

COMP 125: Semester Paper Rubric

Spring 2026

In pursuit of the goals of a COMP course, students will produce one technical paper. Students will write about the details of one technical topic, including but not limited to the modern context, historical connotation, and/or future trajectory. Care should be taken to make the paper technical (not opinion or editorial) in nature, but discussion of personal experience or impact is welcome as long as it is imbued with detail about the technical nature of the project.

References must be used - at least 8 cited references should be included. Students should use APA or MLA-style citations. The bibliography does *not* count towards the overall paper's word count.

Students wishing to receive 5% extra credit should complete their work in LaTeX (the formatting library) and submit the accompanying .tex files in their submission. Overleaf, a free-to-use online LaTeX editor, is an excellent place to start for using LaTeX!

Note: given the timeline of this paper, late work **will not be accepted**. Please make sure the paper is submitted on time!

Due: 1 May 2026, 11:59PM AoE

Category	Poor	Average	Above
<i>Length</i>	<1,000 words	1,000-1,999 words	2,000+ words
<i>Formatting</i>	Does not follow format requirements	--	Single-spaced Size 12 Legible font Submitted as a PDF
<i>References</i>	<2 references Citation format incorrect	2-7 references Most citations are correctly referenced	8+ references All sources are correctly and completely documented
<i>Structure</i>	Paragraphs are poorly organized; sections are illogical or hinder navigation	Paragraphs are usually well-organized; use of sections is logical and generally allows easy navigation of the document	All paragraphs are well-organized; use of sections is logical and allows easy navigation through the document
<i>Graphics</i>	Graphical documents, sketches, maps, etc. are of poor quality and fail to support the text	Graphical documents, sketches, maps, etc. are of good quality and adequately support the text	All graphical documents, sketches, maps, etc. are creative, professional and strongly support the text
<i>Figures, tables, and/or equations</i>	Figures, tables and equations are not clearly or logically identified and fail to support the text	Some figures, tables and equations are clearly and logically identified and adequately support the text	All figures, tables and equations are clearly and logically identified and strongly support the text
<i>Mechanics</i>	Sentences are poorly written; there are numerous incorrect word choices and errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling	Sentences are generally well-written; there are a few incorrect word choices and errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling	Sentences are well-written; there are no incorrect word choices and the text is free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling

Academic Honesty and the Use of AI

Students are expected to follow the posted course academic honesty requirements (see the course syllabus) as well as those outlined in the Loyola Student Handbook.

Work must be the individual contribution of the student. Referencing outside materials is expected (and required!), but information taken from external resources should be cited both in the text and in the bibliography.

The use of AI when writing documents is a challenging topic. In general, using AI assistance as a tool is welcome - grammar and spelling editing, for example. Using it to generate blocks of text is explicitly not permitted, as it does not express individual work. When in doubt, write in your own words!

Links to resources:

- MLA citation style:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html
- APA citation style:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html
- How to write an excellent technical paper:
 - <https://cs.stanford.edu/people/widom/paper-writing.html>
 - <https://academized.com/blog/technical-paper>
 - <https://pharmasug.org/proceedings/2025/LS/PharmaSUG-2025-LS-010.pdf>
- Sample technical papers:
 - Technical information: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/systemsandpapers/papers/acrobat-17.pdf>
 - Research/project-oriented: <https://web.ing.unimo.it/sammclouds/papers/ijssst07.pdf>
 - Satirical technical design paper:
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/systemsandpapers/papers/bigballofmud.pdf>
 - Canonical excellent example of a research paper:
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/systemsandpapers/papers/mapreduce.pdf>
- Overleaf (LaTeX): <https://www.overleaf.com/>
- Many phrasings borrowed from the technical writing assessment at Utica University, NY:
<https://www.utica.edu/academic/Assessment/new/technical%20report%20rubric.pdf>