Review of PhD Proposals
October 16, 2015

Committee: Ashok Agrawala, Rance Cleaveland, Thomas Goldstein, Clyde Kruskal, Aravind Srinivasan,

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 65% 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 5 PhD proposals from 2014-15 to review and attended the Oral exam along with taking a look at the proposal. Each review resulted in a numerical score from 5-1 (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent) and brief comments.

Of the 5 proposals 2 received a score of 1, 1 received a score of 2, and 2 received a score of 3. This falls below the expected rating of 65% to be very good or excellent. In all cases however, the understanding of the problem of the student was excellent. All the students handled the questions very well.

Here are some comments about the proposals:

- Excellent presentation and clear definition of work completed and to be completed
- Handled questions well
- Non-technical part of the talk was great, but the speaker spoke and moved too fast and was difficult to follow at times.
- Communications skills were not great which may be due to limited command of English language.

3 Summary

3 out of 5 proposals (60%) were deemed to very good or excellent.