PRCO304: Assessment Criteria

Students who fail to provide a demonstration of their project will be awarded a module mark of zero.

Students who fail to produce a Final Report whose main body exceeds 5000 words and which satisfies minimal quality criteria[1] will receive a module mark of at most 38%.

Beyond this, PRCO304 projects are assessed according to 8 categories:

1. Background and objectives
2. Approach
3. Outcome
4. Verification and validation
5. Legal, social, ethical and professional issues
6. Project management
7. Reflection
8. Communication

Grading criteria

a) For each category, a mark classification (40-49, 50-59,…, etc.) will be assigned and an overall final module mark produced.

In generating the final module mark, it is assumed that the "Outcome" category will be roughly weighted 70%

b) Mark classifications for individual categories are based upon the pass-fail criteria (required to gain a mark ≥ 40) and assessment criteria given below.

c) A mark ≥ 60 is awarded for a category only if its assessment criteria were met and the quality of work undertaken would have been regarded as satisfactory had it been undertaken in a professional environment.   Of course "satisfactory" does not mean perfect.

d) A mark ≥ 80 is awarded for a category only if the work undertaken within that category is outstanding; it should significantly exceed the criteria given in (c) above with respect to one or more clearly identifiable characteristics[2] (e.g., product features, product quality, process quality).

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[1] Obviously this implies the need to get feedback from your supervisor on a draft report
[2] There is no set list – discuss with your supervisor

Given that all projects are unique, markers are at liberty to interpret these assessment criteria as appropriate.   Students are welcome to discuss with their supervisor how these criteria might apply to their project.

1.   Background[3] and objectives

Inputs to be considered
  i.   Final Report; PID
  ii.   Any additional information available about the background

Assessment criteria
1. *At the start of the project*, were the associated elements of the PID (specifically Introduction; Business case; Project objectives; Initial scope; Quality expectations) considered by the supervisor to be reasonable[4]?
2. Were the project objectives complete and SMART[5]?   In particular, were the objectives reasonable given the project background?
3. Does the Final Report contain an appropriate introduction and account of the background of the project?

Pass-fail criteria
- Assessment criteria 1 and 3 above

2.   Approach

Inputs to be considered
  i.   PID; plans
  ii.   Final Report
  iii.   Any additional information available relating to the student's approach

Assessment criteria
1. *At the start of the project*, was the PID considered by the supervisor to be reasonable?
2. Does the Final Report contain an appropriate evaluation of possible approaches (e.g., methodologies, processes, technologies, tools) and other background materials;   is this evaluation of appropriate depth and breadth;   does it display appropriate knowledge and/or research?
3. Does the Final Report describe the intended approach at an appropriate level of detail?
4. Was the scope[6] clearly documented (either in the PID or subsequently)?

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[3] In the current context we take "background" to be mean the client/business background as expressed in the business need and business objectives.   In the case when a real client does not exist, the alternative information identified in (at the end of) the PID guidance can be used instead

[4] Needless to say if (at the start of the project) the PID was not seen as being reasonable, then the PID should have been rejected until the matter was rectified.

[5] Meaning: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant (to the Business; traceable to the business need/ objectives); Time-bound

5. Does the Final Report robustly justify the intended approach?
6. Does the Final Report provide a description of the execution of the approach at an appropriate level of detail?   Was execution of the approach carried out to a high standard?
7. Was the student proactive in their handling of the project?

Pass-fail criteria
- Assessment criteria 1 and 3 above

3.   Outcome

Inputs to be considered
   i.   Project objectives; Project plan; Quality plan; Scope definition; Requirements document[7]
   ii.   Final Report; end-Project report; User Guide
   iii. Demonstration
   iv.   Any additional information available about the outcome

Assessment criteria
1. Were the project objectives met? Were they demonstrated to have been met?
2. Were the products identified in the project objectives/plan/scope delivered and did they have the required core[8] characteristics and quality features?

Pass-fail criteria
- A minimal final deliverable was produced which satisfies some of its core requirements[9]

4.   Verification and validation (V&V)

Inputs to be considered
   i.   Final Report
   ii.   Review meetings (with Supervisor)
   iii. Any additional information available about V&V on the project

Assessment criteria
1. Was appropriate validation of interim products carried out during the project (e.g., of project objectives, requirements, designs) to ensure that quality expectations and user needs were being addressed?

