

Assessment for comp4809/comp7809

2007 Semester 1 ([pdf version of this page](#))

From the course profile: The Research Methods course is pass/fail. Both Component 1 and Component 2 must be passed.

Component 1. Attendance at lectures is compulsory. Credit will be given for 2 marks per 2-hour lecture up to a total of 20 marks. Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the start of the session or leaving before the end of the session will be deemed to have missed that session. Students must attend at least 10 lectures during the semester to receive a pass for this component.

Component 2. Weekly deliverables are compulsory. Each week students must complete an exercise related to the project (8 marks per Deliverable). Students must complete all 10 assessable Deliverables and receive a total mark of 40/80 or more to pass this component. Late submissions will receive a penalty of 1 mark per calendar day. Submissions that are more than 3 days late will receive zero and will not be marked. Extensions may be given if requested by email at least 24 hours prior to submission, or for humanitarian reasons.

Other Requirements: All deliverables are individual pieces of work.

Determination of Final Grade: To receive a passing grade, students must pass both Component 1 (attendance) and Component 2 (weekly deliverables). If either component is failed, then a failing grade will be assigned for the whole course.

Component 2. Weekly Deliverables

Both comp4809 and comp7809 submit to <http://submit.itee.uq.edu.au/select.php?coursecode=COMP4809>

Deliverable number	Requirement	Week Number	Email a copy of this week's deliverable to your supervisor	Due Date 1pm Tuesday every week
---	--- Week 1 no deliverable ---	1	---	---
1	Project title and project description	2	yes	6 March
2	Annotated bibliography	3	yes	13 March
3	Project plan (Swales 4b)	4	yes	20 March
4	Statement of research question and project introduction (Swales 1-4)	5	yes	27 March
5	Progress report draft	6	yes	3 April
	--- Mid semester break ---	---		
	*** Progress report *** (honours project requirement) http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp6803/	7		
6	Elevator pitch	8	yes	24 April
7	Seminar outline and draft of seminar slides	9	yes	1 May
8	Description of preliminary results or pilot studies	10	yes	8 May
	*** Seminar Week*** (honours project requirement) http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp6803/	11		
9	Description of your research methodology and analysis or evaluation techniques	12	yes	22 May
10	Project review and Timeline for semester 2	13	yes	29 May

D1. Project Title and Project Description

Task

1. State your name, student number, your email, the project course you are taking (eg comp6804), supervisor, supervisor's email, title of your project (you can change it later in the year — state your current working title)
2. Describe your project *in your own words* (200-500 words)
3. Give the word count
4. Send an email to your supervisor with the Title and Project Description and include in your submission. “A copy of my D1 submission was emailed to my supervisor on dd/mm/yy [date] at xx [time].” If you get feedback early enough, incorporate it.
5. Create a pdf of your D1 and call it “D1-<student no>.pdf”
If you need to create a pdf on ITEE machines, see the course FAQ at <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/CourseFAQ>
6. Submit your pdf to the online submission system. <http://submit.itee.uq.edu.au/select.php?coursecode=COMP4809>
7. If you don't have a supervisor or project yet, submit on time with the details that you do know and request an extension for a specific date. For example, “I am still organizing my project. I will be seeing XXX about topic YYY on dd/mm/yy. I request an extension until dd/mm/yy to complete D1.”
8. Add your project title to the appropriate section of the Research wiki (http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

Rationale

The tasks for the first week are easy tasks to make sure you can access the facilities and are on track with your project selection. It's like writing a program that says “Hello World!” when you learn a new language.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Marks will be deducted if any of the required details are missing — name, student number, supervisor, title, word count, date and time that you emailed your supervisor, for descriptions that are too short or too long or that reproduce the supervisor's original project description. Describe the project in your own words.
- A good project description clearly describes the goals of the project and the methods that will be used.

Tips

- Look at three previous project reports to get a feel for what is required and the variation between reports.

