Review of PhD Proposals
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1 Introduction

The committee was tasked to review a collection of PhD proposals that spanned different content areas and were accepted by the students’ PhD committees. The proposals were not associated with the members of this committee. It was expected that 85% of the reviewed proposals would be deemed very good or excellent by this external review committee. This review will help ensure the cohesiveness of the program and the material learned by those in different subject areas.

2 Material reviewed

The committee selected 6 PhD proposals from 2011-2012 to review. Each review resulted in a numerical score from 1-5 (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent) and a brief comment. Each committee member reviewed 3 proposals; 3 proposals received one review each and 3 proposals received two reviews each (for normalizing across reviewers).

1. **Area:** Computational Biology
   **Score:** 4
   **Comments:** A concatenation of three papers (co-authored with advisor/students). Each is well-written, but with some grammatical problems. The technical depth and review of related work are solid. The results are good and nice. But there is no cohesion between the three parts. The only description of proposed work is in the last paper.

2. **Area:** Artificial Intelligence
   **Score:** 5
   **Comments:** Well-written, cohesive, adequate technical depth, good review of related work.

3. **Area:** Vision
   **Score:** 3
   **Comments:** The first chapter is quite good, since it is a finished paper describing interesting methods with good results. The other chapters are incomplete: e.g., sections with place-holder text. The proposed work is very sketchy.

4. **Area:** Machine translation, Database
   **Score:** 5
   **Comments:** Very well-written, cohesive, excellent technical depth, excellent review of related work. Very interesting work, really state-of-the-art for that field at the time. Proposed work section very well laid out.
5. **Area:** Natural Language Processing  
   **Score:** 4.5  
   **Comments:** The results and presentation are very good. Just some typos and informality in writing, such as using a lot of "etc" or "I" instead of "We" (and a few more).

6. **Area:** Algorithms and Theory  
   **Score:** 4.5  
   **Comments:** Very good both in terms of writing as well as depth of the results. Well written, novel application of standard techniques. Proposed work section is clear.

### 3 Summary

5 out of 6 proposals (83%) were deemed to very good or excellent.