Modular Degree in Computer Science or Information Technology

Final Year Project

Lecture 3:

How to Structure a Detailed Project Proposal
What you need to do

- work out what problem you want to solve
- set your project objectives
- work out what you need to learn
- identify the tasks you will need to undertake
- draw up an action plan
- identify the resources you will need
- work out whether you need ethics approval
What the Proposal is for

1 A means of clarifying your ideas

2 A record of what you set out to do

NOTE: Your final submission will not be assessed against the goals you set yourself in your proposal
What is in the Proposal

- Information about you
- A working title for your project
- Answers to questions to help you and your tutor determine whether or not you will need ethics approval
- Overall Aim(s)

What, in general terms, you are setting out to do

- The target you have set yourself
  » It isn’t a disaster if you don’t hit the bull’s eye
  » It may not even be a disaster if you miss the target altogether!
Objectives

• The principal things you intend to achieve
  » specific, achievable goals
  » may be expressed in terms of the major tasks you intend to carry out
  » BUT NOT a list of system requirements
  » not a binding contract!

• Should be SMART (Simple, Meaningful, Achievable, Relevant, Testable)

• May be useful to have a shopping list of challenging objectives, as a step towards your final list.
Tasks & Deliverables

Your project proposal should indicate
- Give us a list of tasks you will perform and the deliverables in order to pass your project.
These are the ones that will be judged to accept your proposal.

Your project proposal should:
- Give us a list of tasks you will perform and the deliverables in order to obtain a better mark.
Read the marking criteria to help you.
- Try for a 1st class mark, in order to get good mark. I am sure you will all do so.
- If your target is set low, then you will probably fail
How your target affects your mark

Case 1: You aim for a pass (3\textsuperscript{rd} class mark)
   This is 49 at the most
   If you are marked by 80\% that means that you will get 0.8*49=39 ie: fail

Case 2: You aim for a 2\textsuperscript{nd} upper class mark
   This is 69 at the most
   If you are marked by 57\% that means that you will get 0.57*69=39 ie: fail

Case 3: You aim for a 1\textsuperscript{st} class mark
   If you are marked by 40\% you will get 0.4*100=40 ie: Pass

So: **Put your target to 100**
Provisional Plan

• An outline of when you plan to meet your objectives
  » little detail expected – just an indication that you have thought about the amount of work there is to do, when it will need to be done, and in what order tasks should be attempted

Some examples:

A first try

objective1: Design the database
  target1: mid November

objective2: Implement and test the database
  target2: end November

objective3: Implement a web front end to the database with ASP.
  target3: end December

OK as far as it goes, just rather thin
A second try

objective1: Research

\hspace{1cm} target1: end October

objective2: Analyse Requirements & Design database

\hspace{1cm} target2: mid November

objective3: Implement a fully normalised database for the Job Recruitment System.

\hspace{1cm} target3: mid December

objective4: Design Interfaces for Job Seeker & Job recruiter

\hspace{1cm} target4: end January

Objective 1 is much too vague Objective 2 is not very challenging for 5-6 weeks work; how will we know you have done it -- what will you put in your IPR?
**A better version**

objective1: Learn about databases and SQL   
*target1: end October*

objective2: Choose the database system   
*target2: end October*

objective3: Create and implement the database   
*target3: mid November*

objective4: Implement a web front end to the database   
*target4: mid November*

objective5: improve my project to a first class standard   
*target5: mid March*
Resource Requirements

. What equipment / software / data / services will you need to use during the course of your project?
. Are these resources essential, important, or just useful things to have?
. Where / how do you think you will get them?
. What will you do if they are not available?

Note that in general we cannot accept a project that requires resources that are not available in the University Labs.
Ethics Approval

“A project may need ethics approval if it involves work of any kind on human subjects. This includes asking friends to evaluate a system, asking people to fill in questionnaires, conducting interviews (e.g. to elicit system requirements), observing people’s behaviour, collecting data about people (including those who are no longer alive), and a range of other activities.”

- Usually most of the projects require ethics approval
- You cannot start a project until you get an Ethics approval.
- For almost all cases a certain answer pattern in a correctly filled form will get you automatically approval.
- If you fail to get approval we will automatically withdraw you from the project or we will fail a submitted project.
- If you delay in getting approval then we may have to withdraw you from the project if there is not enough time to cover the required student’s effort.