MSc ACT project marking criteria

**Assessment Criteria**

To **pass**a project the markers assess whether the project proposal and project report meet the following criteria. They also assess any other aspect of special relevance for the project.

Project Proposal:

* *Background research*, *presentation of the problem – aims and objectives*: The proposal specifies a suitable problem, and discusses its requirements. It also reviews potential approaches and evaluates them.
* *Plan for developing the solution*: A suitable development/research method is chosen. The project is broken down into manageable chunks.
* *Presentation of the proposal*: Assessed as for the report – see below.

Project Report:

* *Specification and design*: Before starting the implementation, a specification and design of the system/software is laid out.
* *Implementation, or execution of research*: The key stages of the implementation/research are explained. The implementation/research is sound.
* *Testing, results, analysis and critical evaluation*: The report attempts to provide a clear and justified reflection upon the contribution and its limitations. It discusses how the software meets the specified requirements. A running version of the software is demonstrated to the supervisor (and the code [submitted to GitHub](https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/intranet/index.php/MSc_Student_Projects#Submission_of_Code)).
* *Presentation of the proposal/report and documentation*: These are coherent in style and structure. They clearly communicate the student's contribution to the reader.

For a **distinction**, a student would have to attempt a challenging project (this should be discussed and agreed with the potential supervisor) and gain a high grade under each of the above headings. To award a distinction the markers assess the report according to the following criteria:

Project Proposal:

* *Background research, presentation of problem – aims and objectives*: A challenging problem is specified and clearly outlined: this includes its context and the technical/user requirements. The student shows a clear understanding of the researched material. Potential approaches are reviewed and critically evaluated, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of each.
* *Plan for developing the solution*: An appropriate development/research method is chosen and its suitability is well-justified. The project is broken down into subtasks that are logically coherent. In the case of unknowns (e.g. open research questions) “fallback” plans are laid out.
* *Presentation of the proposal*: Assessed as for the report – see below.

Project Report:

* *Specification and design*: The specification and design of the system/software shows a clear understanding of what needs to be done to meet the requirements, and is well-rounded, i.e. the components fit together in a coherent way.
* *Implementation, or execution of research*: The key stages of the implementation/research are clearly explained. The implementation/research is done to a high standard.
* *Testing, results, analysis and critical evaluation*: The solution demonstrates real insight into the problem/research question. There is clear and justified reflection upon the contribution and its limitations. The key results are accurately analysed and their relevance is explained. It is discussed how the software meets the specified requirements and is shown to be reliable. The author critically assesses the results and draws relevant conclusions from the study. A running version of the software is demonstrated (as above).
* *Presentation of the proposal/report and documentation*: Complex issues are explained clearly and concisely. The content is well-organised and structured in a way that demonstrates the links between the concepts presented. The proposal/report shows that the student clearly understands the researched material. The solution and any other claims made by the students are well- justified. The author uses various resources and cites relevant resources using an appropriate consistent referencing style. The proposal/report is of professional quality and contains very few, ideally no, typographic errors.

Work that meets some, but not all, of the criteria for distinction may be considered for a **merit**. A merit might be awarded for a respectable, if only partially successful, attempt at a challenging project, or for a less ambitious project carried out, and written up, to a high standard.

If the project produces a piece of software, the student is required to give the supervisor a demonstration of the software in action.

The separate examiners grade the project independently and then meet to arrive at an agreed grade.