Meeting 5: The Second Coursework

CST3990 Undergraduate Individual Projects

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The Second Coursework

The Second Coursework has two main parts.

1. The Literature Review: A comprehensive review of the literature around your topic.
2. First Steps: The first ideas and methods you have developed in the past few months towards your aim.

The Literature Review

By literature analysis we mean a systematic examination of a problem, by means of an analysis of published sources, undertaken with a specific purpose in mind.

With the problem and specific objective established, i.e. what should be analysed, the next problem concerns appropriate use of relevant sources.

Literature Analysis

You may use a combination of the following, in order to ensure that you have considered all relevant sources:

- Bibliographic databases: By searching or browsing their content using a sensible strategy, e.g. by using a set of keywords which your background reading and problem statement have identified as potentially relevant, by using a reference to a given source and locating additional sources

- Journals and conference proceedings: By browsing the table of contents in conference proceedings, or by searching for relevant articles using the search function at a journal's web site.

Literature Analysis

A related difficulty is that of completeness. One of the difficulties in a literature analysis is to know when one has collected enough material. In other words, at what stage should you stop collecting material?

Finally, expert opinions, such as your supervisor's, can be of great help in ensuring that your intended strategy is feasible.

It may be that at certain points in the process, depending on what emerges, you need to reconsider your strategy and try other techniques for ensuring relevance and completeness. In these situations, it is good to have someone monitoring your progress; someone who will be able to help by suggesting planned or unplanned deviations. If you do deviate from your plan, you should be able to give good reasons for doing so.

The First Steps

The deadline of the Second Coursework is in January. We expect you develop some ideas by then.

You should then present them in your Second Coursework. The weight of the "first steps" is the same as the "literature review".

Marking Criteria for Second Coursework

▶ **Literature Review** (40 %): This should demonstrate evidence of scholarly activity of surveying the relevant literature. Factors to be considered for marking are whether problem background and literature review have been clearly presented and accurately referenced. Further criteria include whether it has critical reflection applied as appropriate, relevant to the over-all project. In a good literature review and survey, one can learn the state of the art of the research area.

▶ **First Steps** (40 %): Second coursework is not just a literature review. We expect students to take the first steps of their research. This can be towards developing an artefact or an algorithm as well as developing the main hypothesis or analysis. In a good interim report, one should have the sense that the research is progressing in the right direction towards the goal.

Marking Criteria for Second Coursework

▶ **Style** (10 %): In the interim report, one would expect to see evidence of the student's ability to complete an effective final project report, for example in the report's structure, logical presentation, quality of written English, use of diagrams and referencing as well as articulate prose. A good interim report is interesting to read and must have a good narrative. Technical proficiency in English language will also be considered.

▶ **Ethics form or the proof of application for the MORE form** (10 %): The low-risk projects can be signed-off by supervisors. In this case, the one-page form must be attached. If there is no form, there is no point to be awarded.

More than-low-risk projects need to apply for ethics approval. A copy of the application form must be attached. If there is no form, there is no point to be awarded.

Students cannot start their research before obtaining the approval if they need one.
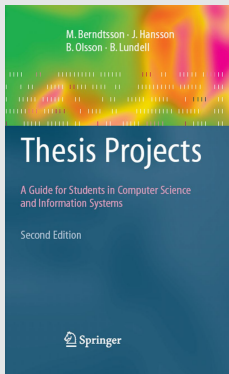
Let us see some sample second courseworks now.

▶ See MyLearning for samples.

References

These slides are based on our textbook

Mikael Berndtsson & Jörgen Hansson & Björn Olsson & Björn Lundell, *Thesis Projects*: A Guide for Students in Computer Science and Information Systems, Second Edition, Springer, 2008.

M. Berndtsson · J. Hansson
B. Olsson · B. Lundell

Thesis Projects

A Guide for Students in Computer Science
and Information Systems

Second Edition

Springer

Thank you!