**Dissertation assessment criteria**

The dissertation will be assessed and marked with reference to the criteria listed in the table below. For example, if the aim of the project is clear, a mark of 100% will be recorded. If the dissertation contains no evaluation of results, 0% will be recorded. If the technical writing is good but there are small problems, 80% will be recorded. Further guidance notes are given below.

There is no fixed weighting of component marks, e.g., technical writing does not account for 50% of the overall mark or any other fixed percentage. However, while there is no fixed weighting for each assessed element, we would expect the overall assessment to be broadly in agreement with the assessment on each of the criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Does the dissertation contain:** | **Mark out of 100** |
| A clear statement of the **aim** of the project? |  |
| Evidence of **knowledge and understanding** of context? |  |
| A convincing **motivation** of the aim of the project? |  |
| A clear **description** of what has been done? |  |
| Evidence of a suitable **technical achievement** for a 3 month project? |  |
| A good **evaluation** of results? |  |
| Good **technical writing**? |  |
| **Overall mark:** is it a good dissertation? |  |

**Guidance notes:**

* **Knowledge and understanding.** The dissertation needs to have a background chapter/literature review explaining the context of the project. For example, if the project is using machine learning, there has to be an explanation of how the machine learning approach used in the project works. If the project is on an e-voting system, there has to be an overview of existing e-voting systems, how they work, and the dissertation should show understanding of the main challenges in implementing a safe and secure e-voting system.
* **Motivation and justification** are connected with the knowledge and understanding of the context of the project, and also reflect the ability to make good arguments and think critically. A good motivation would be identifying a research gap or unsolved problem; doing something as an exercise to learn some technique or a programming platform is a bad motivation. A good justification for the methodology will be arguing that some technique has never been used to solve the problem, and giving reasons why it may work well for solving it.
* **Description of what has been done:** a clear description of any activities performed in the project, such as data collection, implementation, data analysis, set up of any experiments, etc.
* **Technical achievement.** What has actually been achieved (as evident from the dissertation), how difficult it was, how original the approach has been.
* **Quality of evaluation.** Is there a good evaluation (with reference to the project’s aim and the state of the art); again it should demonstrate to reason logically, analyse the results and think critically, this time about own work.
* **Technical writing.** How well the document is structured, how clear is the writing, how well the sources are referenced, good use of figures and graphs where necessary etc.

If technical writing is excellent, but the content of the dissertation is vacuous, the project will not get a good mark. However if an excellent project is written up badly, the markers may not appreciate the content. Even if the markers manage to understand what has been achieved and be impressed with it, the dissertation will not a get a high Distinction mark if it is badly written.

The project supervisor can additionally comment on **Professionalism** take into account the student’s project management skills, professional quality of the outcome of the project (whether it can be published or commercialised), etc.