D2. Annotated Bibliography

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project (you can update it from last week if you want)
2. Look at the reference formats, APA and IEEE. Choose one of these two.
3. Learn how to use endnote.
4. List 5 appropriately formatted references relevant to your project using endnote. At least three must be *peer reviewed* papers. If you can't find a relevant article, choose something related to the topic.
5. Briefly summarizing each article (1-2 sentences) and its relevance to your project (1-2 sentences).
6. Email your Annotated bibliography to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4).
7. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

- Compiling a reference list is a mundane task that should be done throughout the project. Getting the format

right early saves valuable time later.

- Endnote is a standard tool. Even though you may not need to use it for your project, you should be familiar with it and able to learn such tools quickly. You can choose any tool for the rest of your project.
- Reading a paper is more than just starting at the beginning and continuing to the end.
- Reading original references and extracting the relevance for your own research is a skill essential to a good researcher. It can initially take time, but it can be developed and the relevance of a paper extracted very quickly

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Marks will be deducted if any of the required details are missing, the format is incorrect, if three references are not clearly peer reviewed, or if the descriptions of the articles are inadequate.
- Refereed publications include full articles in journals and fully refereed conference papers. They don't include textbooks, or user manuals.
- Wikipedia and other web pages are **not** refereed.
- Appropriate formatting means in traditional academic style, as if submitted to a journal or conference.

Tips

- <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/Writing>
- <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/Reviewing>
- If you don't know what format to use, look at the journal or conference where your most important references are from, find their format (usually available in the back cover of the journal or online) and use that format.
- Google and scholar.google.com are often useful. Online journals are ok, provided that they are peer reviewed and published. If you can't tell, assume they are not peer reviewed.
- <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/CourseFAQ> for details of what "peer review" means
- Impact factors are a good way to find out the standing of a conference or journal. E.g. ISI and Citeseer http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/Impact_factors
- When you summarise, don't copy sentences directly from the paper - that would be plagiarism. Use your own words.

D3. Project Plan (Swales 4b)

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Describe the specific aims for your project and the methods to be used, including references if applicable (200-500 words). Define all technical terms. Give the word count
3. Summarize the progress made in the first three weeks of the project (200-500 words). Give the word count
4. Email your project plan to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4).
5. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

This section will form part of the introduction for your progress report (Swales 4b)

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Marks will be deducted if any of the required details are missing, or for descriptions that are too short or too long.
- A good description will often have global aims and specific aims.
- Methods in the broadest sense include software engineering, computational modeling, ethnography, surveys, etc. Within each of these general areas, there are more specific details for your particular project — what language, tools, analyses, etc. If you don't yet know what methods are appropriate, give what details you can and state how you will find out more information and when you will be making those decisions.

Tips

- Look at the methods sections from past project reports, or from relevant journal and conference articles.

D4. Statement of research question and project introduction using Swales format

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. State your Research Question (also called the thesis-of-the-thesis). It should be 25-200 words. State the word count
3. Write a brief description for each of the sections below (these elaborate on the headings of the Swales format discussed in class in week 3). The total should be 800-1000 words. State the word count
(These sections will be useful preparation for writing the introduction section for your project at the end of the year. You may also use them for your progress report.)
4. Email your D4 to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
5. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Swales format for writing an Introduction

