



**Master of Information Technology / Master of Computer Science**

# **Guidelines for Project Interim Report**

**MIT/MCS 3101 – Individual Project**

**Version 7.3**

**(Last update 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015)**

## **Project Interim Report Guidelines**

Each student is required to submit an interim report **by the end of the third semester**. The deadline for the submission is available on the PG VLE. The students doing a group project need to submit **one** interim report highlighting each member's contributions separately. The interim report should be submitted to the **Academic & Publication** Branch of the UCSC.

The interim report aims to ensure that you understand the project objectives, have mastered the relevant literature, have done a good design of your solution and have a realistic time plan.

Along with the interim report you ***should submit*** the duly filled and signed ***Interim Report Submission Form*** **separately** at the time of submission of your interim report. The contents of the Interim Report are listed below.

### **Basic Formatting Guidelines**

#### **Cover**

The interim report should be **spiral bound**. It is NOT necessary to laminate the cover page or include plastic cover sheets. The title, the author's name, index number and the year of submission should appear in the front cover. Templates for these pages will be available on the PGVLE.

#### **Paper**

Each copy of the report shall be on good quality **A4-sized** clear white paper having at least 80 gsm. Printing should be done on **both sides** of the paper.

#### **Font**

The general text should be in **12 point Times New Roman**. Chapter headings should be in **16 point** size and any other title should be in **14 point size**.

#### **Line Spacing**

The typing should be with a line spacing of **1.5**. Candidates may choose an appropriate spacing for the **appendices** and it should appear **after** the references.

#### **Margins**

Top, right and bottom margins should be equivalent to **2 cm**. The left margin should be **3 cm**.

#### **Pagination**

Please note the quality of report content to be more important than its number of pages. Therefore you are encouraged decide on the most important information (which would benefit the readers) to be provided in your report, avoiding any unnecessary repetition of detail.

Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the report. Preliminary pages (first page, cover page and title page) should not be numbered. **Starting** with statement of declaration, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables and list of abbreviations that precede the Preliminary pages should be numbered with **lower case roman numerals** beginning with **i** for the page that contains the statement of declaration. Number the main text with **1**, starting with the Chapter 1. All page numbers should be placed on the **bottom** (halfway between the last text line and the bottom edge of the paper).

## Report Structure

There is no single report structure applicable to the wide range of projects undertaken by students. The example structure given can be adapted in your report. Before diverging significantly from the given structure, note that many successful reports and scientific papers have a structure similar to this.

In general, all reports should be divided into a series of numbered sections, each with appropriate titles. You may consult **your supervisor/ project coordinator** if there are any issues regarding the structure of the report.

The following pages are compulsory for your thesis:

- **First Page**

The first page format and the contents are given in the PG VLE (Masters\_Project\_First\_Page). Please use this page as your first page of the thesis.

- **Cover Page**

The cover page should include the **full title** of the dissertation, the **author's name with initials** and the **year of submission**. A template of a Cover Page is available in the PGVLE.

- **Title Page [NOT REQUIRED FOR THE INTERIM REPORT]**

The title page should include the **university crest**, the **full title** of the thesis, the **author's name**, and **the degree** for which the thesis is submitted, the **full name** of the UCSC and the **year of submission**. A template of a Title Page is available in the PGVLE.

- **Declaration Page [NOT REQUIRED FOR THE INTERIM REPORT]**

The thesis must contain the signed and dated statement of originality and conformity by the candidate and the supervisor. Remember to include the **Student registration** and the **index number** after the student name. A template of a Declaration Page is available in the PGVLE.

- **Abstract [NOT REQUIRED FOR THE INTERIM REPORT]**

Generally the abstract is a summary of the report within one A4 page and it should not exceed **one** A4 page.

The abstract should be a concise description of the problem addressed in the project work, the method of solution, the results, and conclusions. The abstract should help a prospective reader decide whether to read the entire dissertation or not. The abstract may be the only available part of your dissertation that the readers can obtain via electronic literature searches or through published abstracts. Therefore, enough key information must be included to make the abstract useful to someone who may to reference your work. When writing the abstract use the active voice when possible, but much of it may require passive constructions. The abstract is only text. It should **not** contain: lengthy background information, references to other literature, elliptical (i.e., ending with ...) or incomplete sentences, abbreviations or terms that may be confusing to readers, any sort of illustration, figure, or table, or references to them.

It is suggested that the abstract be structured as follows:

- Problem: What you tackled, and why this needed a solution
- Objectives: What you set out to achieve, and how this addressed the problem
- Methodology: How you went about solving the problem
- Achievements: What you managed to achieve, and how far it meets your objectives.

You are encouraged to refer web on how to write an abstract.

- **Acknowledgements [NOT REQUIRED FOR THE INTERIM REPORT]**

It is expected of the candidate to acknowledge all persons and organizations that facilitated the work described in the Thesis.

- **Table of Contents**

This should list all the chapters, sections, and subsections of the report giving the page number on which each starts. You are required to use the word processor's facility for generating table of contents rather than typing titles and page numbers.

A list giving the number, title, and the page of each figure used in your report should be provided. You are required to use the word processor's facility for generating List of Figures

- **List of Tables**

A list giving the number, title, and the page of each table used in your report should be provided. You are required to use the word processor's facility for generating the list of tables.

