

1. The Progress Report

1.1 Purpose

The ICS5200 Dissertation requires the production of a progress report, which needs to be agreed upon, approved and signed off, by both student and supervisor(s). Students are obliged to produce a report according to departmental procedures. Further work on this study unit can only proceed after due approval of this report.

The main aims of the progress report are:

- To establish a checkpoint between supervisor and student: the problem (aims and objectives), methodology and evaluation plan, should have been defined by this point.
- Establish a plan of action milestones and as such to ascertain whether the timeline proposed by the student is realistic.
- An opportunity for the supervisor(s) to give feedback on the plan of action.

1.2 Format and Expected Content

The ICS5200 Progress Report should consist of 2 main components:

- A work-in-progress paper (max. 6 pages) that provides a clear description of the aims and objectives, a description about work related to the chosen area (literature review) and a description of the proposed solution, as well as an evaluation plan.
- A work plan (e.g. in the form of a Gantt chart) (max. 1 page) that describes the plan for the remaining months – start of coding, system design and implementation, evaluation, start of dissertation writing, etc..

The work-in-progress paper must be written in scientific paper format similar to that of a professional academic workshop or conference proceedings¹.

The following structure is suggested:

- Abstract
- Introduction – Introduction to the area, motivation for the project, and a defense of why the problem is non-trivial.
- Aims and Objectives.
- Background research and Literature review.
- Proposed Solution – Methods and techniques used or planned.
- Evaluation Plan – The evaluation strategy and techniques that is being proposed.

¹ <http://www.acm.org/sigs/publications/proceedings-templates>