

CIS Senior Project: How it Works + Customer Responsibilities

CIS Department senior projects are team projects, since we want our students to practice what they learn in our program (e.g., team building, project management, requirements gathering, evolutionary prototyping, design, development and implementation, etc.). The projects have to be technologically challenging to the students as well.

Project Proposals – getting a team

Each customer submits a project proposal on the attached form:
CISSeniorProjectProposal.doc.

The instructor reviews the project requirements to determine how well it will fit the scope of a project and whether a CIS senior project team should be able to handle the technological side of the project. The scope of the project is determined during the early part of the project requirements gathering, but we like to start out with something that appears about right in size and degree of difficulty. **Thus, customers need to submit a project proposal, outlining what they believe are the project requirements** (usually these change and become more refined as the project progresses).

If we can define a project of the correct scope, you could have a team of 4 to 6 students work throughout a 10-week quarter on your project. Defining project scope may continue through the first half of the quarter, since projects are not always what they appear at first glance. We try to have the students learn how to do this, but the instructor is there to ensure that the team does not agree to deliver more than it can possibly handle.

Before the quarter begins, senior project proposals are posted on the class web site, so that students can contact prospective customers with their questions.

Potential customers for senior projects are invited to present their projects to the students, usually for about 5-10 minutes, during the second class meeting of the quarter. The prospective customer needs to come to Cal Poly to present the project to the students enrolled in the class. After the customer presentations, there is time to meet with the students informally, answer their questions, and generally sell your project to them. Students will bring resumes for you to review. We try to encourage students to form teams around projects that interest them.

Usually by the end of this session, customers and student teams have selected one another. Once a senior project team and a customer agree they want to work together, the match is made and the team begins its work. If two or more teams interested in your project, you choose the team you want.

Schedule throughout 10-week Quarter official meetings with team, customer, and instructor present are:

What	Where	When	What happens
Customer presentations	Cal Poly	Week 1, 2nd class meeting	Customers pitch projects, match with teams
JAD 1 session	Customer site	Week 2	Requirements gathering, trust building
JAD 2 session	Cal Poly	Week 4	Requirements gathering, design
Prototype 1	Cal Poly	Week 6	Students present design
Prototype 2	Cal Poly	Week 8	Final deliverables solidified
Final Presentation	Cal Poly	Finals week	Students present final project, deliver documentation, etc.

Customer Responsibilities:

Meetings & Feedback: The main recommendation of senior project customers is that they need more communication with the student team – The customer needs to initiate part of that communication.

Since the students have only a limited amount of time to finish their projects (a ten-week quarter), customers must respond to them in a timely fashion so that they can keep the flow of work going.

The customer for the senior project is expected to meet regularly with the students to give them feedback on their work and motivate them toward success. We recommend one meeting per week, since part of the customer's responsibility is to make sure the project keeps moving along.

Technology requirements: Customers also provide any technology that is specialized that the students do not ordinarily have. Some customers want the team to work on site, and others are happy if they work on their own computers and bring in the work periodically for review. If your project requires a server, the team can help you with that, but you will have to have the server available during the latter part of the quarter if you want the students to implement their project on the server.

Ecommerce Projects with Payments: If you have an ecommerce site and want to have payments set up, you will need to arrange for a third-party provider. The students can set up the information that must be passed to the provider.

Student Reports: Students in this class are learning to self-manage team projects. Consequently they are required to formalize their requirements and project design, as well as report on their project planning and task management in a series of iterative reports throughout the quarter. Your student team will ask you to read and sign the report. This report is refined and used to prepare the final report documentation.

Time Limitations: We get the projects rolling early in the quarter and finished by the 9th or 10th week. We want the students to test and document the project and provide training to whoever will manage it. Frequently students take this course during their final quarter. Thus, once the quarter is over, the students are gone and no longer available to work on the project.

Compensation for successful projects:

There is no charge for senior projects.

The CIS Department performs many community service projects for nonprofit organizations.

However, the CIS Department requests donations from projects delivered to for-profit organizations. Customers that are not non-profit can use the form to submit a donation to the CIS Department.