Master's Project Guidelines—Instructions for Proposal
Computer Science Department
Northeastern Illinois University

Student Objectives

1) Obtain a skill level beyond that obtained in the classroom.
2) Learn something new
3) Gain experience in creating a solution to a substantial problem in computer science
4) Gain real-life work and learning experiences

Topic Areas

The topic area is usually computer programming but it could be other areas (e.g. networking, DB design, algorithms, theory) as long as there is substantial work and learning experience.

It may not be: data entry, entering passwords as part of network administration, installing software.

Proposal Requirements

The student must fill in the Project Proposal Form to provide answers to the following requests:

1) State the project name.
2) Discuss the scope of the project. Describe what problem you will solve.
3) Describe each component in the solution of the problem. For example, if it is a programming project, the components may be functional specifications, design, coding, testing, documentation, and verbal explanation of the delivered project (to the advisor and perhaps others).
4) Provide a timetable for completion of each component.
5) State where you will work on the project and what resources you will use.
6) Describe what you will learn by completing this project.
7) Describe at least 3 review points, which will be used by your advisor to judge the quality of your completed project.

If the student's project is part or all of a company's or agency's project, these questions must also be answered:

1) State your company's name.
2) Give the name, phone number, and email address of the person to whom you report.
3) Provide the name and description of the overall project in which your master's project is a component.
4) Explain how your component of the project can be measured and evaluated separately from the overall project.

Interim Reporting

The student will report progress at least four times before the final meeting. The student will report activity and learning, show results since the last meeting, and show what will be completed before the next meeting. For outside projects, students must keep a daily log of activities.

Guidelines for Documentation

The student will keep a portfolio of the proposal, the work in progress, and the final project. The portfolio must contain a record what the student has accomplished and learned (usually this record is about 4 pages long).