

Sample Project Proposal Handout and Rubric

NOTE: This is only a sample rubric (from last semester's iteration of CSC413), and we will not follow this exactly for our course. The aim is to give you some ideas on how to write a project proposal.

The purpose project proposal is to demonstrate that your team:

- knows what the goals and motivations for your project are.
- knows what dataset you will use to train your model.
- has a rough idea of the type of neural network(s) you will use.
- has a rough idea of the relate work that you can build on.
- has a reasonable idea of how you will measure success of your model, and your project.
- has a clear idea of how you will work together, and how to distribute the work fairly.

The document has a word limit of maximum of 1400 words, but you really shouldn't need to use all of them. A concisely-written document is preferred.

The document has a word limit of maximum of 1400 words. However, a concisely-written document is preferred. The word limit is hard: There is a 1% penalty for every word in excess of the 1400 limit. **Please count the words in your document, compute the penalty, and put it on the front page.** These are not included in the word count, nor are figures or references.

Proposal Rubric

The project proposal document is graded out of 40 points.

Introduction (4 points):

A brief description of the motivations behind your project, the goal of your project, why it is interesting or important, and why machine learning is a reasonable approach.

- 4/4 An introduction that clearly describes the project goal, why the project is interesting and/or useful, and convincingly describes why machine learning is an appropriate tool for the task.
- 3/4 The introduction describes the project, but does not “sell” it well, get to the point quickly, contain overly vague phrases, or minor factually incorrect information.
- 2/4 The introduction is vague, does not sufficiently convince the reader that the project is useful, and/or that the machine learning is an appropriate tool to use.
- 1/4 The introduction does not make it clear what the specific goal of your project is.

Illustration / Figure (4 points):

A figure or a diagram that illustrates the overall model or idea of your project. The idea is to make your report more accessible, especially to readers who are starting by skimming your work. For the project proposal, taking a picture of a hand-drawn diagram is fine, as long as it's legible. PowerPoint is another option. You will not be penalized for hand-drawn illustrations

- you are graded on the design and illustrative power
- 4/4 A well thought-out figure that communicates the core idea of your project and architecture immediately.
- 3/4 An illustration that does the job, but is not particularly clear, or too wordy.
- 2/4 The illustration is significantly lacking in some respect, or contain factual inconsistencies or inaccuracies.

Background & Related Work (4 points)

A description of 1-2 related work in the field, to provide reader a sense of what has already been done in this area, e.g. papers or existing products/software that do a related thing.

- 4/4 Briefly describes 1-2 prior work related to your project to put your project into context. Your descriptions need not be complete, but should contain important work, especially those recommended by your instructors or TA.
- 3/4 Background that has minor omissions or factual incorrectness, but otherwise places your project into context.
- 2/4 Background contains too much information not related to your project, or has major omissions of content provided to you by your instructor or TA.
- 1/4 Background that does not sufficiently put your project into context.

Data Processing (4 points)

A description of the sources of your data. We are looking for some effort and evidence of work to collect/re-purpose/clean training data vs. simply taking a known dataset. While it is OK to work with an existing dataset, there should be a major data cleaning portion.

- 4/4 Clearly describes and cites sources of data, and the steps you will take to clean and format your data. The descriptions are clear enough for another classmate to follow and reproduce.
- 3/4 Mostly clear description, but some aspects of the data processing steps are vague enough so someone attempting to reproduce your project might do something different enough to possibly affect model goal or performance.
- 2/4 Mostly clear description, but aspects of the data processing step are incomplete.

Architecture (2 points)

A rough description of the type(s) of neural network models that you will use: for example RNN, CNN, etc. You won't know all the information about number of layers and hyperparameter choices at this point, so it is okay for the description to be rough. However, you should provide enough details so another classmate could potentially take over your project.

- 2/2 Rough description of the type(s) of neural network model(s) that you will use, and the relevant components.
- 1/2 Some issues with the description (inconsistencies, factual inaccuracies)
- 0/2 Unclear description of the type(s) of neural network model that you will use, or a choice that is inconsistent with your problem.

Baseline Model (2 points)

Describe a simple, baseline model that you will compare your neural network against. This can be a simple model that you build, a hand-coded heuristic model (that does not use machine learning)

- 2/2 A reasonable choice of baseline, accompanied by a description of the baseline so that a knowledgeable classmate can either find or reproduce.
- 1/2 A description of a reasonable baseline, but not enough detail to reproduce a version that would perform similarly.
- 0/2 Poor choice of baseline inconsistent with the problem.

Ethical Considerations (2 points)

Description of a use of the system that could give rise to ethical issues. Are there limitations to your model? Your training data?

- 2/2 Thoughtful consideration of ethical issues in data collection, and the impact of using the model.
- 1/2 Some consideration of ethical issues in data collection, but missing related ideas discussed in class.

Project Plan (4 points)

Describe how your team will work together. When will you meet? How will you communicate with each other and with your TA mentor? How will you ensure that you won't overwrite each others' code? Divide up the tasks and set deadlines for yourselves.

- 4/4 Plan provides enough detail about the breakdown of tasks, internal deadlines, and team member responsibilities so that a new team member can replace an existing one and know roughly what their responsibilities are. Work is divided evenly amongst team members.
- 3/4 Plan lists the breakdown of tasks, internal deadlines, and team member responsibilities.
- 2/4 Plan misses important tasks, or has timelines that are obviously impractical (e.g. setting aside 1 day for hyperparameter tuning)

Risk Register (4 points)

Document 3-5 major/likely risks of the project, the likelihood of the risk, and what your team would do in the situation. For example, what would you do if a team member decides to drop the course? What would you do if your model training takes longer than expected? Not all risks make sense for each project, so think about risks involved with *your* project.

- 4/4 A thorough analysis of the major risks, and their solutions.
- 3/4 Good analysis, but with possible omission of serious risks.
- 2/4 Major miscalibration of risks.

Link to Github or Colab Notebook (1 point)

You are expected to store all your code in either a public Colab notebook or a Github repository. If your team is uncomfortable with having your code public, please speak to your instructor prior to the deadline.

If you use a Github repository, you have the option of writing your final report as a Github README.

- 1/1 Includes link to public Colab notebook or public Github repo.
- 0/1 Omitted.

References (1 point)

References should be in the IEEE documentation style, described here.

- 1/1 At least 2 references, formatted consistently using the IEEE format.
- 0/1 References are omitted or inconsistent (e.g. some use first names, other use initials)

Structure, Grammar & Mechanics (8 points)

We are looking for a document that is easy to follow, grammatically correct, and well-written.

- 8/8 Clear, concise and well-written document. Exceeds expectations.
- 7/8 Well-written document that could be more concise or less error-prone.
- 6/8 Well-written document that has some issues with grammar, mechanics, or structure. Meets expectations.
- 5/8 Reasonably-written document with grammar, mechanics, or structural issues.
- 4/8 Document has many issues.