



UMass Lowell Dept. of Computer Science
COMP 4620 — GUI Programming II
Spring 2016 Semester, Section 201
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[Site Home](#)
[Teaching](#)
[Research](#)
[Advising](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Projects](#)

[Course Home](#) [Information](#) [Class Notes](#) **[Assignments](#)** [Piazza](#) [Grades](#) [Resources](#) [Login](#)

Assignment No. 1



Project Milestone #1: Proposal

Date Due: Thursday, February 4, 2016

Contents

[Top](#)

- [What This Assignment Is About](#)
- [What You Are To Do](#)
 - [Writing Resources](#)
- [Submitting Your Assignment for Grading](#)
- [How You Will Be Graded](#)

What This Assignment Is About

[Top](#)

This is the first assignment related to the project you will complete as your major work in this course. You are to work with your partner(s) to write a formal proposal for the project that describes the overall plan in general and then provides specifics on what each team member will do.

What You Are To Do

[Top](#)

Write as complete a specification as you can for the program you intend to develop in this course. Your specification should provide all the information that *someone besides yourself* would need if you were to hire him or her to implement the project for you. To say it another way, suppose you were hired to implement someone else's project. What questions would you ask the person who hired you so that you could do the job? Your specification should provide the answers to all of those questions.

Although professors always dislike telling students how long a paper needs to be to “cover the ground,” to set expectations properly I will say that I expect your proposal to be 8-12 double-spaced pages in length. Of course, shorter proposals are fine as long as they provide all the required information, and longer proposals are also fine if you need more space to describe your plans. As presented in class, I have provided sample proposals from the [2008](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2014](#), and [2015](#) offerings of this course **with my comments** for you to review.

- the latest proposals — those from the [2014](#) and [2015](#) courses — are probably the best to look at initially
 - these have my comments embedded in them
- the [2013 proposals](#) are probably the next best to look at
 - each of these has two files: the original proposal (files named [*_JMHscan.pdf](#)) and my grade sheets with extensive comments (files named [*_JMHcomments.pdf](#))
- there are interesting ideas in the older ones, too

Regardless of which proposals you look at, be sure to note the comments on formatting and presentation as well as exploring the main proposal theme.

Your proposal must include:

- a single, clear statement of your project's goal
- descriptions of your program's major capabilities and/or features that support that goal
- details to clarify the software components you'll need to fulfill your goal
 - which, if any, of these components already exist in some form?
 - if existing components can't be used directly, can they be used as models?
 - which components will you have to write yourself?
 - what materials, if any, do you have to guide you in writing these components?
- a description your program's intended users (real or fictional)
- a list of the issues you see at this time that you will have to address to be able to write your program

- I strongly encourage you to do feasibility tests to ensure that you can actually do what you propose to do
- a preliminary schedule for developing the required components and addressing any issues
 - this schedule should be detailed with specific milestones
 - it should also clearly identify who within your partnership is going to do what
- statements of acceptability that define completion of major parts of your program
 - minimum functionality for release
 - nice-to-have features that will be implemented if there's time
 - features that will most likely not be implemented but that might influence the design

As always, I would be happy to discuss your project ideas with you either in person or via e-mail. I am very good at helping students pare ideas down to projects they can complete within the allotted time-frame. We will continue to discuss project ideas in class, but please make an appointment to meet with me if you would to discuss your ideas in greater detail, because I learn as much from those discussions as you do!

Writing Resources

[Top](#)

Please note that 6 of the 40 points on this assignment are for the Presentation of your proposal. This includes the paper's look, its organization, and the correctness of spelling and grammar. There are two documents posted on this Web site to help you understand the importance of these issues and avoid the most common writing mistakes that I see in student papers. These are:

- [Strong Writing Skills Essential for Success, Even in IT](#)
 - by Paula Jacobs, *InfoWorld*, July 6, 1998
- [Common Writing Mistakes and Their Corrections](#)
 - collected from student papers submitted in classes I have taught

In addition, here are links to some of the many Web sites that will help you improve your writing:

- [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)
 - the classic reference, but some parts require a paid subscription
- [The Free Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)
 - wonderful, completely free dictionaries and writing resources
- [Datasegment.com](#)
 - an interesting, somewhat different dictionary: simple but valuable
- [Grammar Slammer](#)
 - a wonderful and very helpful resource on grammar rules
- [Dr. Grammar's Frequently Asked Questions page](#)
 - answers to such thorny questions as when to use "accept" vs. "except," "good" vs. "well," and "i.e." vs. "e.g."
- [Grammar Traps](#) (Dept. of Agricultural Communication, Purdue University)
 - more answers to such thorny questions as when to use "insure" vs. "ensure"

And of course there are many more. Just enter something like "English Language Grammar, Usage, and Style" into your favorite search engine and you will find a huge collection of links to helpful pages. I **strongly** recommend that you at least look at some of these documents and resources before writing your proposal and use them as you write.

Submitting Your Assignment for Grading

[Top](#)

I expect papers to be typed double-spaced and printed with 1-1/2" margins all around so that I can write comments back to you. I strongly encourage you to include figures in your proposal showing what your screens and dialog boxes will look like. Review carefully the grading criteria below for further guidance on what I'm looking for.

Convert your proposal to a PDF and post it on your weblab.cs.uml.edu website. Be sure that it identifies the full names of all the partners. If you do not have software that can create a PDF, you can convert Word documents to PDFs for free at <http://www.pdfonline.com/convert-pdf/>. If you're a Windows user, you can also download a free PDF writer from <http://www.cutepdf.com/products/cutepdf/writer.asp>. Note that the CutePDF Writer requires GPL Ghostscript 8.15, but that is also available for free on their site.

Submit your assignment using the [Assignment Submission Form](#). This form will lead you through providing all the information we need to evaluate your work, confirming that it is correct, and then e-mailing that information to me with a copy to yourself. Be sure to select **91.462 Assignment No. 1: Project Milestone #1: Proposal** from the assignment dropdown list on that form.

Important Note: If you do not receive an e-mail in your CS account within a few minutes confirming that your assignment has been submitted, something has gone wrong. Try submitting again or contact our teaching assistant or me.

How You Will Be Graded

[Top](#)

This assignment will be graded on a 40-point system with points awarded as follows. If you do not understand what is meant by any of these criteria, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. **In past semesters many students have misunderstood what I mean by “component details” and “acceptability criteria.”** We'll go over these a few times in class!

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Possible Points</i>
Goal Statement • clear, concise, realistic	4
Feature Descriptions • practical, doable • comply with GUI standards • clearly described	8
Component Details • researched, not just assumed • locations and references cited	6
User Descriptions • specific and focused	4
Discussion of Issues • realistic • alternatives and/or fallback strategies proposed	4
Schedule • good selection of milestones • realistic expectations	4
Acceptability Criteria • clear enough to be applied by someone other than yourself • germane to the project goal	4
Presentation • professional look • logical organization and structure • correct spelling and grammar	6



This is document <http://localhost/~heines/91.462/91.462-2015-16s/462-assn/ProjectProposal-v06.jsp>. It was last modified on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 10:42 AM.
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