

MSc Project Assessment Criteria

Indicative Characteristics for Each Assessment Criterion

Note: In order to achieve a particular rating for one criterion, a project will likely achieve many but probably not all of the indicative characteristics listed.

Note: The interpretation and weighting of the criteria (Technical Approach and Critical Interpretation) should be informed by the nature of the project

Note: Project evaluation should be sensitive to the extent of the curriculum studied by the student, e.g., the difference between BSc, MEng, MSc, etc.

Criteria:	Challenge & Achievement: Results & Contribution	Technical Approach: Design & Implementation	Critical Interpretation: Evaluation & Understanding	Report Presentation: Organisation & Communication
Relevant Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition of project goals and degree of challenge • Extent to which project aims were achieved • Utility of the work produced • Degree to which the work was self-directed or, conversely, relied on supervisor direction • Volume of work undertaken • Extent to which the work goes beyond the ideas and techniques taught in the curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp of relevant technical material, theory and methodology • Quality of the relevant design and implementation undertaken • Command of appropriate tools, techniques and methods demonstrated • Degree to which work was systematic, considered, and well explained • Value of the project outputs by comparison with the state of the art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and extent of critical and/or comparative analysis and evaluation • Use of appropriate metrics and techniques • Appropriate balance of qualitative, quantitative and analytic considerations • Level of understanding and interpretation of the project findings • Appreciation of limitations, flaws and drawbacks • Grasp of relevance and implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of writing, grammar and spelling • Clarity of report structure and formatting • Use of diagrams, figures, and tables • Extent and relevance of literature review • Citation of appropriate prior work • Performance in viva/meeting/presentation
Rating:				
80 to 100 "Outstanding"	<i>The project represents an <u>outstanding</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>outstanding</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>outstanding</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>outstanding</u>.</i>
70 to 79 "Excellent"	<i>The project represents an <u>excellent</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>excellent</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>excellent</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>excellent</u>.</i>
60 to 69 "Good"	<i>The project represents a <u>good</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>good</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>good</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>good</u>.</i>
50 to 59 "Satisfactory"	<i>The project represents a <u>satisfactory</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>satisfactory</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates a <u>satisfactory</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>satisfactory</u>.</i>
40 to 49 "Weak"	<i>The project represents a <u>weak</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>weak</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>weak</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>weak</u>.</i>
0 to 39 "Poor"	<i>The project represents a <u>poor</u> achievement.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates <u>poor</u> technical competency.</i>	<i>The report demonstrates a <u>poor</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i>	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>poor</u>.</i>

Illustrative Descriptions for Each Assessment Criterion

Note: In order to achieve a particular rating for one criterion, a project will likely achieve many but probably not all of the indicative characteristics listed.

Note: The interpretation and weighting of the criteria (Technical Approach and Critical Interpretation) should be informed by the nature of the project

Note: Project evaluation should be sensitive to the extent of the curriculum studied by the student, e.g., the difference between BSc, MEng, MSci, etc.