1. **Understand the wider context and importance of the project**
 - a. State the general topic and make a claim about why it is important.
 - b. Describe what is generally known about this topic.
2. **Summarize previous research**
 - a. State the core ideas in the literature and structure them in a logical sequence.
 - b. Draw conclusions from the literature review by summing up the relevance of the literature review for the project and listing the informed decisions that need to be made.
3. **Prepare for the current research**
 - a. List the gaps. That is, given all the research reviewed in Step 2, what is left to be done? An accurate summary of this situation is one of the critical aspects of a project. Are there gaps related to an area that has not been studied, or to a new method that needs developing?
 - b. List possible methods for addressing the gaps. For a large project, usually at least five different approaches are possible. Understanding the breath of questions that could be addressed is a major step in understanding why your project is addressing the gap that it is.
 - c. Select a gap and a methodology for addressing it. A gap can be selected because new technology, theoretical tools or methods have recently become available. It can be constrained by length of time available for the project or by resources available. The gap is frequently large. By appreciating that many approaches would be valid, you can see what aspects you will be able to address with your chosen methodology, and what will be outside the scope of the project. Don't confuse the gap with your research plan (which is the next Step). It is conceivable that someone else could address the same gap using the same general methodology but design a different specific plan.
4. **Research plan**
 - a. State the overall goals and the specific aims of the research. In an empirical study, the hypothesis is stated here. Make the aims as specific as possible.
 - b. Outline the methods to be followed. A timeline is frequently useful in this section.

Rationale

Using a standard set of headings (such as Swales) forces you to think about why your project is important, how it relates to past literature and what the gap and aims of your project are. Thinking about these issues deepens your understanding of your research question and guides the plan of your project work. You won't necessarily have good

answers for all the questions at this stage, but should endeavour either to give the best answer at present, or indicate that the issues are not yet fully known, and sketch how you will find an answer. The questions raise issues that many students in the past have only faced at the final stage of writing.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Is the title given?
- Is the research question identified?
- Is the word limit for the research question in the range 25-200 words?
- Is each section addressed (minimum 1-2 sentences on each section from 1a to 4b)?
- Is there a clear understanding of the difference between the gap in section 3 and the plan in section 4.
- Is the word count stated?
- Is the word limit for all four sections together appropriate — not too short (min 800 words) and not too long (max 1500 words)

Tips

- D4 requires writing a brief section on each of the areas of Swales. A full introduction is not required at this stage.
- Material from D3 can be used in Swales 4b.
- Bullet point format is ok so long as you use full sentences.
- More details are linked to the wiki copy at http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp4809/wiki/index.php/Defining_the_thesis_theme
- Note that D4 differs from the project progress report because it requires specifically addressing each section and has strict word limits.

D5. Progress report draft

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Write a draft of your progress report. State the word count.
3. Email your draft to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
4. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

- The aim of the progress report is for the student to crystallize the issues in their project, report on pilot studies and outline a plan for the remainder of the project. It demonstrates the level of understanding of the literature, methodology and plan, and provides a first assessable piece of written work.
- The *draft* progress report is aimed at ensuring that the major framework and all the components of the report are in place a week in advance, so that the final week can be spent dealing with substantive issues that enable the student to deepen their understanding of the literature, methods and/or plan, as necessary. It is both a time management and a quality management
- The more complete the draft report, the better you will be able to evaluate the balance of all components, and also the better the feedback possible.

Assessment

8 marks. The minimum requirement includes:

1. Title, student name and number, supervisor
2. Contents showing a clear structure with suitable headings, including at least a first draft of
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Literature review
 - c. Methods

- d. Plan
 - e. References in appropriate format
3. Note that you should use the structure as determined by your supervisor. The above structure is one example among many.
For example, for one student, the supervisor specified that the sections (with more informative headings) should cover
- a. Title
 - b. Contents
 - c. Abstract (or executive summary)
 - d. Introduction
 - e. Literature review
 - f. Methodology
 - g. Pilot studies
 - h. Plan and timeline for the rest of the project
 - i. References
 - j. Appendices (if needed)
4. Don't include the annotations from the annotated bibliography D3. They were a step on the way to developing a literature review, and should not be included in the progress report or final report.
5. For the Introduction, a Swales format is good. But rewrite section 3b much more concisely to focus on your specific gap and include appropriate (project specific headings). For the project proposal, you need to describe your specific project.

Tips

- See the assessment at <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp6804/assess.pdf>

Question: Can D4 be used in the D5 Progress Report draft? Is it appropriate to use it?

