
Graph Robustness Benchmark: Rethinking and Benchmarking Adversarial Robustness of Graph Neural Networks

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Abstract

1 Recent studies have shown that Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) are vulnerable to
2 adversarial attacks. Previous attacks and defenses on GNNs face common prob-
3 lems like scalability or generality, which hinder the progress of this domain. By
4 rethinking limitations in previous works, we propose Graph Robustness Benchmark
5 (GRB), the first benchmark that aims to provide scalable, general, unified, and
6 reproducible evaluation on adversarial robustness of GNNs. GRB includes (1)
7 scalable datasets processed by a novel splitting scheme; (2) diverse set of baseline
8 methods covering GNNs, attacks, and defenses; (3) unified evaluation pipeline that
9 permits a fair comparison; (4) modular coding framework that facilitates imple-
10 mentation of various methods and ensures reproducibility; (5) leaderboards that
11 track the progress of the field. Besides, we propose two strong baseline defenses
12 that significantly outperform previous ones. With extensive experiments, we can
13 fairly compare all methods and investigate their pros and cons. GRB is open-source
14 and maintains all datasets, codes, leaderboards at <https://cogdl.ai/grb/home>,
15 which will be continuously updated to promote future research in this field.

16 1 Introduction

17 Graph Neural Networks (GNNs), starting from Graph Convolutional Network (GCN) [1], to a
18 large group of more recent variants [2, 3, 4], have shown promising performance in graph machine
19 learning (ML) tasks in various domains including recommender systems [5], academic network
20 analysis [2], knowledge graphs [6] and molecular graph learning [7]. However, neural networks
21 are known to be vulnerable to adversarial examples [8], and recent works [9, 10, 11, 12] show that
22 GNNs are no exception. Typically, GNNs take an attributed graph as the input, and use the message
23 passing scheme [13] to extract relational information. Attackers may modify the graph structure by
24 adding/removing edges [14, 15], or modify the features of nodes with tiny perturbations [10, 11, 12],
25 or even inject malicious nodes [16, 17] to conduct adversarial attacks on GNNs. These attacks can
26 significantly destroy the performance of GNNs with only small changes to the graph [10].

27 Threatened by adversarial attacks, researchers have begun to take robustness into consideration while
28 designing new GNNs. New architectures like RobustGCN [18], GRAND [19], ProGNN [20] are
29 designated to improve robustness against adversarial attacks. Other methods, like GNN-SVD [21] or
30 GNNGuard [22], try to alleviate the impact of attacks through preprocessing based on the intrinsic
31 properties of the graph. Despite previous works, there are still several common limitations from both
32 the attacker side and the defender side:

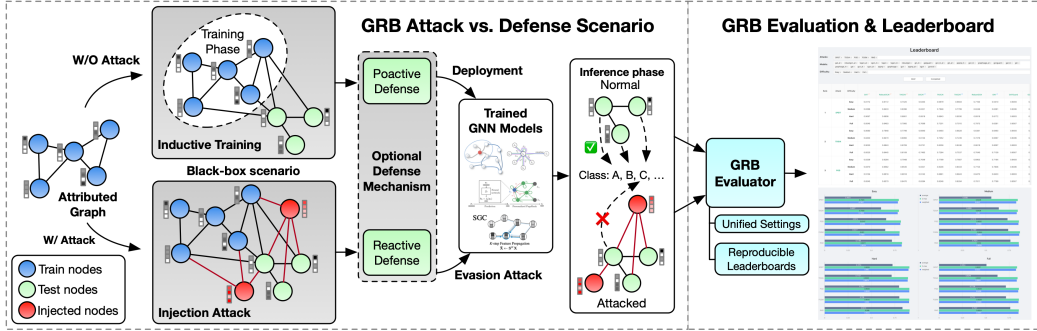


Figure 1: Process of Graph Robustness Benchmark (GRB). It introduces a refined threat model considering: *Black-box*: the attacker only has access to the attributed graph but not the target model; *Evasion*: the attack happens during model inference; *Inductive*: the target model is trained in an inductive setting (test nodes are unseen during training); *Injection*: the attacker is allowed to inject new nodes without modifying existing nodes. All attacks and defenses are evaluated under unified settings and the results are shown on GRB leaderboards.

- 33 1. **Ill-defined threat model.** Previous works attempt to imitate the threat model from other domains,
34 like adversarial attacks in image classification, which is not actually suitable for graph structured
35 data. For example, the definition of "unnoticeability" needs to be refined.
- 36 2. **Lack of fair comparison among various methods.** Previous works use different settings in
37 their experiments (datasets, data splitting, attack constraints, etc.), each introduces its own bias to
38 the evaluation results, making it difficult to fairly compare the effectiveness of different methods.
- 39 3. **Lack of scalability and generality.** Most of previous works only consider small-scale graphs
40 (tens of thousands of nodes), which is far from the scale of real-world applications. Moreover, the
41 assumption of attacking/defending only a single type of defense/attack lacks generality.

42 Because of these limitations, so far, there is no benchmark on evaluating the *adversarial robustness* of
43 GNNs, i.e. the robustness in the presence of adversarial attacks. Nevertheless, it is an important but
44 challenging task, which requires avoiding pitfalls in previous works and proposing a better solution.
45 Given that there already exist several benchmarks focusing on evaluating the performance of GNNs,
46 like Open Graph Benchmark (OGB) [23] and GNN benchmarking framework [24], it is essential to
47 construct a well-defined, general and scalable graph robustness benchmark.

48 In this paper, we first revisit the adversarial robustness of GNNs in a principled way. Then, we
49 propose a new benchmark, Graph Robustness Benchmark (GRB). The main goal of GRB is to provide
50 a fair evaluation for adversarial attacks & defenses on GNNs under unified settings. As illustrated
51 in Figure 1, GRB is designed to include the following features:

- 52 1. **Refined threat model.** GRB provides a refined threat model and gives precise definitions of
53 attacker and defender’s capabilities. The framework clarifies the information and possible actions
54 for both sides, resulting in a new challenging and realistic evaluation scenario.
- 55 2. **Elaborated datasets.**¹ GRB consists of five datasets with different scales. The datasets are under
56 an innovative splitting scheme which helps to better evaluate the adversarial robustness of GNNs
57 under different levels of difficulties.
- 58 3. **Unified evaluation pipeline.** GRB provides a unified evaluation pipeline that calibrates the
59 experiment settings, which helps to make fair comparisons for both attacks and defenses.
- 60 4. **Reproducible leaderboards.**² GRB offers leaderboards for each dataset as well as codes, trained
61 models, attack results, and scripts that help to easily reproduce all results. The leaderboards
62 are continuously updated and maintained to ensure reproducibility and to track the progress of
63 adversarial robustness researches on GNNs.

