SE Workterm Reports
We are changing

1. Submissions deadlines are at the end of the first month of the term
   • No extensions:
     • Historically one week
     • One month is enough: plan your time!

2. No resubmissions
   • They are an administrative nightmare
   • They encourage the attitude of “well, I can always resubmit ....”
   • You have a month of time to get it right
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3. Formatting is less significant
   • It should look visually appealing
   • Fonts should be large enough to be readable
   • Sectioning should be sensible
   • ...
   • Think of the formatting guidelines as a way to satisfy these requirements
     • not the only acceptable way

• As long as it is reasonable and does not interfere with comprehension, you should be fine
  • If in doubt, just use the template and the standard guidelines
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4. Nits:

1. Do not use contractions except for possessives
   • *i.e.*, don’t use don’t!

2. Acronyms must be defined before first use (AMBDBFU)
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5. Spelling and grammar do matter
   • They reflect attention to detail!
   • We grade it separately from technical content: A, B, C, F
   • Assuming that formatting is basically OK:
     • A: **zero** spelling errors, no significant grammar errors
       • Spellcheckers exist. Use them!
       • English, American, Canadian all fine as long as consistent within the document!

     • C: numerous errors, but they do not cause vagueness or ambiguity in comprehension
       • *While the technical communication is poor, the technical content has been conveyed with sufficient precision that a technical person reading the document would be able to acquire the necessary technical information the report is intended to present.*

     • F: Spelling and grammar errors cause vagueness or ambiguity in comprehension of technical content

     • B: Not great; not so bad as to be a C
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6. Technical content:
   • What are we looking for?
     • A thoughtful reflection on (some of) your design decisions in a recent work-term, with numbers to back up those thoughts and reflections
       • **Thoughtful**: not mechanical application of MCDA without comprehension (see below)
         • Think about the tradeoffs: cost/performance; cost/functionality
       • **Design decisions**: when you consider alternatives, there is an obvious alternative to consider:
         • Do nothing!
           • More precisely, do whatever we are currently doing
           • Humanity is alive and well without whatever it is you are proposing to do
             • ergo, doing nothing is a legitimate choice
         • Therefore, the best comparison possible is with respect to the status quo
           • All you have to do is show that what you propose is better than the status quo
             • Stop trying to show that you made the **best** choice
             • Just demonstrate that your design decisions satisfy the requirements
       • **With numbers**: do the math (but probably not MCDA)
       • **Recent**: typically the immediately preceding term, but you may use a prior one
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• What are we fed up with seeing?
  • Badly done, ill thought out, mechanical MCDA
    • (and friends)
    • Seriously, this is really depressing

• What is wrong with MCDA?
  • (as seen in too many reports)

1. No recognition of cases where the weights are irrelevant:
   • Design choice A beats design choice B over all criteria!

2. No recognition of tradeoffs
   • Design choice A is cheaper, but has less functionality
     • Kill the discussion about weights and think: do we need the extra functionality: yes or no?
     • Think in terms of requirements
     • Think in terms of status quo vs. proposed work

3. No recognition of short-term vs. long-term requirements

4. Significant criteria missing
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7. Grades for technical content:
   • A+, A, B, C, F
   • A+: The report clearly identifies the problem, its significance and context, explores the solution space, presents appropriate quantifiable criteria for evaluations, and justifies all conclusions. It is suitable, as is, for publication as a technical report.
   • A: Some deficiencies from the above.
   • B: Fails to adequately address one aspect of the above.
   • C: Fails to adequately address more than one aspect of the above; however, the report does sufficiently present technical content that a technical person could understand the report’s conclusions and justifications and reliably act on it.
   • F: Fails to adequately address more than one aspect of the above; a technical person would not be able to determine if the technical content is correct.
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8. How do we compute your final grade?
   • Your overall grade is based on your technical-content grade, \textit{modified} by your technical-communication grade.
     • An A on technical communications means your final grade is your technical-content grade
       • You need an A on technical communication to get an A+ on the overall report

     • A B on technical communication reduces your overall grade from technical content by roughly 1 level:
       • A+ $\rightarrow$ A ; A $\rightarrow$ B+ ; B $\rightarrow$ C ; C $\rightarrow$ C-
         • Yeah, about that last one ...

     • A C on technical communications reduces your overall grade from technical content by 2 roughly levels:
       • A+ $\rightarrow$ B ; A $\rightarrow$ C+; B $\rightarrow$ C- ; C $\rightarrow$ D

   • If you fail the technical communication, you fail the report!
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9. Submission at non-standard times
   • is mostly being eliminated
   • Why?
     • What you write in 2B, and the work you do on coop, will be less mature than what you write in 4A/4B
       • So you cannot do a submission in 2A, 2B, 3A
       • We are not interested in creating hoops for you to jump through
       • We want thoughtful reflection, and that is necessarily different in 4B than 2B

     • The exception is 4A submission can be delayed until 4B
       • Until we manage to change the formal submission time to 4B

10. We expect to move to having grades for work-term reports included in your average, with the three reports collectively adding up to one course in credit weight