

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**Department of Computer Science**

**Guidelines for MSc(CompSc) Dissertation (COMP7704)**  
**for Cohort 2015 Student**

**1 Introduction**

In fulfilling the requirements of the MSc(CompSc) degree, students have to earn in total the credit of 12 modules. Students have to take 8 regular courses and complete a dissertation in order to satisfy the requirements.

This document provides a general guideline of the dissertation (COMP7704). This module provides an opportunity for the student to study and work independently on a substantial computing related dissertation under the supervision of academics in the Department of Computer Science.

**1.1 Weighting**

Note that the weighting of COMP7704 dissertation is equivalent to 4 modules of regular courses.

**1.2 Grouping of Dissertation**

Up to 3 students can form a group and work together on the same topic.

**1.3 Individual Dissertation**

Unless otherwise specified, dissertation for MSc(CompSc) are individual dissertations. Each student has to submit a self-contained dissertation of 80-150 pages. (See Section Assessment for the details.)

**1.4 Enrollment Period and Duration**

All dissertations commence in the second semester of an academic year. Students are allowed to apply enrolment in a period specified by the Programme Office, in November in the first semester. Enrollment in other times will not be accepted.

The dissertations can be completed in 2 to 5 semesters (with 3 semesters in normal) for full-time students, or 4 to 8 semesters (with 5 semesters in normal) for part-time students, including Summer Semesters, but not longer than the maximum period of the study of the whole degree. Note that the maximum period for MSc(CompSc) is 3 years for part-time students and 2 years for full-time students. Also note that a dissertation represents a significant amount of work (at least 600 learning hours) and a request to complete the dissertation shorter than the minimum period will only be granted if students can show sufficient progress.

## **2 Dissertation Selection Process**

Students can select their dissertations proposed by the teaching or research staff of the Department of Computer Science. Dissertation selection usually takes place in November. Each dissertation will be associated with one or more streams from “General Computer Science Stream”, “Financial Computing Stream”, “Multimedia Computing Stream” and “Information Security Stream”. Students who selected non-general specialized streams must complete the dissertation under the same stream.

### **2.1 Dissertation Selection**

A list of dissertation proposals from the teaching or research staff of the Department of Computer Science will be posted on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet in November. Some dissertation works may be led by industrial people with teaching staff as the coordinator. Students make their selections by submitting a dissertation selection form available on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet. Besides, students are required to submit short proposals on the selected topics together with the dissertation selection forms to show their interest and understanding on the selected topics.

### **2.2 List of Teachers**

A list of teachers with their expertise will be posted on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet. Students may approach them to seek advice for other dissertation topics not in the given list. Students are welcome to make appointments with the teachers via email or through the Programme Office. The email addresses of the teachers are also listed on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet.

### **2.3 Self-proposed Dissertation**

Students may also propose dissertations by themselves. Self-proposed dissertations should be discussed with potential supervisors. Students should make sure that the teachers concerned have endorsed and agreed to supervise the proposed dissertations before submitting their enrollment forms. Besides, students are required to submit a short proposal on the proposed topic together with the enrollment form to show their interest and understanding on the proposed topic. Students can choose to tag the self-proposed dissertation to one or more streams by having the approval of stream associate directors.

### **2.4 Dissertation Allocation**

The dissertation allocation will be done by the Programme Director / Programme Office right after the end of the enrollment period. Students may be interviewed by the potential supervisors. The final result will be announced on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet.

### **2.5 Drop or Change Allocated Dissertation**

After enrolling in the dissertation, a student is allowed to:

- drop allocated dissertation and re-enroll in the dissertation in the next academic year.
- change allocated dissertation to another available dissertation if he/she is not satisfied with the allocation result.

To apply for drop or change allocated dissertation, you have to submit the Drop / Change Allocated Dissertation Form, which can be downloaded from the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet, **within two weeks after the dissertation is allocated.**

### **3 Assessment**

Each dissertation will be assessed by examiners consisting of the supervisor, a second examiner and a moderator. The moderator would be the associate director for the stream of the programme. The role of the moderator is to scale the grade distribution of all students in the programme. The assessment is based on the **dissertation proposal, webpage, interim report, poster, oral examination, as well as dissertation.** Students are advised to maintain good communication with their supervisors. They should schedule sufficient meetings with their supervisors so that the progress of the dissertation is well monitored, and ensure that they have put in a substantial amount of work worthy of the 4-module dissertation.

#### **3.1 Detailed Dissertation Proposal**

After the dissertation allocation has finished, each student has to submit a more detailed proposal to their supervisor by the end of February. The proposal includes the objectives and scope of the dissertation and the schedule for the implementation. Students should consult their supervisors about the feasibility of their proposals. The duration of a dissertation, i.e. the number of semesters, should also be stated in the proposal. Also the estimated number of learning hours for each milestone in the dissertation work (e.g. background reading for 100 hours) should be clearly stated.

#### **3.2 Dissertation Webpage**

Each student has to design a dissertation webpage and place it into a dissertation account allocated by the Technical Office of the Department of Computer Science. The dissertation webpage should contain details of the dissertation in an easy-to-understand manner. The students should design the webpage at the beginning of the dissertation work and keep the webpage updated to reflect their latest progress so that their supervisors can closely monitor the progress of the dissertation. This webpage must be ready by the time the students submit the intention to submit dissertation and interim report.