Criteria:	Challenge & Achievement: Results & Contribution	Technical Approach: Design & Implementation	Critical Interpretation: Evaluation & Understanding	Report Presentation: Organisation & Communication
Relevant Aspects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition of project goals and degree of challenge • Extent to which project aims were achieved • Utility of the work produced • Degree to which the work was self-directed or, conversely, relied on supervisor direction • Volume of work undertaken • Extent to which the work goes beyond the ideas and techniques taught in the curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp of relevant technical material, theory and methodology • Quality of the relevant design and implementation undertaken • Command of appropriate tools, techniques and methods demonstrated • Degree to which work was systematic, considered, and well explained • Value of the project outputs by comparison with the state of the art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and extent of critical and/or comparative analysis and evaluation • Use of appropriate metrics and techniques • Appropriate balance of qualitative, quantitative and analytic considerations • Level of understanding and interpretation of the project findings • Appreciation of limitations, flaws and drawbacks • Grasp of relevance and implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of writing, grammar and spelling • Clarity of report structure and formatting • Use of diagrams, figures, and tables • Extent and relevance of literature review • Citation of appropriate prior work • Performance in viva/meeting/presentation
Rating:				
80 to 100 "Outstanding"	<p><i>The project represents an <u>outstanding</u> achievement.</i></p> <p>An ambitious, challenging project that achieves all of its aims, and could form the basis of an academic research paper or commercial product (being consistent with the work of a good early-stage PhD student or employee at a high-ranking institution), featuring a substantial volume of self-directed work that goes significantly beyond the scope of the degree programme. Could be used as a clear example of a model project.</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates <u>outstanding</u> technical competency.</i></p> <p>The project findings represent an advance on the state-of-the-art and could form the basis for an academic publication in a reputable venue or a new product. Appropriate methodology, tools and techniques are argued for and employed correctly throughout, with good motivation and consideration given to relevant alternative approaches where appropriate. Very strong command of relevant tools and techniques is clearly evidenced, and technical material is handled in a clear and convincing fashion throughout.</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates outstanding understanding of the project's findings.</i></p> <p>The project includes an extremely well-designed, well-executed and comprehensive evaluation (experimental or otherwise), using appropriate metrics and techniques and generating interesting and well-reasoned conclusions, supported by effective and comprehensive analysis. The report presents a sophisticated and deep critical appraisal that aligns very well with project aims, connects with the relevant research literature and shows an appreciation of their relevance for appropriate future work.</p>	<p><i>Writing and presentation are <u>outstanding</u>.</i></p> <p>A clear, accurate and engaging report, demonstrating an extremely high quality of presentation while being enjoyable to read; very few problems with spelling and grammar; creative and effective use of (typically self-developed) visualisation and illustration, with visual consistency maintained throughout; includes a strong review of relevant literature including extensive and appropriate citation of relevant work and demonstrating a very strong understanding of the wider context of the work. Able to answer advanced topic-specific questions without significant prompts.</p>
70 to 79 "Excellent"	<p><i>The project represents an <u>excellent</u> achievement.</i></p> <p>An ambitious, challenging project that achieves almost all of its aims, and could be further developed such that it forms the basis of an academic paper or commercial product, featuring a significant volume of largely self-directed work, with only limited guidance from the supervisor, that goes beyond the scope</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates <u>excellent</u> technical competency.</i></p> <p>The project findings are largely novel, introducing new results, analysis or designs that are sound and useful. Appropriate methodology, tools and techniques are employed, with some motivation and some consideration given to alternative approaches where appropriate. Solid command of</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates <u>excellent</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i></p> <p>The project includes a suitably designed and executed evaluation (experimental or otherwise), using appropriate metrics and techniques, and generating sensible conclusions, is supported by argument and evidence. The report presents a sophisticated critical appraisal that aligns well with project</p>	<p><i>Writing and presentation are <u>excellent</u>.</i></p> <p>A mostly clear, accurate and engaging report, demonstrating a high quality of presentation with few problems regarding spelling and grammar; visualisation and illustration is used effectively throughout; a strong review of relevant literature including appropriate citation of relevant work is provided demonstrating a good understanding of the</p>

	of the degree programme in places. Could be used as a clear example of a very successful project.	relevant tools and techniques is evidenced, and technical material is handled in a clear and convincing fashion. Resolving any technical problems with the work would require only minor effort.	aims and informs well-defined open problems and/or identification of relevant future work.	wider context of the work. Usually able to answer topic-specific questions without significant prompts, and often able to extend answers to a more advanced level.
60 to 69 "Good"	<i>The project represents a <u>good</u> achievement.</i> A reasonably challenging project that made good progress, achieving most of its aims (but which would be challenging to extend in order to form the basis of an academic paper or commercial product), featuring a reasonable volume of occasionally self-directed work (but benefitting significantly from supervisor input), with scope remaining largely within that of the degree programme. Could be used as an example of a solid project.	<i>The report demonstrates <u>good</u> technical competency.</i> The project findings are somewhat novel, introducing new results, concepts, analysis or designs that are sound and useful to some extent. Appropriate methodology, tools and techniques are employed for the most part (but could have been deployed more effectively in places), with some motivation and consideration given to alternative approaches where appropriate. Appropriate use of relevant tools and techniques is evidenced, and technical material is mostly handled in a clear and convincing fashion. Resolving any technical problems with the work would require moderate effort but no re-design.	<i>The report demonstrates <u>good</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i> The project includes some evaluation (experimental or otherwise) that is for the most part suitably designed and executed, using metrics and techniques that are largely appropriate, and generating some consistent conclusions. The evaluation may be shallow or sparse in places, or suffer from problems in its execution, but overall it presents a critical appraisal that aligns reasonably well with project aims and can inform some consideration of open problems and/or identification of relevant future work.	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>good</u>.</i> A readily understandable report, demonstrating a good quality of presentation with some problems regarding spelling and grammar; visualisation and illustration are of reasonably quality and are used largely effectively throughout; a solid review of relevant literature including appropriate citation of relevant work is provided demonstrating a solid understanding of the wider context of the work. Usually able to answer basic topic-specific questions without significant prompts but often unable to extend answers to a more advanced level.
50 to 59 "Satisfactory"	<i>The project represents a <u>satisfactory</u> achievement.</i> A somewhat challenging project that made substantial progress but failed to achieve some of its more significant aims, featuring a merely adequate volume of work, little of which was self-directed (instead relying on supervisor input), with scope remaining largely within that of the degree programme.	<i>The report demonstrates <u>satisfactory</u> technical competency.</i> The project findings are of some value, perhaps only partially replicating or confirming existing work, or failing to extend the work convincingly. Tools and techniques are reasonable and employed appropriately, (but could have been deployed more effectively in several places) and little consideration is given to motivating the choice of tools or to alternative approaches where appropriate. Methodology is somewhat ad-hoc or unsystematic in places. Some lack of command of the tools and techniques employed is evidenced in places, and technical material is sometimes handled in an unconvincing or incorrect fashion. Resolving technical problems with the work would require moderate effort but little re-design.	<i>The report demonstrates a <u>satisfactory</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i> The project includes some evaluation (experimental or otherwise), but in several places it is poorly designed or executed, or uses inappropriate metrics and techniques, and generates limited project conclusions. The critical appraisal of the project is shallow and sparse and may not be appropriately aligned with project aims. There is little useful consideration of the implications of the project for open problems and/or future work.	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>satisfactory</u>.</i> A report that is understandable overall, but often unclear, demonstrating a merely satisfactory quality of presentation with occasional substantive problems regarding clarity and meaning; visualisation and illustration are often not used effectively; a superficial or flawed review of relevant literature is missing citations of relevant work, and fails to demonstrate a totally solid understanding of the wider context of the work. Often unable to answer basic topic-specific questions without significant prompts and unable to extend answers to a more advanced level.
40 to 49 "Weak"	<i>The project represents a <u>weak</u> achievement.</i> A project involving little challenge, that made some progress, but failed to achieve several of its more significant aims, featuring an inadequate volume of work, very little of which was self-directed, instead relying heavily on supervisor input, and remaining almost entirely within the scope of the degree programme, or	<i>The report demonstrates <u>weak</u> technical competency.</i> The project findings are of little value due to technical inadequacies in the work and fall short of replicating or confirming existing work. The tools and techniques employed are not always appropriate or are often misapplied, with little consideration given to	<i>The report demonstrates <u>weak</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i> The project includes very little evaluation (experimental or otherwise) and what is presented is for the most part poorly designed and executed, uses inappropriate metrics and techniques, and generates little in the way of useful project conclusions. The	<i>Writing and presentation are <u>weak</u>.</i> A report that is hard to read, demonstrating a weak quality of presentation, with many substantive problems regarding clarity and meaning that interfere with understanding; visualisation and illustration are absent or ineffective and often visually inconsistent; a review of the relevant literature is either