¹<https://cogdl.ai/grb/datasets>

²<https://cogdl.ai/grb/leaderboard>

- 64 5. **Extendable coding framework.**³ GRB has an extendable framework supporting all above
65 features. GRB also contains implementations of existing methods and is based on a modular
66 design that facilitates researchers to add new GNN models, attacks, or defenses conveniently.
- 67 6. **Abundant baseline methods.** GRB currently has diverse set of baseline methods covering GNNs,
68 attacks, and defenses. We also propose two general defense mechanisms that can significantly
69 improve the robustness of GNNs and regard them as strong baselines. GRB will be continuously
70 be elaborated with more methods as the research advances.

71 Overall, GRB serves as a *scalable, general, unified, and reproducible* benchmark on adversarial
72 robustness of GNNs. We believe that it can help researchers to investigate pros and cons of previous
73 works, and provide insights for future research.

74 2 Rethinking Adversarial Robustness in Graph ML

75 2.1 General Definition

76 In graph ML, adversarial robustness refers to the performance of graph ML models (e.g. GNNs)
77 under potential adversarial attacks. Take node classification as an example, for an attributed graph
78 $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{F})$ where $\mathcal{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$ represents the adjacency matrix of N nodes and $\mathcal{F} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times D}$ the
79 set of node features with D dimensions for every node. Define a graph model $\mathcal{M} : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow Z$ where
80 $Z \in [0, 1]^{N \times L}$, that maps a graph \mathcal{G} to probability vectors of all N nodes across L classes. The
81 adversarial attack can be formulated as:

$$\max_{\mathcal{G}'} |\mathcal{M}(\mathcal{G}') \neq \mathcal{M}(\mathcal{G})| \quad (1)$$

82 where $\mathcal{G}' = (\mathcal{A}', \mathcal{F}')$ is the graph modified by attackers. The attacker try to maximize the number of
83 wrong predictions. Usually, there is an assumption that the attack should be *unnoticeable* [9]:

$$d_{\mathcal{A}}(\mathcal{A}', \mathcal{A}) \leq \Delta_{\mathcal{A}} \quad \text{and} \quad d_{\mathcal{F}}(\mathcal{F}', \mathcal{F}) \leq \Delta_{\mathcal{F}} \quad (2)$$

84 where $d_{\mathcal{A}}$ and $d_{\mathcal{F}}$ are the functions that measure the changes between \mathcal{A}' and \mathcal{A} , \mathcal{F}' and \mathcal{F} . These
85 changes are limited by the constraints $\Delta_{\mathcal{A}}$ and $\Delta_{\mathcal{F}}$. Although this kind of definition is frequently
86 used in previous works, we discuss in the following parts that there are actually some pitfalls.

87 2.2 Revisiting Adversarial Attacks on GNNs

88 In the domain of security, it is essential to define a threat model, which determines the capabil-
89 ity of the attackers. As shown in Table 1, we
90 categorize adversarial attacks on GNNs into sev-
91 eral types. Some of terms (*Black-box / White-*
92 *box*) are inherited from adversarial attacks in
93 image classification [27], others (*Poisoning /*
94 *Evasion* [9], *Modification / Injection* [17], *Trans-*
95 *ductive / Inductive* [2]) are specific for graph
96 structured data and GNNs. Here, we give pre-
97 cise definitions of each term:

99 **Attacker’s knowledge.** *Black-box:* The attack-
100 ers do **NOT** have access to the targeted model
101 (including its architecture, parameters, defense
102 mechanism, etc.). However, they have access to
103 the graph data (structure, features, labels of training data, etc.). Besides, they are allowed to query
104 the GNNs and get the outputs. *White-box:* The attackers have access to **ALL** information as the
105 defender has. However, if the targeted model has random process, the runtime randomness should
106 not be available for the attackers.

107 **Attacker’s objective.** *Poisoning:* The attackers generate corrupted graph data and assume that the
108 targeted model is (re)trained on these data to get a worse model. *Evasion:* The attackers generate
109 corrupted graph data to affect the runtime performance of a trained model.

110 **Attacker’s approach.** *Modification:* The attackers modify the original graph (the same one used by
111 the defenders for training) by adding/removing edges or perturbing the value of features. *Injection:*

Table 1: Categorization of adversarial attacks on GNNs. GRB supports the implementation of all kinds of attacks. For GRB leaderboard, we mainly consider the following case: *Black-box, Evasion, Inductive, Injection.*

Attack	Knowledge		Objective		Approach		Training	
	Black.	White.	Poi.	Eva.	Mod.	Inj.	Trans.	Ind.
DICE [14]	✓		✓		✓		✓	
FGSM [9]	✓		✓		✓		✓	
RND [9]	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Nettack [9]	✓		✓		✓		✓	
RL-S2V [25]	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Metattack [10]	✓		✓		✓		✓	
PGD-Topo [15]	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
AFGSM [16]	✓		✓			✓	✓	
SPEIT [26]	✓			✓		✓	✓	
TDGIA [17]	✓			✓		✓	✓	
GRB Support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GRB Leaderboard	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

³<https://github.com/THUDM/grb>

112 The attackers do not modify the original graph but inject new malicious nodes to influence the nodes
113 in the original graph.

114 **GNNs’ training approach.** *Transductive*: The targeted model is trained with the entire graph
115 containing all nodes (including training, validation, test nodes). *Inductive*: The targeted model is
116 trained with the graph containing only the training nodes.

117 As show in Table 1, previous works cover various combination of these categories. However, there
118 are some common limitations: (1) **Lack of scalability**: most attacks only evaluate in very small
119 graphs and are not scalable to large ones. (2) **Lack of generality**: most attacks only evaluate on basic
120 GCNs, without showing effectiveness to other kinds of GNNs or in the presence of defenses. (3)
121 **Ill-defined threat model**: the threat model in some works is actually ill-defined, especially for the
122 *poisoning* attack under *transductive* training setting, which will be explained in the Section 2.4.

