Project Proposals Marking Guidance

Marking descriptors are provided to staff and students as guidance. The mark descriptors capture essential elements of proposals at different levels but are not exhaustive. A degree of academic judgement must always be exercised when evaluating a proposal. The School of Computer Science employs robust inspection, second marking and moderation processes.

The marking descriptors below are designed to be applied to proposals of various lengths. When considering shorter proposals, e.g., 1,000 words, the criteria should be applied holistically.

A sensible proposal that outlines a viable problem, methodology, implementation approach, and evaluation, should typically receive at least 60. Proposals in higher categories are characterised by careful problem positioning, sound methods, convincing implementation plans, reasoned evaluation approaches, and some affinity with the state-of-the-art and/or existing systems. Proposals in lower categories will be characterised by notable omissions and oversights.

A fail mark, i.e., below 40 for undergraduates and below 50 for taught postgraduates, will suggest that a proposal is not viable or appropriate. All mark of 40 or below trigger a review of the project.

80-100 — Outstanding

Problem Definition: Exceptionally clear and rigorous articulation of a significant technical problem, with thorough comparisons to state-of-the-art approaches or existing systems. Demonstrates deep understanding of the problem's importance and relevance.

Methodology: Proposal outlines rigorous and appropriate methods to address the problem, showing exceptional analytical ability and astute decision-making in the choice of methodologies.

Implementation Plan: Systematic and detailed plan for implementation, including potentially innovative aspects. Strong understanding of necessary tools and techniques.

Evaluation Plan: Comprehensive and robust evaluation plan with clear metrics and methods for assessing success, supported by solid evidence and justifications.

Proposal Quality: Systematic, well-structured, and professionally presented proposal with exceptional clarity and accuracy. Excellent use of academic and/or technical literature.

70-79 — Excellent

Problem Definition: Clearly defined problem with solid comparisons to existing work. Shows strong understanding of the problem's significance and context.

Methodology: Proposal demonstrates deep understanding of relevant Computer Science concepts and methods, with well-justified choices.

Implementation Plan: Accurate and mostly robust implementation plan with well-justified design choices and consideration of potential challenges.

Evaluation Plan: Evidence-based and well-structured evaluation plan using appropriate methodologies and metrics.

Proposal Quality: Well-structured, clear, and professionally presented proposal. Excellent use of academic and/or technical literature, perhaps with some errors.

60-69 — Very Good

Problem Definition: Significant and relevant problem that has been sensibly motivated.

Methodology: Sound critical thinking and substantial methods are evident.

Implementation Plan: Accurate plan with some minor errors or omissions, demonstrating understanding of necessary steps and tools.

Evaluation Plan: Rigorous plan based on sound methodology, with viable methods.

Proposal Quality: Sufficiently detailed proposal to enable understanding of planned work.

50-59 — Good

Problem Definition: Generally well-defined problem with some conceptual errors or omissions. Shows some understanding of the problem's relevance.

Methodology: Appropriate methods proposed, but with one or two significant errors or lack of depth.

Implementation Plan: Good plan with some key parts not rigorously detailed or justified.

Evaluation Plan: Evaluation plan may lack substance or be partially based on opinion.

Proposal Quality: Clear proposal but may lack some details necessary for full understanding and reproducibility.

40-49 — Undergraduate Pass but M-level FAIL

Problem Definition: Problem specification may be anecdotal or superficial, lacking depth and intellectual challenge.

Methodology: Basic methods with major errors or omissions. Limited understanding.

Implementation Plan: Basic plan with potential flaws or incomplete details.

Evaluation Plan: Informal or weak evaluation plan, likely based on anecdotal evidence.

Proposal Quality: Proposal may be unclear, poorly structured, or lack significant details.

30-39 — Undergraduate and M-level FAIL

Problem Definition: Insufficiently substantial problem addressed, lacking depth and clarity.

Methodology: Insufficiently rigorous methods proposed, with substantial errors throughout.

Implementation Plan: Incomplete or substantially flawed implementation plan.

Evaluation Plan: Weak or non-existent evaluation plan, lacking rigor and evidence.

Proposal Quality: Poorly presented proposal with significant missing or unclear sections.

0-29 — INCOMPLETE

Problem Definition: Little to no evidence of substantial problem specification.

Methodology: Inability to propose appropriate methods using scientific and engineering principles.

Implementation Plan: Severely incomplete or erroneous implementation plan.

Evaluation Plan: Little to no evaluation plan present.

Proposal Quality: Incomplete proposal with major omissions and lack of clarity.