Answer: D4 and the Intro to D5 cover similar but not identical information. You are welcome to use the same material in both, keeping in mind that they have slightly different requirements:

- D4 required specific sections and had a word limit which allowed you to see more clearly the relationship between each section. The Progress Report introduction may be much longer and may also integrate the D4 sections into a single section.
- In D4, Section 2 included just the main points. For many projects, the full literature review in the Progress report would be much more detailed and the section in the introduction will include forward references to the literature review where appropriate.
- In the D5 introduction, the gap section from D4 (Section 3) will need condensing down to just the main issues. In thinking about the project for D4, you needed to consider all the wider options to ensure that you can justify why your approach is appropriate. D5 is the point where you condense that down to your project.

Project Progress report (final)

Assessment

Marked by supervisor as part of project. (no marks for comp4809/7809)

- See the assessment at <http://www.itee.uq.edu.au/~comp6804/assess.pdf>

D6. Elevator Pitch

An “elevator pitch” is a brief description of the motivation and aims of your project.

Imagine you have walked into an elevator with the chairman of the Faculty Research committee, who comments that the committee is looking for interesting research to fund in the coming months. He or she then asks what your project is about. It's not a long elevator ride - you have 30 seconds to get the message of your project across. What would you say? That 30-second message is called an elevator pitch.

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Write an elevator pitch for your project (aim for a message that takes you about 30 seconds to say talking at normal speed). State the word count.
3. Email your D4 to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4).
4. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.
5. Bring a copy of your elevator pitch to class in week 8.

Rationale

The aim of the elevator pitch is to practice communicating your work at a different level of detail. A brief time frame forces you to focus on the most important aspects.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Elevator pitches will be assessed for clarity of the communication.
- Marks will be deducted for descriptions that are too short or too long, or do not give a clear description of the motivation and aims of the project.

Tips

- Try explaining your project in non-technical terms to a few people who don't know your work, and watch their faces to see what explanations are most useful.
- Typically, the first draft takes about 3-5 minutes, which you can hone and polish until the message is very clear and can be communicated well in 30 seconds.

D7. Seminar outline and draft of Seminar slides

Task

Prepare a draft of your seminar presentation. This is not intended to be the final perfect presentation, just the planning stage.

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Length of time for your seminar, giving total time and time for questions.
3. Date for your seminar if organized, or approximate date if not yet known
4. Number of slides
5. Title of your seminar (use your project title if nothing better comes to mind)
6. Describe the **take home message** of your seminar (20-50 words). State the word count.
7. Topic for each slide. You may either
 - Do the slides using Power Point or another presentation format (a rough draft of each slide is ok); or
 - List the contents of the slides in text form
8. Write five questions that you would like the audience to ask you at the end of your seminar. These questions may be circulated at your seminar so make sure they are ones that you will be able to answer well.
9. Email your slides to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
10. Submit a pdf of your draft presentation to the online submission system.

Rationale

Presenting research effectively in a seminar requires attention to both the content of the research and the delivery. Planning early and thinking about the issues ahead of time allows a speaker to consider a variety of options for communicating the main point, and then plan and refine a talk. Drafting the talk before polishing the slides is effective time management, since no time is wasted polishing slides that are not likely to be part of the final performance.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Appropriate details provided, clear take-home message.
- A serious attempt at a seminar draft.

Tips

- The “take-home message” is the one thing that you want your audience to remember.
- A seminar is a professional communication task. The skill of effectively presentation of technical material can be learned. Like all skills, it improves with training and practice.
- Choose five questions that will make you look intelligent, reveal how much you understand about your research area, and/or allow you to highlight the main points.

D8. Description of preliminary results or pilot studies

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Describe the progress made on the substance of the project to date, including description of pilot studies, code written etc. (300-500 words). State the word count
3. If your project includes writing software, state the backup system you are using and other software engineering tools.
4. Email your D8 to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
5. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

Efforts at this stage of semester are often directed towards the seminar, but you also need to be making progress on the substance of the project.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Your progress at this stage.
- Clear descriptions, appropriate word count.