123 2.3 Revisiting Defenses for GNNs

124 The defenses for GNNs can mainly be categorized into two types: *Preprocess-based* and *Model-based*.
125 In the case of an attributed graph, the defender can preprocess the adjacency matrix (e.g. GNN-
126 SVD [21], GNN-Jaccard [28]) or the features of nodes (e.g. feature transformation [26]). Robustness
127 can also be achieved through *model enhancement*, either by robust training scheme (e.g. adversarial
128 training [29, 30]) or new model architectures (e.g. RobustGCN [18], GNNGuard [22]). Despite many
129 attempts of defenses, they have some common limitations: (1) **Lack of scalability**: defenses are
130 not scalable to large graphs due to time/memory complexity. (2) **Lack of generality**: defenses are
131 proposed to defend only certain types of GNNs with ad-hoc designs, or are only effective against
132 certain types of attacks. (3) **Fragmented evaluation**: there are many biases (choice of datasets,
133 random splitting, various threat models, choice of attacks, different constraints, etc.) introduced in
134 the evaluation process, making it hard to compare the effectiveness of different defenses.

135 2.4 Rethinking the Notion of Unnoticeability

136 Many of the previous adversarial attacks [9, 25, 10] consider the *poisoning* attack and develop the
137 notion of *unnoticeability*, similar to Eq. 2. The initial idea is to imitate the same notion in image
138 classification task: the differences of adversarial examples, compared with clean examples, should be
139 tiny and unnoticeable, so that humans can still easily recognize the objects in images. That’s why
140 l_p -norm is a widely-used constraint, as it corresponds to the visual sense of humans.

141 In the *poisoning* setting of graph modification attacks, the attackers assume that the graph is perturbed
142 with corrupted nodes and edges, in a way that the perturbed graph is close to the original one.
143 However, this assumption is controversial: If defenders have the original graph, they can simply train
144 the model on that one; If defenders do not have the original graph (the general case for data poisoning
145 where defenders can not tell whether the data are benign or not), then it does not make sense to
146 keep *unnoticeability*. In this case, we only have $\mathcal{G}' = (\mathcal{A}', \mathcal{F}')$ but not $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{F})$ in Eq. 2, making
147 it almost impossible to compare them. Previous works propose to compare the graph properties,
148 like degree distribution [9], feature statistics [28] or topological properties [15]. However, all these
149 comparisons need to be done in presence of the original graph. This is different from the case of
150 images, where *unnoticeability* can be easily judged by humans even without ground-truth images.

151 The attackers may perturb the graph structure or attributes within the scope of *unnoticeability*
152 defined by themselves, while defenders have to depend on their own observations to discover. For
153 example, Nettack [9] proposes to keep the degree distribution of modified graph similar to the original
154 one. However, even if defenders notice that the degree distribution is different, it is still hard to
155 identify specific malicious nodes or edges from the entire graph. On the contrary, defenses like
156 GNNGuard [22] can use the dissimilarity between features to alleviate effects of perturbations. We
157 argue that it is inadequate to simply adopt the notion from image classification, and to make two
158 graphs “similar” in whatever way. Indeed, there is not an absolute definition, but it is recommended
159 that: “*Unnoticeability*” shall be considered from the defenders’ view instead of the attackers’.

160 2.5 Unifying Evaluation of Adversarial Robustness for both Attack and Defense

161 As mentioned in the above sections, there are some common limitations in both attacks and defenses,
162 making it hard to evaluate the adversarial robustness in graph ML. To tackle these problems, we
163 propose a unified evaluation scenario in GRB for fair comparisons between attacks and defenses.
164 As shown in Figure 1, to make it realistic, the scenario is *Black-box*, *Inductive*, *Evasion*, *Injection*
165 (as defined in Section 2.2). Take the case of a citation-graph classification system for example. The

166 platform collects labeled data from previous papers and trains a GNN model. When a batch of new
167 papers are submitted, it updates the graph and uses the trained model to predict labels for them.

168 (1) *Evasion*: We assume that the GNNs are already trained in trusted data (e.g. authenticated users),
169 which are untouched by the attackers but might have natural noises. Thus, attacks will only happen
170 during the inference phase. (2) *Inductive*: We assume that the GNNs are used to classify unseen
171 data (e.g. new users), i.e. validation or test data are unseen during training, which requires GNNs to
172 generalize to out of distribution data. (3) *Injection*: We assume that the attackers can only inject new
173 nodes but not modify the target nodes directly. Since it is usually hard to hack into users' accounts and
174 modify their profiles. However, it is easier to create fake accounts and connect them to existing users.
175 (4) *Black-box*: Both the attacker and the defender have no knowledge about the applied methods each
176 other uses. We further clarify attacker and defender's capability in the following:

- 177 1. **For attackers**: they have knowledge about the entire graph (including all nodes, edges and labels,
178 **excluding** labels of the test nodes to attack), but do **NOT** have knowledge about the target model
179 or the defense mechanism; they are allowed to inject a limited number of new nodes with limited
180 edges, but are **NOT** allowed to modify the original graph; they are allowed to generate features of
181 injected nodes as long as they remain *unnoticeable* by defenders (e.g. nodes with features that
182 exceed the range can be easily detected); they are allowed to get the classification results from the
183 target model through limited number of queries.
- 184 2. **For defenders**: they have knowledge about the entire graph **excluding** the test nodes to be
185 attacked (thus only the training and validation graph); they are allowed to use any method to
186 increase adversarial robustness, but **NOT** having prior knowledge about what kind of attack is
187 used or about which nodes in the test graph are injected nodes.

188 Besides, it is reasonable that both sides can make assumptions even in *Black-box* scenario. For
189 example, the attackers can assume that the GNN-based system uses GCNs, since it is one of the most
190 popular GNNs. Also, it is not reasonable to assume that the defense mechanism can be completely
191 held secretly, known as the Kerckhoffs' principle [31]. If a defense wants to be general and universal,
192 it should guarantee part of robustness even when attackers have some knowledge about it.

193 Following the above assumptions, we are able to provide a unified evaluation scenario, in which a
194 fair comparison of attacks and defenses could be done in a principled way. Moreover, *unnoticeability*
195 becomes meaningful in this case because defenders can compare test data with train data, thus
196 attackers need to pay attention to it. We believe that the scenario covers limitations in previous works
197 and helps promote future research in this field. It is worth mentioning that this is not the only scenario,
198 more well-defined scenarios may be introduced according to the progress of the field in the future.

