INFR09032 – System Design Project

Response to student feedback in 2018/19 course survey

I/We have taken note of the feedback from students in this course survey, and have the following comments in response.

- It is clear students find this course challenging and potentially a lot of work, but that they also appreciate that it is unique and provides the opportunity to acquire important skills that cannot be learnt elsewhere in the curriculum. Note that although some responses criticise the high workload, the course explicitly allows students to set (as a group) their own goals and milestones AND to revise these if they discover the work required is more than they can reasonably do in the time available. We repeatedly emphasise, and try to actively support, good time and project management practices. One area we plan to revise for next year is the format and feedback for the demos; as the course structure naturally makes these a focus for the students. We had altered demo timing this year to try to improve consistency (common markers for all demos) but this limited the time for discussion and sometimes left a gap in communicating the basis of the markers' opinions. We did offer direct discussion with the course organisers for any group requesting clarification, but in future will make sure this loop is better closed for all groups. We note that, generally, the introduction of workshops this year (instead of the previous guest lectures) was considered helpful. It should be noted that 'mandatory attendance' mentioned in the feedback was actually only a request for a minimum of two students from each group to attend, to ensure that essential information passed on at these workshops reached all groups. The slides were available on Learn. We will be fine-tuning the workshop content to make sure all of them are relevant. We would also like to note the commendation of the SDP technical support, Garry Ellard. We agree that it remains key to the course to provide this level of dedicated support. We introduced an additional (student) helper for technical support this year and will look to expand this option in the coming year. We regret that the transfer to Learn (not our choice but university policy) apears to have reduced the navigability of the online information, and we will try to improve this for the coming year.

Barbara Webb, June 2019