

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
School of Computing and Data Science

Guidelines for MSc(CompSc) Project (COMP7705)

1 Introduction

To fulfill the requirements of the MSc(CompSc) degree, students must obtain 72 credits, of which 48 or 60 credits are from courses (equivalent to eight or ten 6-credit courses) and 24 or 12 credits from a capstone project which should be either:

- a dissertation (COMP7704 - equivalent to four 6-credit courses) or
- a project (COMP7705 - equivalent to two 6-credit courses).

This document provides a general guideline for the project (COMP7705). This project provides an opportunity for students to study and work independently on a substantial computing related project and the progress of the project will be monitored by academics in the School of Computing and Data Science. This guideline is subject to change or amendments.

1.1 Weighting

The weighting of COMP7705 Project is equivalent to two 6-credit courses (or 12 credits).

1.2 Group Project

Students taking project should form their own project team among their fellow students. They may form a group of 4 partners (nominal and preferred, min 3 – max 5). Students are reminded that they will be assessed individually.

1.3 Enrolment Period and Project Duration

All projects should commence in the second semester of an academic year. Full-time students are expected to enroll in their first year of study while part-time students are expected to enroll in their second year of study. Please note that completion of the Project does not need to coincide with the completion of the degree. Students can submit their enrolment application in a period specified by the MSc Programme Office. Enrolment at other times will not be accepted.

Please note that a project represents a significant amount of work (at least 300 learning hours per student). Project must be completed by summer semester of the same academic year. No extension will be granted and internship is not allowed for full-time students. Student that found taking internship while he/she enrolled in the project may lead to a failure in the project study as a whole.

2 Project Enrolment Process

Student should decide on the choice of Project or Dissertation option in the second semester of their study in Year 1 for full-time students. For part-time students, they may delay this choice until the second year of study.

2.1 Stream of Project

Each group will individually research and propose a project topic aligned with their interests and will be associated with one or more streams from “General Stream”, “Financial Computing Stream”, “Multimedia Computing Stream” and “Cyber Security Stream”. Students of a specialized stream must work on a project with topics related to the stream.

2.2 Enrolment Process

Each group is required to submit a short proposal on the proposed topic together with the enrolment application to show their interest and understanding on the proposed topic. Each group should consider the feasibility, relevance, and potential impact of the topic. The project topic proposals will be reviewed by the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator will help in identifying a suitable Project Mentor and will pass the proposal to the recommended Project Mentor.

Each group can choose to tag the project to one or more streams, subject to the approval of stream Associate Directors.

2.3 Project Allocation

The project allocation will be done by the Project Coordinator / MSc Programme Office right after the end of the enrolment period. The final result will be announced on the Moodle.

2.4 Change Enrolled Project / Group Members

After enrolling in the project, students are allowed to:

- change the enrolled project to another project with the agreement of all concerned parties.
- change the group members with the agreement of all concerned parties.

To apply for changing enrolled projects, students have to submit the Change Enrolled Project Form, provided by the MSc Programme Office, **within two weeks after the project is allocated.** Change enrolled project after the above period is allowed in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Programme Director, otherwise it will be considered a failure and the failed student has to re-enroll and re-do another project, subject to the same regulations.

3 Assessment

Each project will be assessed by a panel of examiners consisting of the Project Mentor, two Examiners and a Moderator. Examiners and the moderator will be assigned by the Programme Director / Project Coordinator. The role of the Moderator is to scale the grade distribution of all students in the programme if necessary to ensure quality and standard.

The assessment is based on the project proposal, webpage, interim report, progress updates, oral examination, and the final report. Students are responsible for independently learning the necessary skills, tools and methodologies required to execute their chosen project. The Project Mentor will provide minimal supervision, offering guidance and support as needed. Students are expected to demonstrate self-motivation, initiative, and resourcefulness in resolving challenges and making progress.

3.1 Detailed Project Proposal

After the project allocation process has been completed, each group has to submit a detailed proposal to their Project Mentor within 1 month of the project allocation. The proposal includes the objectives and scope of the project and the schedule for the implementation. Students should consult their Project Mentor about the feasibility of their proposals. They should also state the estimated number of learning hours for each milestone of the project in the proposal. Defining the project with the detailed project proposal is considered an essential learning component of the Project.

3.2 Project Webpage

Each project group has to design a project webpage and place it into a project account allocated by the Technical Office of the School of Computing and Data Science. The webpage should contain details of the project in an easy-to-understand manner. Students should design the webpage at the beginning of the project and keep the webpage updated so that their Project Mentor can closely monitor the progress of the project.

3.3 Project Progress Updates

Each group has to participate in project progress updates regularly showing the details of work to their Project Mentor. Each group will have to show their project progress, including, their achievements, challenges faced, and plans for the upcoming weeks. All group members should take part in these project progress updates.