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[6] Scope should cover both what the student will (and possibly won't) do and what the student will (and possibly won't) produce
[7] The form of the definition of the intended outcome may vary from project to project
[8] Students have been advised to divide scope into a core – which they are confident of delivering, together with optional additional features.   The priority should be to deliver the core features with high quality.
[9] Students are strongly encouraged to gain feedback on this issue from their supervisor via product review meetings.

2. Was appropriate validation of the final product carried out to ensure that quality expectations and user needs were met?
3. Was appropriate verification/quality control carried out to ensure compliance with the requirements and quality plan?
4. Were methods chosen for V&V appropriate, and was their usage (and results) documented in the Final report?

Pass-fail criteria
- Some verification and/or validation of the final product/outcome was carried out and documented in the Final Report

5.   Legal, social, ethical and professional (LSEP)

Inputs to be considered
  i.   Final Report
  ii. Any additional information available on LSEP issues

Assessment criteria
1. Does the Final Report provide an appropriate (retrospective) evaluation/discussion of LSEP issues that were encountered/relevant to the project?
2. Were LSEP issues identified during the project and factored appropriately into the execution of the project?
3. Does the evaluation of LSEP issues have appropriate breadth and depth, and does it demonstrate appropriate knowledge and/or research?
4. Did the project adhere to the University's Ethics policy and requirements for ethical approval?

Pass-fail criteria
- Assessment criteria 1 and 4 above

6.   Project management

Inputs to be considered
  i.   PID; Highlight reports; stage plans; end-Project report; project post-mortem; any other project management artefacts (e.g., exception reports & plans)
  ii.   Final Report
  iii. Review meetings (with supervisor)
  iv.   Any additional information available about the management of the project

Assessment criteria
1. Were the project management artefacts (i above) produced in a timely fashion and did they adhere to the quality criteria set out on the PRCO304 documentation?
2. *At the start of the project*, was the PID seen as reasonable by the supervisor?
3. Were review meetings held as planned/required and were they effective?

4. Were deviations from the plan a result of mis-management[10]?
5. Was project control exercised properly (and in line with the control plan identified in the PID) with respect to:
    a. Schedule control
    b. Risk management
    c. Communication
    d. The use of exception reports and (supervisor-agreed) exception plans
6. Does the Final Report provide a reasonable overview of the project management of the project, and do the appendices contain copies of the project management artefacts?
7. Was the student proactive and "on-top of" their management and handling of the project?
8. Does any additional information that is available suggest that the project has been well-handled?

Pass-fail criteria
- Assessment criteria 2; was a PID submitted on time?
- Were the majority of Highlight reports produced on time and did they adhere to the quality criteria set out on the PRCO304 documentation?
- Were the majority of review meetings held as planned/required?

7.   Reflection

Inputs to be considered
    i.   Final Report, particularly: end-Project report; project post-mortem
    ii.   Any additional information available about the student's reflection on the project

Assessment criteria
1. Does the end-Project report provide a robust, objective and detailed evaluation of the achievement of the project objectives?
2. Does the post-mortem provide a reflective evaluation (e.g., of methods, approaches, technologies, etc.), and suggest/justify lessons learnt and/or alternatives that (with the benefit of hindsight) might have been preferable?
3. Do the project conclusions provide a reasonable summary?
4. Do the student's evaluations/reflections have depth?

Pass-fail criteria
- Does the end-Project report provide an evaluation of the achievement of the project objectives?
- Does the post-mortem provide some reflection on methods/approaches/technologies?

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[10] Deviations from the plan are acceptable provided they are not the result of mis-management, and provided they are well managed.

8.   Communication

Inputs to be considered
   i.   Final Report
  ii.   Demonstration
 iii.   Review meetings (with Supervisor)
  iv.   Any further communications

Assessment criteria
1. Is the Final Report written and presented to a quality (e.g., structure, clarity, conciseness, grammar, typos) that would be acceptable in a professional environment?
2. Does the Final Report include a statement of the word count, and is this within the stated limit?
3. Were the demonstration and supervisory meetings conducted effectively (and with appropriate planning), and was student communication there-in clear & authoritative?

Pass-fail criteria
- Does the main body of the Final Report exceed 5000 words?
- Does the Final Report have an appropriate structure[11] and provide at least a basic overview of the project?
- Did the demonstration provide a basic understanding of the project and its products/outcomes?

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[11] E.g., As given in the FinalReport guidance