Questions that arose from Synopsis Group Session

Content / Sections of Synopsis	
Objectives	
Can we change the objectives as we get deeper into the project?	Yes – in fact this this is almost certain happen (as you find you have over- or under-estimated certain challenges and are able to better explain others). Just make sure that your final objectives are still sufficiently challenging.
Are the time constraints in the SMART targets part of the objectives?	Not necessarily – while we should always write objectives that could be timed, we don't need to impose a schedule at this point. Project planning is often best left until the objectives themselves have been well thought out.
Should it be 1 aim or can there be more than 1 aim?	I would always aim to have one aim (which can of course be broken down into multiple objectives). With enough thought, I believe it should always be possible to summarise your entire project in one simple statement.
Deliverables	
What is expected in the staging of the deliverables? What are you looking for?	Not much right now – though the marking criteria mention "deliverables *can* be staged", unless you've been doing your project for a time, thinking too much about this right now is likely to detract from more important aspects.
Is the staging of the deliverables the same as the itemised (timed) objectives?	No – simply because objectives are not deliverables. But, I suggest you don't focus too much on "staging" until you've had the planning lecture and been working long enough for this concept to emerge naturally, if applicable.
Could deliverables have a % of time instead of number of weeks?	Possibly – but if your ideas are mature enough that it makes sense for you to be doing this sort of planning at this stage, then I would say it is probably more useful to express estimates in weeks rather than a percentage.
Is the write up (i.e. the thesis) a deliverable?	Yes – but as we know you have to write one, it doesn't add much to say so – particularly if it takes the focus off other more exciting deliverables (but you may want to include it anyway to show you've allocated time).
Added Value	
Why is our own background relevant to the added value section?	A strong background could add credibility to the student's assessment of the impact of any added value; it is also worth mentioning more generally because it lends support to the notion that the student has the necessary skills
Is it OK for any research element of the added value of the project to relate entirely to a field outside Computer Science?	Yes – but only on the basis that, after the project is done, that field will no longer be unrelated to Computer Science! You need to clarify the benefits that CS will bring to that field and vice versa.
Any tips on quantifying added value?	When planning the project try to estimate any time or money savings your work will bring about. When executing the project make sure to perform a targeted, representative, and statistically significant evaluation.
How strict are the criteria followed in the marking? Is it necessary for example to include future research potential in addressing the project's added value?	It is a matter of balance - adding something insightful (not blindingly obvious) about future research potential could help persuade a marker that you have an "excellent" understanding of the "ADDED VALUE of the project".
In the 'added value' it says 'it is a good idea to make evaluation one of your objectives' – does this mean it should be in the Added Value or the Objectives section?	Probably – you could include it as an objective to show you've allocated time and thought about how to show the added value of your work (so the results of an evaluation may go later into the added value section of your thesis).
Grading & Feedback	
Is the synopsis submitted with the final project at the end?	Yes – but you'll get a chance to revise the final synopsis you submit as the first page of your Research Review. Similarly, when you submit your thesis, the first page will be an extended abstract.
Is the synopsis submission a formative or summative submission?	The intention is as follows: Draft version – formative feedback via group sessions Revised version - formative feedback from supervisor Version in Research Review – summative (=5% of unit)
Will we get feedback on the project synopsis?	See above

What is the new percentage allocation?	See above
One student commented on the fact that it wasn't being assessed and seemed a bit 'put out' that he'd 'bumped other things aside in order to complete it'.	Time spent in preparing and discussing the draft synopsis will pay great dividends later. Feedback from the group sessions will help students build a firm foundation for the Research Review (which will contain a marked synopsis)
Format of Synopsis	
Are there any specifications regarding margin size (left and right) and line spacing?	No – but common sense should prevail. Minor tweaking of margins could be appropriate but it will not be productive to try and cram in too much information when removing less important information is what is likely needed
If we have sub-points in the Aims and Objectives which are indented, do they also have to be in 11pt?	Yes – making text very small implies it is not really that important. If it is not that important then you are probably better off removing it. I might suggest putting extra focus on really important things by making them larger!
Can headings and sub-headings be in a different font size?	Yes – you are free to use font, formatting and colour to help emphasise key points and document structure.
Should there be a (student) name as well as a title in the pdf?	Possibly – I would recommend putting your name date and title on all project work. But I would be happy for you to use your candidate number instead of your name. As project work is much more student-specific than normal assignments, the notion of anonymity is arguably less important and certainly less enforceable (bearing in mind you will be discussing your work in group sessions and eventually be giving a poster-demo). Personally, I think it is highly beneficial for you to want to take pride in and put your name on this highly personal and creative work.
Is there a latex template file that could be used?	No
Are there any specifications regarding font style?	No
Other	
Is a model synopsis available?	No
Are citations and references a requirement? E.g. in the background before aims & obj. If so, how many?	No
What are the expectations about providing a list of citations with the synopsis? If it is included, can this continue beyond the one page limit?	No – The expectation is that no references should be included. This much like a paper abstract (where it is usually poor form to include citations and which would normally be much less than a page).
The check list evaluates aims as 'specific' and as 'precise'. How do these terms differ? It was felt by the participants that they were synonymous.	I would say 'precise' refers to the linguistic expression of an aim (i.e. is expressed clearly and doesn't leave any question about what you mean), while 'specific' refers to the intended meaning of an aim (i.e. is sufficiently realistic and doesn't leave any doubt about it feasibility).