to identify a gap in current knowledge. In essence, the literature review can be considered a more detailed, elaborated and well-supported version of the introduction. In the literature review, the research gap or design problem is developed in significantly greater detail and supported by references to research. If your thesis work revolves around a design project, the literature review may also help you to develop a deeper understanding of the design problem, discuss reference designs as well as define design requirements, including objectives, constraints, and criteria. Workshops for the IR will focus on this component of the document, which (in revised form) will likely form a portion of your final thesis.
3. In documenting your **Progress to Date**, write up your work as it would appear in the final thesis document, rather than as a set of steps you have performed. Clearly indicate what you have done (as well as what you are currently doing), but avoid strictly narrative prose (“I did this, then I did that ...”) in favour of descriptions of the work performed. If you have performed some experimental work already, describe and justify methods that you have chosen (eg. “To characterize the materials, SEM was chosen because ...”) and identify and discuss any preliminary results you have. In a design thesis, describe and justify the decisions you have made (eg. “Using an FPGA instead of a DSP allows for ...”), your design concept(s), as well as any preliminary evaluations of your design(s). Structure this section in a manner that suits the work that you have performed.
4. In a short section documenting your plan for **Future Work**, you should indicate the next steps for your research or design work, and identify any details relevant to each of those steps, such as potential approaches, expected outcomes, or alternative methods. A Gantt Chart can be included to show relevant milestones and concisely present a timeline for your future work.

Important: While these are the expected components for the thesis IR, the unique nature of your thesis work may demand other components or place specific requirements on your document. If you have any questions about how to adjust the IR genre to your own specific project, please ask your supervisor or discuss with the communication consultant assigned to your research group. Of course, the contents of the document are negotiable with your supervisor.

Due Date and Submission:

Please submit an electronic copy of your thesis proposal in .pdf format to Quercus, alongside a copy (in their preferred format) directly to your supervisor with a copy of the fillable proposal rubric, available on the course website. The actual IR due date must be negotiated with your supervisor, but cannot be later than **(F): November 3, 2023, (Y): January 12, 2024, (S): March 4, 2024.**

Late submissions will be subject to a penalty of 10% per day. Extensions will only be granted for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances, with appropriate documentation, and if accompanied by an approved term work petition, which are approved by your advisor and the course coordinators.

Formatting Requirements:

When designing your document, please adhere to these requirements:

- Exact length requirements should be negotiated with your supervisor and may depend on your progress to date as well as the nature of your thesis, but we expect a minimum of 10 pages of text.
- Use 12pt Times New Roman, or comparable font, using standard page layout (left justified), 1.5x spaced.
- Citations, in the body of the proposal, and references, at the end of the proposal must be provided, properly formatted to a standard appropriate for your discipline (such as IEEE or CSE).
- Informative and specific headings throughout the document are required.
- A Table of Contents, List of Figures and Tables, and Title Page are also required. The Title Page should include the thesis title, supervisor name, along with student name and number.
- Page numbers should also be included. Please paginate Table of Contents, the List of Figures and Tables, and other relevant prefatory material using roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv); paginate the body of the thesis using regular numbers (1, 2, 3).

Support:

Writing support for the Interim Report will be delivered via individual consultations for F students, and via online lectures (via Thesis Quercus site) and in-person workshops for Y/S students (Y/S students will also have access to individual appointments with communication consultants). A basic rubric and a rubric guide for the IR is also available on Quercus. The online IR lecture/workshops will focus on the literature review, covering tools for accurately summarizing, using and documenting sources effectively, and organizing your literature review. Please watch your email and the Thesis Quercus page for announcements on the topic.

Appointments can be booked through the Engineering Communication Program's online system at <https://ecp.engineering.utoronto.ca/ecp-tutoring-centre/book-appointments/>. A meeting too close to the due dates of the various components of the thesis project may be challenging to schedule, since we expect that those will likely be the busiest times for the tutors. Multiple meetings are possible, but again, please plan in advance.