

# Informatics Large Practical (ILP)

Response to student feedback in 2018/19 course survey

Thank you for your comments on the course in 2018/19. Paul Jackson is joining Stephen Gilmore (lecturer in 2018/19) to co-teach the Informatics Large Practical in 2019/20. We note the student feedback in this course survey, and have the following comments in response.

- The course is a 20-credit course, made up entirely of coursework; there is no exam. Accordingly, there is a lot of programming to do in the course so we wholeheartedly support the encouragement to start work on the practical early, and work on it week-by-week. As with any large programming project, it is possible to be tripped up by minor annoyances which are difficult to foresee, and which take some time to fix. It is important to be able to cope with these when they occur, and the best way that you can do that is by starting early and keeping on top of your development work throughout the semester.
- As a practical course, the Informatics Large Practical tries to encourage active independent learning, and learning-by-doing. Different from a taught lecture course, the lectures in the ILP course are only there to introduce concepts and ideas which can be useful in carrying out the practical work. The real learning in the course is indeed done in the laboratory, not the lecture theatre. The course does try to present a "real-world" challenge, so it was heartening to see that the students on the course found this realistic and considered it to be a valuable aspect of the course.
- Several students requested more lectures on the course so we will consider adding an additional week of lectures when the course is taught in 2019/20. We have been aware of students in the past waiting until all of the lectures were given before beginning work on the practical; this motivates us to limit the number of lectures on the course so that students begin their development work earlier. We know in any case that our treatment of Android will always be partial; the Android development platform is a large and complex development environment so even if we had a full lecture course of lectures we would not be able to cover all aspects of Android development.

**Stephen Gilmore and Paul Jackson, 30th May 2019**