Tips

- Good time management is useful for keeping a project on track.

Half Time Seminar

Assessment

Marked by supervisor as part of project. (no marks for comp4809/7809)

Tips

- Make sure your presentation has your name, student number and project title clearly displayed.
- To create a pdf from a powerpoint presentation, <print> → select pdf printer → select <print what> handouts - 6 slides per page

D9. Description of Research Methodology and Analysis or evaluation

techniques

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. Clearly describe the planned methodology for your project. Use diagrams where relevant. This should be in a form that may be directly useful for your final project report (minimum 300 words)
3. Describe the results you intend to collect and the form in which they will be collated. Use tables or graphs to show the relevant variables or axes. (minimum 300 words)
4. Clearly describe the analysis or evaluation techniques that are relevant to your project. Refer to particular analyses in the literature, and where relevant include specific diagrams that you will be using as a model for your own project. (minimum 200 words)
5. State all word counts.
6. Email your D9 to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
7. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

The time to think about methodology, collation of results, and analyses or evaluation is when studies are first designed. This information is important both for the planning stages of research, and also for the presenting your work in the seminar.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- The depth of your thinking about these issues at this stage of the research.
- Clear descriptions, appropriate word count.

Tips

- “Methodology” covers all the procedures that are followed in a field in order to discover new information. In some fields it might involve mathematical proofs, in another it might be neural network simulations, in another it might be extreme programming. “Methodology” covers the general case, and “Methods” are the specific application of a methodology to your project.
- “Results” are the indisputable numbers or the facts that are observed.
- “Analysis or evaluation” is how to turn the observed facts into meaningful knowledge. For example, when comparing two algorithms, the results might be their recorded performance on a set of tasks. Analysis might include a statistical test to determine if the performances were statistically different. For a classifier, analysis might include generating a ROC curve.

D10. Project Review, Plan and Timeline for remainder of project

Task

1. State your name, student number, supervisor and title of your project.
2. **Project Review:** Think about what you know and/or have learned this semester about how to do research and about your research project over the last 13 weeks.
Write 500-1000 words about the process of the research you have done so far this semester. Give the word count.
3. **Plan and timeline:** Provide a detailed plan of the project tasks to be done. Provide a **Gantt** chart of the tasks and estimated duration for each task (week-by-week) until project completion.
Include time to write the project report, seeking and incorporating feedback, and preparing and delivering the demo or poster.
Mark when there are breaks for holidays.
4. Email your Plan and Timeline to your supervisor and incorporate their feedback if there is time. Add a

- statement that you have emailed them a copy (similar to D1.4)..
5. Submit your pdf to the online submission system.

Rationale

Professional researchers learn most of their research skills through practical projects, working with experienced researchers where possible, and learning by trying things and finding out what works for them. Self-reflection is one of the major tools that can be used to improve performance by sifting through experiences to determine things that went well, and are effective for the individual in practice, and places where performance could be improved by deepening technical knowledge or development of personal skills such as writing and time management. Planning research is a skill that is learned primarily through practice.

Assessment

8 marks. Marking will take into account the following issues:

- Marks will be deducted for Project Reviews with less than 500 words, or for plans and timelines with insufficient detail.
- The Project Review is about the research *process* and not the product. That is, it is about “How you do effective research” and not “what your research produces”
- The Plan and Timeline should provide sufficient detail to estimate the time management issues for the rest of the project.

Tips

- Gantt charts are a common tool. Descriptions can be found using any search engine.
- If you don't know where to start, consider one or more of the following questions:
 - How well has your project gone this semester?
 - Are you on track compared to where you thought you would be?
 - What went well this semester?
 - What didn't go well?
- The Plan and Timeline requires thinking about next semester. What will you focus on for your project and what is the core path to completing the project successfully?