199 3 GRB: Graph Robustness Benchmark

200 3.1 Overview of GRB

201 GRB is proposed as a benchmark for evaluating the adversarial robustness of GNNs. It en-
202 ables fair and convenient evaluations for various attacks and defenses, especially in the
203 above-defined scenario. To this end, GRB includes scalable datasets, unified evaluator, and
204 up-to-date leaderboards to track the most recent progress of this domain. Furthermore, GRB has
205 a modular coding framework based on popular deep learning libraries (Figure 2), which is
206 more than a benchmark. This design facilitates implementations of GNN models, attacks, and
207 defenses, which help to ensure reproducibility and extendability for future works.
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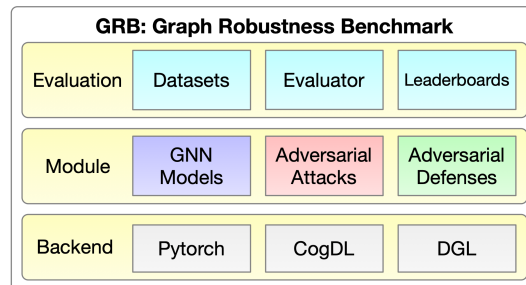


Figure 2: GRB Implementation Framework.

215 Altogether, GRB serves as a *scalable, general, unified, reproducible, and extendable* benchmark
216 on evaluating adversarial robustness of GNNs. In the following subsections, we introduce the
217 implementation of GRB and design details as well as the motivation behind them.

218 3.2 GRB Framework

219 GRB is mainly built on PyTorch [32], and also supports popular graph learning libraries like
220 CogDL [33] and DGL [34]. It provides a modular coding framework, which allows users to con-
221 veniently use the implemented methods, and to add new ones. It contains several modules that
222 support the process introduced in Figure 1: (1) *Dataset*: loads GRB datasets and applies necessary
223 preprocessing including splitting scheme and features normalization; it also allows users to customize
224 their own datasets and make them compatible with GRB evaluation framework. (2) *Model*: imple-
225 ments GNN models, which supports models built on pure Pytorch, CogDL or DGL by automatically
226 transforming the inputs to the required formats. (3) *Attack*: builds adversarial attacks on GNNs, the
227 process of attack is abstracted to different components. For example, graph injection attacks are
228 decomposed to node injection and feature generation. (4) *Defense*: engages defense mechanism
229 on GNN models, including *preprocess-based* and *model-based* defenses. (5) *Evaluator*: evaluates
230 one/multiple methods under unified evaluation settings, i.e. same datasets, constraints and evaluation
231 metrics. (6) *Pipeline*: unifies the entire process of evaluation: load datasets, train/load models, apply
232 attacks/defenses, and finally get the robustness evaluation results; it also helps to easily reproduce
233 the exact results on GRB leaderboards. Apart from these modules, there are also some others like
234 *Trainer* for model training, *Visualise* for visualizing the attack process.

235 This implementation framework allows GRB to have the following features: (1) *Easy-to-use*: GNN
236 models or attacks can be easily built by only a few lines of codes (Figure 3). (2) *Fair-to-compare*: all
237 methods can be fairly compared under unified settings. (3) *Up-to-date*: GRB maintains leaderboards
238 for each dataset and continuously track the progress of this domain. (4) *Guarantee-to-reproduce*:
239 unlike other benchmarks that just display the results, GRB attaches great importance to reproducibility.
240 For reproducing results on leaderboards, all necessary components are available, including model
241 weights, attack parameters, generated adversarial results, etc. Besides, GRB provides scripts that
242 allow users to reproduce results by a single command line. For all future submissions to GRB, we
243 insist that they should all respect the reproducibility rules detailed in Appendix A.4. All codes are
244 available in <https://github.com/THUDM/grb>. where the implementation details and examples
245 can be found. GRB also provides full documentation for each module and function.

```
import torch # pytorch backend
from grb.dataset import Dataset
from grb.model.torch import GCN
from grb.utils.trainer import Trainer

# Load data
dataset = Dataset(name='grb-cora', mode='easy',
                 feat_norm='arctan')

# Build model
model = GCN(in_features=dataset.num_features,
            out_features=dataset.num_classes,
            hidden_features=[64, 64])

# Training
adam = torch.optim.Adam(model.parameters(), lr=0.01)
trainer = Trainer(dataset=dataset, optimizer=adam,
                 loss=torch.nn.functional.nll_loss)
trainer.train(model=model, n_epoch=200, dropout=0.5,
             train_mode='inductive')
```

```
from grb.attack.tdgia import TDGIA

# Attack configuration
tdgia = TDGIA(lr=0.01,
             n_epoch=10,
             n_inject_max=20,
             n_edge_max=20,
             feat_lim_min=-0.9,
             feat_lim_max=0.9,
             sequential_step=0.2)

# Apply attack
rst = tdgia.attack(model=model,
                  adj=dataset.adj,
                  features=dataset.features,
                  target_mask=dataset.test_mask)

# Get modified adj and features
adj_attack, features_attack = rst
```

Figure 3: Code example of GRB. **Left**: Train GCNs on *grb-cora* dataset. **Right**: Apply TDGIA attack on the trained model. GRB facilitates the use of the GNN models, attacks and defenses.

246 3.3 GRB Baseline Methods

247 GRB currently has a number of implemented methods including GNN models, attacks, and defenses.
248 **GNN models**: GRB includes 7 popular GNN models, GCN [1], GAT [3], GIN [4], APPNP [35],
249 TAGCN [15], GraphSAGE [2], SGCN [36]. Note that these models are not originally designed to
250 increase the robustness. **Attacks**: GRB adapt 5 baseline attacks to the proposed scenario: RND [9],
251 FGSM [8], PGD [29], SPEIT [26], TDGIA [17]. All these methods are implemented as graph injection
252 attacks and are scalable to large-scale graphs. **Defenses**: GRB adopts RobustGCN (R-GCN) [18],
253 GNN-SVD [21] and GNNGuard [22]. We also find that techniques like layer normalization (LN) [37]
254 and adversarial training (AT) [29], if properly used in the proposed scenario, can significantly increase
255 the robustness of various GNN models and outperform current methods. The proposed LN is to apply
256 LN on the input features and after each graph convolutional layer (except the last layer). The idea is
257 to stabilize the dynamics of input and hidden states to alleviate the impact of adversarial perturbations.

258 The proposed AT is to apply injection attacks during training to make GNNs more robust. In each
 259 iteration, we apply FGSM with a few steps to attack the current model and repeat this until the loss
 260 converges. These two defenses are general and scalable, and the experiment results show that they
 261 outperform previous methods significantly. Thus, we include them in GRB as strong baselines for
 262 defenses. More details of these methods can be found in Appendix A.3.

263 3.4 Datasets

Table 2: Statistics of five datasets in GRB, which cover from small to large scale graphs.

