

Student Guide for Thesis/Project Part A

Technical Report and Seminar

Weeks 8-10

At the conclusion of Thesis/Project A, your work is still a work in progress. Therefore, the assessment only aims to gauge the background work that you have done and to assess how prepared you are for Thesis/Project B. The assessment is based on the technical report and seminar and will be carried out by your supervisor and an assessor whose marks are equally weighed. As with all work submitted for assessment, there are severe penalties for plagiarism.

Report

The technical report is due by 12pm Thursday of week 10. The report must be in the form of one single PDF formatted file. Submission is via the course Moodle. There are 2 steps. Firstly, you must check your report against possible plagiarism using the Turnitin Report Checking on Moodle; the Similarity Index should be well below 15% to be considered acceptable. Note that Turnitin checking will be made available just 1 week before the report submission deadline; it may take up to 2 days to know the result so be early. Only when your report has passed the checking, you may proceed to finally upload your report through the Report Submission activity.

The report is worth 57% of the overall assessment. Below is the marking scheme for the report:

Reviewing work of others: Problem statement; hypothesis and aims; literature review (comprehensive, up-to-date, critical assessment of existing work).	Weighting 50%
Project planning and partial execution: Articulating research question; ability to apply logical thinking in gathering information, analyzing available information, formulating plans, proposing solutions; thesis outline; preliminary work already completed like simulations, solving simpler sub-problems or becoming skilled in the use of relevant tools	40%
Document presentation: Physical presentation (report structure, legibility, layout); quality of writing (grammar, spelling, wording, style, clarity, adequately proofread); referencing (fully documented reference list, using correct citation conventions); report self-contained, (provide all information needed)	10%

The technical report is to be written and submitted individually (even for situation where several students work jointly on a project). It should be short and concise, typically about 5000 words (not more than 20 pages). It is intended to complement your oral presentation. The report might have the following outline:

- Problem definition and thesis/project objectives
- Brief literature review and background theory

- Descriptions of possible solutions and reasons for choice made
- Description of other preparatory work, e.g. technical skills, tools or knowledge required for the thesis work, development of experimental procedure, preliminary testing and results if available (simulations, measurements)
- A Gantt chart showing what work has been completed in Part A, and providing outline and timetable schedule for work in Part B and C in the following terms.

The first page of the report must be a scanned copy of the technical report cover sheet with your signature. This cover sheet can be downloaded from the course Moodle. The report must also include an Appendix for a scanned copy of the completed Risk Assessment Form. If using spacing of 1.5 lines and size 12 font, a typical report is about 15 to 20 pages (everything included: graphs, figures, diagrams, attached forms).

Seminar

The seminar program will run during week 8-9. You will be responsible to organise your time slot for the seminar and book the slot using Scheduler on Moodle. This should be done in consultation with your supervisor and assessor and before week 5. By week 7, the exact location of your presentation and confirmation of your booked time slot will be announced.

The seminar is worth 25% of the overall assessment. Below is the marking scheme for the seminar:

Subject matter: Context of problems and underlying theory, possible solutions and reasons for choice made, difficulties to be overcome, relations to published work, etc	Weighting 30%
Preliminary work : Skills acquired, training completed, preliminary work completed, planning.	25%
Quality: Quality of thesis work revealed by seminar, degree of challenge, innovation.	15%
Presentation: English usage, rate of speech and audibility, clarity of description and relevance, use of aids, platform manner, logical structure of the presentation, quality of summary sheet	15%
Questions handling: Degree of competence in answering questions	15%

The allocated time for each seminar is 30 minutes in total. Plan your presentation to last about 20 minutes plus 7 minutes for answering questions and 3 minutes for the changeover to the next presentation (setting up, introducing the new speaker). It must be stressed that the time limit will be strictly enforced in order to prevent over-run in the presentation schedule.

Your presentation might follow the same outline as mentioned above for the written report. Technical skills are very important; also important is the ability to talk about your work in an informative and convincing way. The seminar provides the opportunity both to inform and to demonstrate your communication skills. Your talk should be addressed both to your examiners (supervisor and assessor) who will need to know details about your progress with the topic, and to students and staff members having a more general interest in the project. By this stage you will be knowledgeable in your topic, but you should present the material so that it can be understood by the students attending your seminar. Go at a steady pace. Practice the right emphasis and timing. Rehearsals will give you confidence and remove some of the nervousness.

PowerPoint slides or Acrobat PDF for presentation on a data projector are recommended, either uploaded from a USB stick to the PC in the seminar room or you can bring your own laptop.

You are required to bring along 20 printed copies of your “**Summary Sheet**” for distribution to the audience. This one-page handout contains your thesis title, your name and student ID, thesis aim and objectives, background, your solution to the problem.

You are also required to bring along a few printed copies of your "Seminar Marking Sheet" to be used by your supervisor and assessor to record marks.

You are also required to be the chairperson for the seminar that follows yours in the same room even if it takes place on the following day (note: seminars may be run in several locations). This is compulsory and students must ensure that they perform this duty. See "**Advice for Chairpersons and Speakers**" document on the course web site.

In addition to your own oral presentation, you are required to attend at least five seminar sessions given by other students. You are required to keep a record of the seminars attended on the “**Seminar Attendance Form**”. This form is available from the course website. For verification, each attendance must be signed off by a member of the academic staff who is present at the seminar. You need to have your form signed BEFORE you leave the seminar room. Keep this sheet until you have attended 6 seminars, then upload it via the course Moodle as a PDF formatted file by **12pm Thursday of week 10**.