- **List of Abbreviations**

If abbreviations are used in the thesis, a list should be provided.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The introduction chapter should provide the overview of the project in a way that motivates the reader. It is very important to define the problem clearly and briefly. The introduction can also include the motivation behind the project. The objective(s) of project together with the scope must be described clearly in this chapter.

This chapter puts the work into context. Having read it, the reader should be left in no doubt as to:

- The topic area to which the work applies
- Why the work is being done
- What else has been done in the area and by whom
- How the author proposes to tackle the problem.

The introduction chapter shall contain sections such as Motivation, Statement of the problem (if research type), Aims and Objectives, Scope, Structure of the thesis. MCS Students should include Expected contribution/Novelty of the research/application as well.

It is common to end this chapter with a brief overview of each of the subsequent chapters of the report.

- **Chapter 2: Background**

This chapter should give essential background information with references to published material in research papers, URLs, magazine articles and similar. Depending on the type of the project, this chapter may include **one/both** of the following:

- MIT: Critical review of similar systems available (open source and proprietary) and technologies available and relevant to implement the system. You are not required to define technology, platforms etc but identifying alternative technologies that are available for implementation and their pros and cons should be included.
- MCS: Critical review of similar research. You are encouraged to refer web on how to review literature.

In either case should avoid standard text book material such as definitions etc.

**A literature review:** A survey of existing similar systems, related work could be provided in this chapter. A good literature survey should demonstrate your awareness and understanding of the background literature to your topic. It should begin by setting the proposed work in a wide context, and progress to a more detailed account of the most relevant work in the area, taking care to include some up-to-date references. Reviewing the literature can help to identify questions and issues that have not yet been answered, ideally questions that will be addressed through your project. It may also be appropriate to incorporate criticisms of previous work, although you need to take care here that your criticisms do not reflect a lack of understanding.

You are encouraged to refer web on how to conduct “literature review” and writing style. You should not just provide a list of references followed by a short summary of each of them. Instead the review should be organized and structured in a meaningful way, and the themes and relationships between the references identified. You should expect to redraft the review several times in order to arrive at a text that is clearly written, easy to understand, but that displays an in-depth understanding of the topic. The review would include taxonomies, tabular comparisons of past work, approaches etc.

In summary, you should consider the following points when writing your literature review:

- The literature survey should be focused and concise. Only references that are directly relevant to the project work should be reviewed.
- A literature review is not undertaken for its own sake; it is included in a dissertation or report because it allows you to demonstrate that you have a good understanding of the background to the project.
- References should not be reviewed simply by listing each one in turn and writing a short paragraph about it. Rather, the themes and relationships between reference sources should be identified; that is, the literature review should be organized in a useful and meaningful way.
- The literature survey should be up-to-date. There should be some evidence that the student has read recent literature in the relevant field.
- It is important not just to describe previous work, but to criticize it (and to justify the criticisms). Which ideas identified by the literature review are useful and can be applied to the project? Which ideas are not useful, and why not?
- The citations should be properly included in the text where necessary.

- **Chapter 3: Analysis and Design**

**Analysis:** If the project involves system development, this chapter should include the requirements (functional, non-functional) of the system as well. If research type critical analysis of the problem under investigation is required.

**Design:** There should be evidence of a methodical approach to the design of the solution. You should discuss alternate solutions (e.g., methods, algorithms, data structures etc.) and the one selected by you should be explained and justified. Coherent and logical arguments are encouraged with respect to the selection. Correct use of any related techniques (use case diagrams, entity relationship diagrams, class diagrams, sequence diagrams, data flow diagrams, decision tables, pseudo codes, etc. if applicable) should also be demonstrated in this chapter.

Depending on the type of the project (MIT or MCS) you should use appropriate sections for this chapter. If you have more content for Analysis and Design sections, breaking this chapter for two separate chapters is also possible. Design may include process flow diagrams, architecture diagrams etc. MIT projects may include UML diagrams etc.

- **Chapter 4: Progress to Date and Project Plan**

What have you achieved to date? Describe any results you have and also include a detailed plan of work (if possible using a Gantt chart) for the rest of the project. Issues you should consider here are:

- Has the project changed direction from the original proposal? If so, why?
- Have any difficulties found? How will they be resolved?
- Is the time plan realistic?
- Is the scope of the project reasonable, or is too much being attempted?

- Has sufficient time been allocated for writing up the dissertation?

Data Requirements (if Any)

Outline of Evaluation and Testing Methodology.

- **References**

References and citations should be included according to the IEEE format given in the File called "Masters\_Project\_IEEE-ReferenceGuide.pdf". This file is available on the PG VLE.

- **General points about writing style**

Eliminate jargon. Showing off your technical vocabulary will not demonstrate that your research is valuable. If using a technical term is unavoidable, add a non-technical synonym to help a non-specialist infer the term's meaning.

- Omit needless words—redundant modifiers, pompous diction, excessive detail.
- Avoid stringing nouns together (make the relationship clear with prepositions).
- Eliminate "narration," expressions such as "It is my opinion that," "I have concluded," "the main point supporting my view concerns," or "certainly there is little doubt as to. . . ." Focus attention solely on what the reader needs to know.

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