Dataset	Type	Scale	#Nodes	#Edges	#Features	#Classes
<i>grb-cora</i>	Academic networks	Small	2,680	5,148	302	7
<i>grb-citeseer</i>	Academic networks	Small	3,191	4,172	768	6
<i>grb-flickr</i>	Social networks	Medium	89,250	449,878	500	7
<i>grb-reddit</i>	Social networks	Large	232,965	11,606,919	602	41
<i>grb-aminer</i>	Academic networks	Large	659,574	2,878,577	100	18

264 **Scalability.** GRB includes five datasets of different scales, *grb-cora*, *grb-citeseer*, *grb-flickr*, *grb-*
 265 *reddit*, *grb-aminer*. The original datasets are gathered from previous works [38, 39, 17], and in GRB
 266 they are reprocessed. The fundamental statistics of these datasets are shown in Table 2. Besides
 267 small-scale datasets which are common in previous works, GRB also includes medium and large-scale
 268 datasets for hundreds of thousands of nodes and millions of edges. More details about how the
 269 datasets are generated can be found in Appendix A.1.

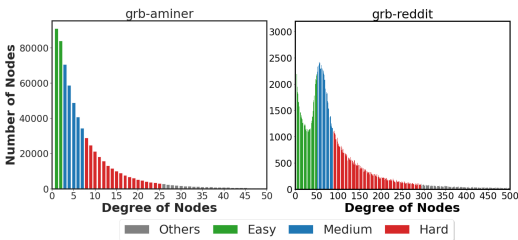


Figure 4: GRB splitting scheme. Difficulties are related to average degree of test nodes.

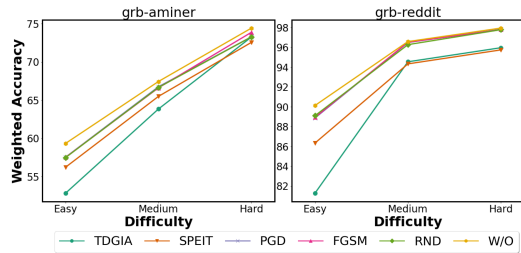


Figure 5: Effect of dataset difficulties on the performance of adversarial attacks.

270 **Splitting scheme.** Random splits are not suitable for a fair comparison across methods, especially
 271 when it indeed affects the evaluation results of GNNs [40]. GRB introduces a new splitting scheme
 272 specially designed for evaluating adversarial robustness. The key idea is based on the assumption that
 273 nodes with lower degrees are easier to attack, as demonstrated in [17]. In principle, GNNs aggregate
 274 information from neighbor nodes to update a target node. If the target node has few neighbors, it
 275 is more likely to be influenced by adversarial perturbations, vice-versa. Thus, we construct test
 276 subsets with different average degrees. Firstly, we rank all nodes by their degrees. Secondly, we
 277 filter out 5% nodes with the lowest degrees (including isolated nodes that are too easy to attack)
 278 and 5% nodes with the highest degree (including nodes connected to hundreds of other nodes that
 279 are hardly influenced). Thirdly, we divide the rest nodes into three equal partitions without overlap,
 280 and randomly sample 10% nodes (without repetition) from each partition. Finally, we get three test
 281 subsets with different degree distributions (Figure 4). According to the average degrees, we define
 282 them as Easy/Medium/Hard/Full ('E/M/H/F', 'F' contains all test nodes). For the rest nodes, we
 283 divide them into train set (60%) and val set (10%), for training and validation respectively.

284 **Feature normalization.** Initially, the features in each dataset have various ranges. To make them in
 285 the same scale (e.g. range $[-1, 1]$), we apply a *standardization* following by an *arctan* transformation:
 286 $\mathcal{F} = \frac{2}{\pi} \arctan\left(\frac{\mathcal{F} - \text{mean}(\mathcal{F})}{\text{std}(\mathcal{F})}\right)$. Finally, the statistics of datasets after splitting scheme and feature
 287 normalization can be found in Appendix A.1.

288 4 Experiments

289 4.1 Experimental Settings

290 **Methods.** For baseline models, we include 7 popular GNN models, GCN [1], GAT [3], GIN [4],
 291 APPNP [35], TAGCN [15], GraphSAGE [2], SGCN [36]. For adversarial attacks, we adapt five

292 baselines to the proposed scenarios: RND [9], FGSM [8], PGD [29], SPEIT [26], TDGIA [17]. For
 293 robustness-enhancement defenses, we adopt RobustGCN (R-GCN) [18], GNN-SVD [21], GNN-
 294 Guard [22]. We also include two general methods, layer normalization (LN) [37] and adversarial
 295 training (AT) [29] to the proposed scenarios. All details of these methods and hyper-parameters can
 296 be found in Appendix A.3 A.4.

297 **Evaluation metrics.** For attacks: (1) **Avg.:** Average accuracy for various defense models on the
 298 attack scenario. (2) **Avg. 3-Max:** Average accuracy for the 3 most robust models (maximum
 299 accuracy). (3) **Weighted:** Weighted accuracy across various attacked models, calculated by: $s_w^{att} =$
 300 $\sum_{i=1}^n w_i s_i, w_i = \frac{1/i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (1/i^2)}, s_i = (S_{descend}^{def})_i$ where $S_{descend}^{def}$ is the set of defense scores in a
 301 descending order. The metric attaches more weight to the most robust defenses. For defenses: (1)
 302 **Avg.:** Average accuracy across various attacks. (2) **Avg. 3-Min:** Average accuracy across the 3 most
 303 effective attacks (minimum accuracy). (3) **Weighted:** Weighted accuracy across various attacks,
 304 calculated by: $s_w^{def} = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i s_i, w_i = \frac{1/i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (1/i^2)}, s_i = (S_{ascend}^{att})_i$ where S_{ascend}^{att} is the set of
 305 attack scores in an ascending order. The metric attaches more weight to the most effective attacks.

