Informatics Project Proposal: Assignment (session 2025/26)

Overview

The Informatics Project Proposal courses (IPP20) is for M.Sc. students who are planning to start their M.Sc. Dissertation (DISS) in the summer after IPP and the examination period finishes. This guidance document also applies to the assignment for full-time and part-time distance learning M.Sc. students across the School of Informatics (IPP-DL).

IPP works closely with the DISS programme and students will need to navigate the M.Sc. Dissertation pages in parallel.

IPP provides a framework for students to research their project ideas and develop a simple but robust project management plan for their research. This course is entirely graded by supervisors on the submitted project plan. The project plan is **marked as PASS or FAIL** but feedback will be provided from your supervisor on the key elements especially where this will feed into the summer DISS activities.

To achieve a PASS mark, an IPP must adequately **consider the list of headings listed below**. **If a heading is not very relevant for a specific project then the IPP must still include it** and briefly justify why, for that specific project, that heading is of limited relevance. To help you with this, a template is provided for the IPP but you are free to alter this to suit your project. We also provide a checklist against which you can self-evaluate whether your IPP has addressed the key marking criteria before discussing with your supervisor or tutor and/or before submitting.

Template: You should use the provided template for your submission. The template contains minimal information on how to use it. You are permitted to change aspects of the structure by adding or removing sections if this is appropriate for your proposal. You are NOT permitted to change the template to increase the number of words contained in a page (e.g., you must not make the font size smaller, change margins, etc.)

Length: The body of your Informatics Project proposal should comprise **at most 8 pages**, excluding any cover page, optional table of contents and references. Images and tables must be inside the 8 pages. Further details on what is included in the limit are provided below.

Deadline: The deadline for submission is **12 PM (Noon) on Monday 20th April 2026.**

Submission: You should submit a PDF of your Informatics Project Proposal to the Turnitin submission in the Assessment section of the Learn webpage.

Marking: Your IPP will be marked by your supervisor, according to a rubric and they will provide feedback. Feedback may come via Turnitin as we release the provisional marks or, in many case, feedback will come direct from your supervisor. IPPs will also be moderated by IPP course staff and by external examiners. The rubric provides an explanation of the criteria on which your Informatics Project proposal will be marked. Please read the rubric carefully.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If Pass/Fail assessed coursework is submitted late without an approved extension, it will be recorded as late and will be graded as a **Fail**.

What you need to include in your IPP.

1. Cover page (1 page, not included in 8 page limit)

This should include your project title. By default this should be the same as your original allocated project but if you want to change it that is OK. It should include an Edinburgh UID: your student number or if you prefer your exam number are fine. The work is not marked blind since it will be assigned to your supervisor. Your should include your IPP tutor name and supervisor name. Finally, please edit the permission at the foot of the page as you see fit. With your permission we would like to show some examples to future students. We will redact your name/details.

2. Abstract and declaration (1 page, not included in 8 page limit)

Please include a 100 word abstract to summarise your project. This will not be assessed but you may receive feedback on it from your supervisor. Finally on this page describe your use or any GenAI tools (if you used any). A reminder that their use to help you summarise for your own notes etc are fine but the ideas and the text you write should be your own. The use of GenAI to check spelling and grammar etc are also allowed but again, please acknowledge their use.

3. *Introduction and State of the Art (included in 8 page limit)*

These introduce topic of the research including the motivation (*Introduction*) and a concise review of the key literature relevant to the research topic (*State of the Art*).

4. *Methodology or Approach, Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Criteria (parts of Implementation and included in 8 page limit)*

Your IPP should outline the methodology you plan to use in the project. In some cases you may be considering more than one possible methodology or even comparing two different approaches to the same research question (*Methodology or Approach*).

The anticipated results of the project include clearly defined and measurable outcomes (*Expected Outcomes*). These may include tangible deliverables such as datasets, prototypes, software tools, models, or written reports; performance metrics such as improvements in accuracy, efficiency, reliability, or scalability; and/or scientific contributions such as new insights, validated methods, or theoretical advancements relevant to the field.

Your IPP also needs to include a brief description of how you plan to evaluate the research you will do and provide a brief list of expected outcomes for the project (*Evaluation Criteria*).

In summary, the precise content here will vary considerably with project type but it should be clear to a reader what you are planning to do during the project period and why this will address the research topic of the project. It should list what you expect to achieve and how you will measure/evaluate progress/success.

5. *Risk Assessment anf Mitigation (part of Implementation and included in the 8 page limit)*

You should include project key risk analysis and mitigation, and demonstrate that you have a plan to minimise their impact on your project.

6. *Responsible Research including Ethics (part of Implementation and included in the 8 page limit)*

Your IPP must include a consideration of the relevant topics in responsible research. At a minimum it must include an ethics review of the research indicating if a formal ethical review is required and your reasoning behind this conclusion. It would normally also include a short data management plan that clearly describes how you plan to package or handle any code, data or results for future use by you or your supervisor as appropriate. Often it may include plans for attribution of others input into the project and/or licenses associated with any code written.

7. *Research Plan Milestones and Deliverables (Included in the 8 page limit)*

Here you should outline the plan of work. This should include a brief text description of the tasks indicating how many weeks you expect each piece of work take . The number of tasks in a project can vary widely but most have at least three or four. Although the summer period for full-time DISS is relatively short your plan should include at least one internal milestone that you can use to confirm project progress is as expected and you will have an opportunity to write this up in a mid-term project report (see DISS course for timing and details). Dependencies between individual tasks should be identified.

You should also discuss a meeting plan for the research with your supervisor, this can be outlined. You should carefully consider any resources you need. This could be access to previous executable code, access to datasets or specific compute resources, access to supervisory time or volunteers to take part in the research at specific stages of the project.

A Gannt Chart and table(s) of Milestones and Deliverables should be included here. This section is typically 1 page and it is included entirely in the 8 pages.

8. *References (*not included in 8 page limit*)*

You should include a bibliography that references appropriate literature to support the narrative of the IPP.

All figures, tables and legends (included the Gannt Chart and the table with milestones and deliverables) should be included within the 8 page limit.

We will also provide a checklist to keep track of your progress while completing a typical IPP.

IPP Sanity checklist February 2026

IPP Checklist	PANIC	HAPPY	DRAFTED
I have a project title			
I acknowledge the University's guidance and policies on plagiarism / scholarship and realise the work I submit for IPP must be my own.			
I have described any use of LLMs/GenAI in my IPP.			
I have clearly stated the problem that needs to be solved and identified aims and objectives.			
I have a clear motivation statement that provides a reason why a reader might want to read the rest of my project proposal			
I have a concise literature review that covers the essential background.			
I have described the approach/methods I want to use.			
I have explained why I think the approach/method is appropriate			
I have outlined the approach I will use to evaluate my research findings			
I have summarized the expected outcomes of my project			
I have a narrative description of the high-level tasks.			
I have estimated the time each task will take and provided brief justification for why I think it will take this time and if there is uncertainty around the time a task might take, I have made this clear			
I have identified dependencies between tasks			
I have identified one or more milestones in the plan that I can use to check the schedule is on time or trigger corrective action if running late			
I have identified any resources that my project will need to access			
I have a combined the plan narrative into a graphical Gannt chart			
I have analysed risks in my plan, put in place appropriate measures to minimize any substantial risks and included a risk table			
I have reviewed the ethical implications of my planned research and included a summary of the findings and any actions required			
I have considered the other aspects of responsible research and included a statement about which of these are relevant and what I will do to address them.			
I have included appropriate citations and added references in a bibliography			
My IPP is 8 pages or less			
TOTALS			