### **3.3 Intention to Submit Dissertation, Interim Report and Initial Presentation**

Students should submit an intention to submit dissertation together with an interim report and give an initial presentation to the supervisor and a second examiner (proposed by the supervisor) 4 months prior to the submission of the dissertation. That is, students who plan to submit their dissertation on December 1, May 1 and August 1 should submit the intention to submit dissertation and the interim report by August 1, January 1 and April 1, respectively.

The report can be in the form of a few pages of summary listing the work that has been done and the schedule for the rest of the dissertation, which allow the supervisors to monitor the progress of the dissertation even more closely. The supervisors will then determine whether the students concerned can complete the dissertation on time or need to spend more semesters on it. Note that a student must be taking or have completed a 10-hour dissertation writing course offered by Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES) before submitting the intention to submit dissertation.

### **3.4 Poster Exhibition**

Each student has to attend a 4-hour poster exhibition, which is held twice every year (i.e. November and June), before completing the dissertation. Students are required to prepare posters for the captioned exhibition. Students are also required to stand by their posters to answer questions about their dissertations when the judge panel (who is familiar with the topic) comes and views their posters. Each dissertation group should have at least one student on duty during the period, so that the judges can find someone there to demonstrate the dissertation to them. The score of the judge panel may contribute up to 10% towards the final marks. You may use notebook in the exhibition but you need to charge it up beforehand. Your group will share one small table to put your notebook. Your notebook can access the Internet through **HKU WiFi Network**. Make sure that the network card of your notebook has been registered to use HKU ACEnet, and select "University WiFi" to connect.

The poster should have size 36 inch \* 36 inch with 150dpi (5400 \* 5400 pixels) in TIFF or JPEG format. The color mode should be CMYK (RGB will not be accepted).

**Poster information:**

Number of posters: One

Poster size: 36 inch \* 36 inch with 150dpi (5400 \* 5400 pixels)

Poster file format: TIFF or JPEG

Poster color mode: CMYK (RGB will not be accepted)

Printing cost: For each dissertation group, the Programme Office will pay the printing cost for **one 36 inch \* 36 inch poster only**. For extra copies, students will have to pay out for their own pocket for the extra cost incurred. The printing cost for each 36 inch \* 36 inch poster is around HK\$127.

### **3.5 Oral Examination**

Each student has to attend an oral examination for the dissertation. The examination includes a 30 minutes presentation from the student, followed by a demonstration and then question-and-answer sessions. The students' performance will be judged by the supervisor and the second examiner. The oral examinations will be scheduled at the end of a semester but not later than two weeks prior to the submission of the dissertation. The exact arrangement will be announced on the Moodle / MSc(CompSc) Intranet.

Students can contact the Programme Office for the arrangement of the presentation venue if they require special equipment for their presentation, such as overhead projector, Internet connection, etc.

### 3.6 Dissertation Submission

Students should submit their **draft dissertation** to the supervisor and the second examiner by one month before the deadline of the dissertation and submit their final version of dissertation to the Programme Office before the deadline of the dissertation set by the Faculty (December 1, May 1 or August 1). The dissertation may have to be revised according to the comments of the examiners after the oral examination before the final submission. Each student has to submit one hard copy as well as one electronic copy. The electronic copy of the dissertation should be submitted to Moodle in one single file in PDF format. **Failure in submission may lead to a failure in the dissertation study as a whole.**

Please refer to the reference "Guidelines for MSc(CompSc) Dissertation Report" for the suggested format of the report.

### 3.7 Grading of Dissertation

The grading of a dissertation includes the assessment of the above mentioned requirements. It also depends on the originality, creativeness, and achievement of the dissertation. The following table gives a reference for marks allocation. The exact mark allocation may subject to individual examiners.

Category	Supervisor	2nd Examiner	Judge panel	Combined
Proposal	5%			5%
Webpage	5%			5%
Interim Report	5%			5%
Poster exhibition			10%	10%
Oral Examination	5%	5%		10%
Dissertation	45%	20%		65%
Total	65%	25%	10%	100%

## **4 Fee Payment**

For students admitted in 2015, fee of the 4-module dissertation (\$36,000) should be paid in two installments. All paid fees are not refundable.

### **4.1 Installments**

Installments of \$18,000 each will be included in the debit note issued by the Finance Office each semester before the balance is settled. This could be together with other module fee or in a separate debit note. Students failed to pay the installments on time may be de-registered according to University regulations.

## **5 Financial Support**

Each student enrolled in dissertation may receive financial support of no more than HK\$3,000. The support may be used for purchasing reference book and equipment, etc. Students should check with the CS Technical Office and see whether they have the equipment before purchasing. The items to be purchased should be endorsed by the supervisor. All purchased materials remain the property of the university and must be returned after use.

### **5.1 Procedure for the Claim**

Please provide the original copy of the receipt (showing the names and the chops of the shop) for making the claim. The receipt should also be signed by the supervisor and sent to the Programme Office not later than one month before submitting the Dissertation. Please contact the Programme Office for the arrangement of the claim. Any late claim will not be entertained.



## **6 Dissertation Resubmission**

Student may apply in writing to the Programme Director for permission to undertake resubmission for failed dissertation. Application should be sent to the Programme Office. The resubmission fee is HK\$9,000 (subject to change).

## **7 Enquiry**

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