306 4.2 Experimental Results

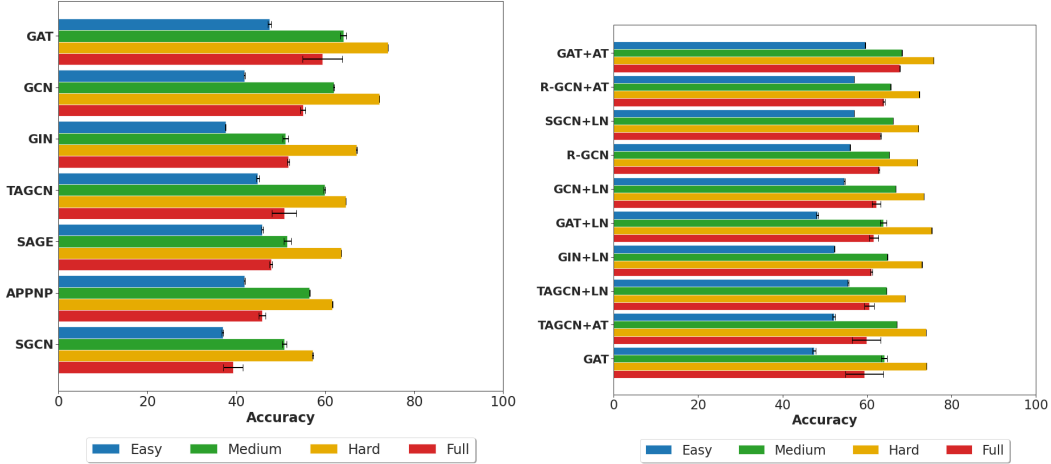


Figure 6: Ranking adversarial robustness of GNNs (W/O Defense) for *grb-aminer* dataset.

307 With GRB, we are able to conduct extensive experiments. We show an example of the GRB
 308 leaderboard, and the effect of two proposed defense baselines. More results for all datasets can be
 309 found in Appendix A.5 or in our website.

310 **Example of GRB leaderboard.** Following the GRB process in Figure 1, we evaluate the performance
 311 of attacks vs. defense. Table 3 shows a example of leaderboard for *grb-aminer* dataset. The attacks
 312 are repeated 10 times to report the error bar. Both attacks and defenses are ranked by the weighted
 313 accuracy, where red and blue indicated the best results in each difficulty. We also compare the
 314 adversarial robustness of GNNs with or without defense (Figure 7 and 6). Clearly, the defense can
 315 help to significantly improve the robustness of GNNs.

316 **Effect of average degrees of test nodes.** The new splitting scheme is designed to investigate the
 317 effect of average degree of test nodes on the attack performance. As shown in Figure 5, attacks
 318 tend to better decrease the accuracy for nodes with lower average degree (Easy), which confirms the
 319 assumption the adversarial robustness of GNNs is related to the degree of nodes.

320 **Effect of layer LN and AT.** Figure 8 and 9 shows that the proposed LN and AT can generally increase
 321 the robustness of various types of GNNs. The detailed algorithms can be found in Appendix A.3.3.
 322 The leaderboards also show that GNNs defended by these two methods have SOTA adversarial
 323 robustness compared with previous works.

Table 3: GRB leaderboard (Top 5 Attacks vs. Top 10 Defenses) for *grb-aminer* dataset.