3.4 Interim Report and Presentation

Project groups should submit an interim report and give a presentation to the Project Mentor by June 1. The report should include some preliminary results. The schedule for the rest of the project should also be included in the report, which allows Project Mentor to monitor the progress of the project even more closely.

3.5 Oral Examination

Each student has to attend a 25 minutes oral examination for the project in which each student in the group presents their contribution to the project. The examination includes a 20 minutes presentation and demonstration from the students, followed by 5 minutes question-and-answer session.

The oral examinations will be scheduled in late July. The exact arrangement will be announced by the MSc Programme Office.

3.6 Final Report Submission

Each project group has to submit one electronic copy of the project report (expected to be around 15,000 words) by July 18, 2025. The electronic copy of the report should be submitted on Moodle in one single file in PDF format. Failure in submission may lead to a failure in the project study as a whole.

3.7 Grading of Project

The grading of a project includes the assessment of the above mentioned requirements. Examiners will take a holistic approach in the assessment, including but not limited to preparation, efforts, innovation, actual work, project implementation, achievement, presentation, etc. The following table gives a reference for marks allocation. The exact mark allocation is subject to individual examiners.

Category	Project Mentor	2 Examiners	Combined
Detailed Proposal	5%		5%
Webpage	5%		5%
Interim Report & Presentation	20%		20%
Project Progress Updates	20%		20%
Oral Examination		10%	10%
Project Report		40%	40%
Total	50%	50%	100%

3.8 Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is used to provide fair assessment for each member of the group in terms of the overall contributions to the project. The Peer Assessment algorithm used is based on the model of WebPA introduced by Loughborough University and used by many other universities around the world. The project marks will be appropriately moderated according to this peer review to reflect the different contributions of individuals. Each member in the team will give a score to all members from 0-4 with the following meaning.

- 0 Not satisfactory = not enough contribution to make any impact to the project
- 1 Needs Improvement = less than the fair share expected
- 2 Satisfactory = good contribution as expected
- 3 Excellent = more than the average of other team members
- 4 Outstanding = outstanding contribution, key to the completion of the project

More information about WebPA can be found at the website:

<http://webpaproject.lboro.ac.uk/>.

The Peer Assessment (PA) score is used on 30% weighting of the overall marks before calculating the final moderated marks, i.e. 70% of the original marks by examiners will be without any PA moderation.

4 Supplementary Workshops

In order to better prepare students for the capstone project, some supplementary workshops will be made available to all MSc(CS) students.

4.1 Language workshops

Students are required to complete the following 2 compulsory workshops offered by Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES):

Full-attendance is required

- a. Writing workshop
- b. Presentation Skills workshop

4.2 Technical workshops

Students are required to complete at least one technical workshops (Research methodology, Python) to enhance their knowledge and skills.

All workshop requirements should be fulfilled by students before the submission of project report. Students who have not fulfilled the requirements may fail the project.

5 Financial Support

Each student enrolled in the Project will be given a maximum budget of HK\$6,500 as financial support.

The support may be used for purchasing reference book and equipment, etc. Students should check with the Technical Office and see whether they have the equipment before purchasing. The items to be purchased should be endorsed by the project mentor. All purchased materials remain the property of the university and must be returned after use.

5.1 Procedure for the Claim

Students are required to provide the original copy of the receipt (showing the names and the chops of the shop) when making the claim. The receipt should be signed by the project mentor and sent to the MSc Programme Office by August 31. Please contact the MSc Programme Office for the arrangement of the claim. Any late claim will not be entertained.

To be eligible for the reimbursement claim, the goods/services paid for should comply with the University's financial regulations. Students should observe the following main points:

- The expenses must be directly related to your project.
- The goods/service providers must be real companies, which can issue legitimate invoices and receipts. For online purchases, both the printed receipts of the goods / service providers and the proof of the transaction records as shown on the statements of your credit card / online payment account are needed as supporting documents.
- For service agreement that spans beyond the completion of the project, only the expenses during the period of the project may be reimbursable.
- Price comparison is needed. If the amount of a single purchase (or multiple purchases from the same company) is over \$30,000, two competitive written quotations are required.
- Avoid conflict of interest.
- Certain computing hardware must be purchased from University's appointed tenders. Please check with MSc Programme Office.

HKU Finance Office reserves the right to turn down any reimbursement claims.

6 Failure of Project

Student may apply in writing to the Programme Director for permission to undertake resubmission for a failed Project. Application should be sent to the MSc Programme Office. Resubmission fee will be charged.

Students who fail to satisfy the examiners at a second attempt in their projects shall be recommended for discontinuation of studies in accordance with General Regulation G12 & MSc9.

8 Enquiry

MSc Programme Office

School of Computing and Data Science

Tel: (852) 3917-1828

Email: msccs@cs.hku.hk