	aligning poorly with CS as a whole.	motivating the choice of tools or to alternative approaches where appropriate. Methodology is ad-hoc or unsystematic in places. Some lack of command of the tools and techniques employed is often evidenced, and technical material is handled in an unconvincing or incorrect fashion. Resolving technical problems with the work would require significant effort and some substantial re-design of the project.	report presents only a partial or shallow critical appraisal of the project that may not be appropriately aligned with project aims. There is little useful consideration of the implications of the project for open problems and/or future work.	missing or inadequate in terms of scope/depth, and features few relevant citations with vital omissions of direct relevance to the topic, demonstrating a limited understanding of the wider context of the work. Usually unable to answer basic topic-specific questions without significant prompts, and often unable to answer them at all.
0 to 39 "Poor"	<p><i>The project represents a <u>poor</u> achievement.</i></p> <p>A project involving trivial challenge, that made little progress, achieving few if any of its aims, featuring an inadequate volume of work, hardly any of which was self-directed, instead relying almost entirely on supervisor input, with scope either incoherent, remaining entirely within the scope of the degree programme, or aligning poorly with CS as a whole.</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates <u>poor</u> technical competency.</i></p> <p>The project findings are of almost no value due to technical inadequacies in the work. The tools and techniques employed are inappropriate or misapplied, with little to no consideration given to motivating the choice of tools or to alternative approaches where appropriate. Methodology is ad-hoc, unsystematic or absent throughout. A profound lack of command of the tools and techniques employed is evidenced, and technical material is handled in an unconvincing or incorrect fashion throughout. Resolving technical problems with the work would require restarting the project.</p>	<p><i>The report demonstrates a <u>poor</u> understanding of the project's findings.</i></p> <p>An evaluation (experimental or otherwise) of the project findings is absent or incoherent, and little or no useful project conclusions are provided. The report suffers from a lack of coherent critical appraisal.</p>	<p><i>Writing and presentation are <u>poor</u>.</i></p> <p>A report that is frequently prohibitively difficult to understand and demonstrates a poor quality of presentation, with many substantive problems that preclude understanding; visualisation and illustration are absent, confusing or misleading; a review of the relevant literature is either missing or profoundly inadequate in terms of scope and depth, featuring few or no citations to relevant work, and demonstrating a very limited understanding of wider context of the work. Usually unable to answer basic topic-specific questions even with significant prompts.</p>