Attack	Defenses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Avg. Accuracy	Avg. 3-Max Accuracy	Weighted Accuracy
		GAT-AT	R-GCN-AT	SGCN-LN	R-GCN	GCN-LN	GAT-LN	GIN-LN	TAGCN-LN	TAGCN-AT	GAT			
1 TDGIA	E	59.54 _{±0.05}	56.83 _{±0.06}	56.73 _{±0.06}	56.12 _{±0.07}	53.51 _{±0.21}	43.93 _{±0.41}	51.10 _{±0.12}	54.63 _{±0.20}	49.59 _{±0.50}	42.40 _{±0.52}	52.44 _{±0.17}	57.70 _{±1.31}	58.08 _{±0.04}
	M	68.39 _{±0.02}	65.61 _{±0.02}	66.11 _{±0.02}	65.23 _{±0.03}	66.78 _{±0.05}	61.84 _{±1.20}	64.49 _{±0.10}	64.62 _{±0.02}	67.27 _{±0.04}	62.47 _{±1.01}	65.28 _{±0.23}	67.48 _{±0.68}	67.69 _{±0.02}
	H	75.83 _{±0.02}	72.35 _{±0.02}	72.10 _{±0.00}	71.94 _{±0.02}	73.39 _{±0.02}	75.22 _{±0.04}	72.92 _{±0.02}	68.94 _{±0.03}	73.98 _{±0.01}	75.03 _{±0.03}	73.17 _{±0.01}	75.36 _{±0.84}	75.33 _{±0.04}
2 SPEIT	E	59.54 _{±0.07}	56.80 _{±0.05}	56.94 _{±0.10}	55.64 _{±0.10}	56.15 _{±0.08}	56.13 _{±0.07}	54.24 _{±0.09}	56.61 _{±0.08}	56.59 _{±0.08}	57.36 _{±0.09}	56.60 _{±0.04}	57.95 _{±1.14}	58.62 _{±0.05}
	M	68.37 _{±0.03}	65.46 _{±0.03}	66.20 _{±0.02}	65.25 _{±0.05}	66.75 _{±0.03}	67.49 _{±0.06}	65.05 _{±0.06}	64.47 _{±0.04}	66.95 _{±0.05}	66.81 _{±0.04}	66.28 _{±0.02}	67.60 _{±0.59}	67.86 _{±0.03}
	H	75.94 _{±0.04}	72.27 _{±0.03}	72.36 _{±0.03}	71.86 _{±0.03}	73.41 _{±0.01}	75.34 _{±0.03}	72.87 _{±0.03}	68.88 _{±0.05}	73.98 _{±0.02}	73.83 _{±0.04}	73.07 _{±0.01}	75.08 _{±0.82}	75.33 _{±0.02}
3 RND	E	59.56 _{±0.06}	57.53 _{±0.06}	57.41 _{±0.06}	56.38 _{±0.11}	57.76 _{±0.05}	58.83 _{±0.10}	54.41 _{±0.13}	58.07 _{±0.12}	58.14 _{±0.04}	57.46 _{±0.10}	57.55 _{±0.03}	58.85 _{±0.57}	59.09 _{±0.05}
	M	68.22 _{±0.04}	65.86 _{±0.03}	66.29 _{±0.03}	65.34 _{±0.06}	67.03 _{±0.03}	68.62 _{±0.05}	65.54 _{±0.06}	64.98 _{±0.08}	67.34 _{±0.04}	67.71 _{±0.06}	66.69 _{±0.02}	68.18 _{±0.38}	68.24 _{±0.03}
	H	75.75 _{±0.02}	72.66 _{±0.02}	72.42 _{±0.03}	72.00 _{±0.03}	73.52 _{±0.02}	75.63 _{±0.03}	73.36 _{±0.03}	69.30 _{±0.06}	74.04 _{±0.02}	75.36 _{±0.03}	73.40 _{±0.01}	75.58 _{±0.17}	75.39 _{±0.01}
4 PGD	E	59.70 _{±0.05}	57.71 _{±0.05}	57.73 _{±0.00}	57.19 _{±0.07}	57.60 _{±0.08}	57.05 _{±0.17}	54.69 _{±0.09}	58.18 _{±0.07}	58.27 _{±0.09}	58.46 _{±0.11}	57.66 _{±0.05}	58.81 _{±0.64}	59.14 _{±0.05}
	M	68.40 _{±0.05}	66.12 _{±0.02}	66.39 _{±0.04}	65.67 _{±0.04}	67.04 _{±0.03}	68.24 _{±0.04}	65.64 _{±0.08}	65.17 _{±0.05}	67.32 _{±0.03}	67.85 _{±0.05}	66.78 _{±0.02}	68.16 _{±0.23}	68.12 _{±0.03}
	H	75.83 _{±0.02}	72.91 _{±0.02}	72.47 _{±0.04}	72.18 _{±0.05}	73.52 _{±0.02}	75.55 _{±0.05}	73.58 _{±0.04}	69.64 _{±0.05}	73.89 _{±0.02}	74.34 _{±0.04}	73.39 _{±0.01}	75.24 _{±0.65}	75.36 _{±0.02}
5 FGSM	E	59.71 _{±0.05}	57.69 _{±0.08}	57.62 _{±0.06}	57.16 _{±0.08}	57.60 _{±0.06}	56.97 _{±0.09}	54.67 _{±0.08}	58.20 _{±0.10}	58.23 _{±0.06}	58.46 _{±0.07}	57.63 _{±0.05}	58.81 _{±0.65}	59.15 _{±0.04}
	M	68.37 _{±0.02}	66.10 _{±0.03}	66.38 _{±0.04}	65.70 _{±0.04}	67.03 _{±0.04}	68.27 _{±0.04}	65.61 _{±0.08}	65.16 _{±0.05}	67.30 _{±0.02}	67.84 _{±0.07}	66.78 _{±0.02}	68.16 _{±0.23}	68.11 _{±0.02}
	H	75.82 _{±0.02}	72.92 _{±0.04}	72.48 _{±0.03}	72.18 _{±0.05}	73.52 _{±0.02}	75.55 _{±0.05}	73.60 _{±0.04}	69.64 _{±0.04}	73.90 _{±0.01}	74.34 _{±0.04}	73.39 _{±0.01}	75.23 _{±0.65}	75.35 _{±0.02}
6 W/O Attack	E	59.67 _{±0.00}	58.08 _{±0.00}	60.22 _{±0.00}	58.53 _{±0.00}	58.14 _{±0.00}	60.78 _{±0.00}	56.83 _{±0.00}	59.47 _{±0.00}	59.62 _{±0.00}	59.88 _{±0.00}	59.12 _{±0.00}	60.29 _{±0.17}	60.42 _{±0.00}
	M	68.28 _{±0.00}	66.14 _{±0.00}	67.11 _{±0.00}	66.35 _{±0.00}	67.00 _{±0.00}	68.98 _{±0.00}	66.26 _{±0.00}	65.41 _{±0.00}	67.53 _{±0.00}	68.41 _{±0.00}	67.15 _{±0.00}	68.56 _{±0.30}	68.59 _{±0.00}
	H	75.85 _{±0.00}	73.05 _{±0.00}	72.69 _{±0.00}	72.66 _{±0.00}	73.46 _{±0.00}	75.64 _{±0.00}	73.69 _{±0.00}	69.84 _{±0.00}	74.10 _{±0.00}	75.76 _{±0.00}	73.67 _{±0.00}	75.75 _{±0.09}	75.52 _{±0.00}
Avg. Accuracy	E	59.62 _{±0.02}	57.44 _{±0.03}	57.77 _{±0.03}	56.84 _{±0.04}	56.79 _{±0.04}	55.62 _{±0.06}	54.33 _{±0.04}	57.53 _{±0.05}	56.74 _{±0.09}	55.67 _{±0.10}	-	-	-
	M	68.34 _{±0.01}	65.88 _{±0.01}	66.41 _{±0.01}	65.59 _{±0.02}	66.94 _{±0.02}	67.24 _{±0.19}	65.43 _{±0.03}	64.97 _{±0.02}	67.28 _{±0.01}	66.85 _{±0.18}	-	-	-
	H	75.84 _{±0.01}	72.69 _{±0.01}	72.42 _{±0.01}	72.14 _{±0.02}	73.47 _{±0.01}	75.49 _{±0.01}	73.33 _{±0.02}	69.38 _{±0.02}	73.98 _{±0.00}	74.78 _{±0.02}	-	-	-
Avg. 3-Min Accuracy	E	59.55 _{±0.03}	57.05 _{±0.04}	57.02 _{±0.03}	56.05 _{±0.07}	55.73 _{±0.07}	52.33 _{±0.12}	53.25 _{±0.07}	56.43 _{±0.07}	54.77 _{±0.16}	52.41 _{±0.17}	-	-	-
	M	68.28 _{±0.01}	65.64 _{±0.02}	66.20 _{±0.01}	65.28 _{±0.03}	66.84 _{±0.02}	65.85 _{±0.40}	65.02 _{±0.04}	64.69 _{±0.03}	67.17 _{±0.02}	65.66 _{±0.34}	-	-	-
	H	75.80 _{±0.02}	72.42 _{±0.02}	72.29 _{±0.01}	71.93 _{±0.02}	73.42 _{±0.01}	75.36 _{±0.02}	73.05 _{±0.02}	69.04 _{±0.03}	73.92 _{±0.01}	74.17 _{±0.03}	-	-	-
Weighted Accuracy	E	59.53 _{±0.04}	56.93 _{±0.04}	56.94 _{±0.04}	55.93 _{±0.08}	54.63 _{±0.14}	48.21 _{±0.27}	52.23 _{±0.08}	55.55 _{±0.14}	52.18 _{±0.33}	47.45 _{±0.35}	-	-	-
	M	65.57 _{±0.02}	66.17 _{±0.02}	66.22 _{±0.01}	65.28 _{±0.02}	66.79 _{±0.02}	63.85 _{±0.80}	64.77 _{±0.07}	64.60 _{±0.03}	67.08 _{±0.03}	64.07 _{±0.08}	-	-	-
	H	75.78 _{±0.02}	72.37 _{±0.02}	72.20 _{±0.01}	71.92 _{±0.03}	73.41 _{±0.01}	75.30 _{±0.02}	72.98 _{±0.02}	68.99 _{±0.04}	73.91 _{±0.01}	74.08 _{±0.03}	-	-	-
F	E	67.73 _{±0.03}	63.96 _{±0.21}	63.19 _{±0.10}	62.80 _{±0.15}	62.18 _{±0.08}	61.58 _{±1.05}	61.00 _{±0.28}	60.54 _{±1.18}	59.82 _{±1.38}	59.37 _{±1.43}	-	-	-

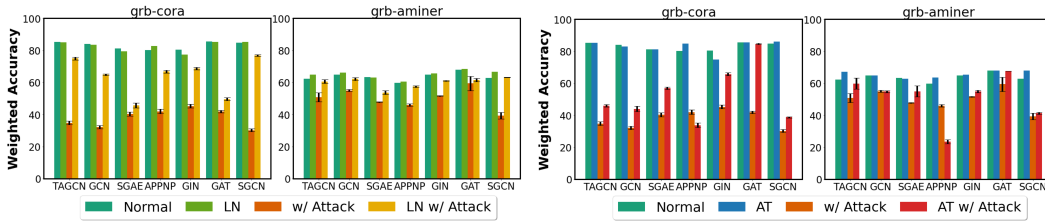


Figure 8: Effect of the proposed layer normalization (LN) on the adversarial robustness of GNNs. Figure 9: Effect of the proposed adversarial training (AT) on the adversarial robustness of GNNs.

5 Conclusion

To improve and facilitate the evaluation of adversarial robustness of GNNs, we rethink limitations in previous works and propose Graph Robustness Benchmark (GRB), a *scalable, unified, reproducible* and *extendable* benchmark. It has scalable datasets with special design and a unified evaluation pipeline for adversarial robustness. Its coding framework ensures the reproducibility and facilitates the implementation of future methods. We implement various methods and propose two defenses as strong baselines. We believe that GRB is helpful for promoting future research in this field.

6 Broader Impact

Positive impact. GRB provides a clear and general framework for robustness evaluation of both attacks and defenses. On one hand, it'll help researchers to develop more robust GNNs against adversarial attacks. On the other hand, it'll also help possible attackers to develop better attack methods to turn down defenses. In the case of adversarial attack and defense, the more public information of potential attack and defense methods, the easier the attackers can use public attack methods and the harder he can conduct secret attacks based on private methods. For defenders, the more information about potential attack methods they have, the more generalized robustness defense mechanism can be designed.

Negative impact. As this benchmark will offer a lot of public information for both sides, it will also make public attack methods more widely-known and hence GNNs may become more vulnerable. Attackers can also use it to design destructive attacks that may cause damage to GNN-based systems. GRB also has limitations. It only considers homogeneous graph rather than heterogeneous graph. It focuses on node classification task, while other tasks like link prediction and graph classification are also vulnerable to attacks. Since the domain of adversarial attacks and defenses develops rapidly, we will maintain update GRB continuously to track the progress and we highly welcome the community's contribution to cover these issues in the future.

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470 Checklist

- 471 1. For all authors...
- 472 (a) Do the main claims made in the abstract and introduction accurately reflect the paper’s
473 contributions and scope? **[Yes]** We introduce in the abstract and introduction the idea and
474 strengths of GRB, and we show in other parts including extensive experiments to confirm the
475 contributions of the proposed benchmark.
- 476 (b) Did you describe the limitations of your work? **[Yes]** We describe the limitations of GRB in
477 Section 6.
- 478 (c) Did you discuss any potential negative societal impacts of your work? **[Yes]** We discuss the
479 potential negative societal impacts of GRB in Section 6.
- 480 (d) Have you read the ethics review guidelines and ensured that your paper conforms to them?
481 **[Yes]** We read and confirm that we read the ethics review guidelines.
- 482 2. If you are including theoretical results...
- 483 (a) Did you state the full set of assumptions of all theoretical results? **[N/A]** This work does not
484 contain theoretical results.
- 485 (b) Did you include complete proofs of all theoretical results? **[N/A]** This work does not contain
486 theoretical results.

- 487 3. If you ran experiments (e.g. for benchmarks)...
- 488 (a) Did you include the code, data, and instructions needed to reproduce the main exper-
- 489 imental results (either in the supplemental material or as a URL)? [Yes] We include
- 490 all codes, data and instructions for reproducibility, which can be found in our website
- 491 <https://cogdl.ai/grb/home> and <https://github.com/THUDM/grb>.
- 492 (b) Did you specify all the training details (e.g., data splits, hyperparameters, how they were
- 493 chosen)? [Yes] We detailed all the training details in Section 4 as well as in Appendix A.4.
- 494 (c) Did you report error bars (e.g., with respect to the random seed after running experiments
- 495 multiple times)? [Yes] We repeat experiments ten times and report the average and standard
- 496 deviation. We also report error bars in figures in Section 4.
- 497 (d) Did you include the total amount of compute and the type of resources used (e.g., type of
- 498 GPUs, internal cluster, or cloud provider)? [Yes] We report the type of GPU in Appendix A.4.
- 499 4. If you are using existing assets (e.g., code, data, models) or curating/releasing new assets...
- 500 (a) If your work uses existing assets, did you cite the creators? [Yes] We reprocess existing
- 501 datasets and cite the creators in Section 4.
- 502 (b) Did you mention the license of the assets? [Yes] We mention the MIT license used for GRB
- 503 codes and datasets in Appendix A.1.
- 504 (c) Did you include any new assets either in the supplemental material or as a URL? [Yes] We
- 505 include the GRB datasets and codes in our website.
- 506 (d) Did you discuss whether and how consent was obtained from people whose data you're
- 507 using/curating? [Yes] The datasets are inherited from previous works.
- 508 (e) Did you discuss whether the data you are using/curating contains personally identifiable
- 509 information or offensive content? [Yes] The data are processed thus the identifiable information
- 510 is lost and can not be recovered.
- 511 5. If you used crowdsourcing or conducted research with human subjects...
- 512 (a) Did you include the full text of instructions given to participants and screenshots, if applicable?
- 513 [N/A] Not applicable.
- 514 (b) Did you describe any potential participant risks, with links to Institutional Review Board
- 515 (IRB) approvals, if applicable? [N/A] Not applicable.
- 516 (c) Did you include the estimated hourly wage paid to participants and the total amount spent on
- 517 participant compensation? [N/A] Not applicable.