Meet the DoT!

Björn Franke

Director of Teaching
About myself

• Studied Computer Science at University of Dortmund, Germany, and University of Edinburgh

• Lecturing experience since 2002

• Member of teaching staff in School of Informatics since 2004

• DoT since start of academic year 2015/2016

• Courses I teach or have taught: Embedded Systems, Compiling Techniques, Distributed Systems, …

• Research areas I am interested in: compilers and compiler optimisation, parallelisation, simulators, embedded systems
What is this about?

• **You said:** “School’s senior management doesn’t listen or care”.

• **We did:** Here I am!
  
  • Weekly meetings with Student Reps - see Blog
  
  • Lots of changes in response to student feedback: 20 credit point courses, December exams, course workload profile, faster feedback turn-around times, ....
Topics

- Shift towards 20 credit point courses
- New course workload profile
- Review of Exam Timing (End-of-year vs end-of-semester)
- Clarification of Marking Scheme
- ASK Trial
- Update on Feedback Turnaround Times
- New Coursework Auto-Marking System
- Student Rep Meetings
- Appleton Tower Update
- How and when to contact me
- Q&A
New course workload profile

• **You said:** “Many 10pt courses involve too much work, too many pieces of coursework, too many hours.”

• **We did:** Introduced a course workload profile, rolled out initially for **UG3** courses, rest to follow
  
  • University guideline: 1pt = 10 hours (all included)
  
  • Reality: Some existing 10pt courses actually closer to ~15pt workload
  
  • Now: reduced workload for 10pt courses (e.g. 1 item of assessed coursework), higher workload for 20pt courses (e.g. more lectures, 3 items of assessed coursework)

• **Side effects:** Fewer exams, but also fewer simultaneous course options (reduced breadth)
Shift towards 20 credit point courses

• **You said:** “There are too many exams” and “There’s too much context switching between courses”

• **We did:** Converted some courses to 20pt model, again initially in UG3, with the remaining years to follow


• **Side effects:** Fewer simultaneous course options (reduced breadth)
Review of Exam Timing

- **You said:** “There are too many exams in a short period of time” and “Please assess S1 courses in S1”

- **We did:** December exams for selected UG3 courses in 2016/17
  - IAML, CD, SDM, PI
  - Release of provisional marks in Jan/Feb
  - Phased introduction of more December exams
  - Careful monitoring of issues (short S1 revision/exam periods, possible clashes with CW deadlines, large practicals)
  - Late decision due to lack of clarity on structure of the academic year!

- **Side effects:** Short revision period, less time for e.g. large practicals, pedagogy: negative effects on long-term retention?
Clarification of Marking Scheme

• **You said:** “In some courses it’s impossible to get marks above 70-80%”

• **We did:** Clarification of University marking scheme, emails sent to both students and staff

  • “Extended Common Marking Scheme”
    
    • **90-100%:** “Often faultless. The work is well **beyond** that expected at the appropriate level of study.”

    • **80-89%:** “A truly **professional** piece of scholarship, often with an absence of errors. As ‘A3’ but shows (depending upon the item of assessment): significant **personal insight / creativity / originality** and / or **extra depth** and academic maturity in the elements of assessment.”

    • **70-79%:** Essentially, do what you have been asked to do and do it right.

• **Side effects:** Possibly requires explanation (everything correct does not imply 100%); very high marks require presence of the X factor; hard to apply consistently across all pieces of assessments, but should apply “on average”
ASK Trial

• Online course discussion forum

• Alternative to Piazza (commercial)
  • Owned by University, data remains within the University
  • Some new features not existing in Piazza

• Developed by Informatics students in conjunction with Information Services

• Trial in selected UG1/UG2 courses and PI
Feedback Turnaround Times

• Proportion of Assessments with Feedback Returned within **15 Working Days** of Submission (University policy)

  • **Semester 1**
    • UG - Pre-honours 72%, UG - Honours 86%, PGT 89%

  • **Semester 2**
    • UG - Pre-honours 91%, UG - Honours 87%, PGT 90%

• Includes formative assessment where submitted to a timetable.
## Feedback Turnaround Times

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UG Pre-Honours</strong></td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UG Honours</strong></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PGT</strong></td>
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<td>84%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td><strong>All Courses</strong></td>
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<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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Coursework Auto-Marking System

• Developed as an innovative and scalable assessment method for coding based coursework by Christophe Dubach for the UG3 Compiling Techniques course

• You can submit coursework as you go, as many times as you like

• Marking script runs over night, shows which tests have passed/failed and **your current mark** (possible to improve by later re-submission). Mark achieved at deadline counts.

• Individual demonstrations at the end of the semester, where students need to demonstrate they have written the code on their own (plus immediate feedback on code)

• Adopted also for Compiler Optimisation, possibly more courses in the future

• **Side effect:** Focus on functionality, harder to assess aspects of **code quality**
Student Rep Meetings

• **Weekly student rep meetings** with DoT and selected other members of staff

• If you want to become a student rep, please contact your year organiser

• Report any issues to student reps, but please also contact lecturers directly

• Minutes, comments and feedback in Blog
  
  • [http://blog.inf.ed.ac.uk/issr/](http://blog.inf.ed.ac.uk/issr/)

• Please follow and contribute!
Appleton Tower Update

- Exterior work almost completed
- Scheduled return for 2017/18
- MSc study space on level 9
- Additional computing labs
- Additional tutorial rooms
- Additional common areas
- ITO to move to level 6
How and when to contact me

• Email: inf-dot@inf.ed.ac.uk

• I follow some of the Informatics students Facebook groups

• Support for student initiatives: Hackathons, programming competitions, …

• Suggestions for improvements (new courses, new things to try out, “systematic” problems you’re experiencing, …)

  • Please use course feedback forms for course-specific ideas for improvement

• Official complaints/really big problems (after your have tried to resolve the issue with the course lecturer, year organiser, ITO…)

• Use relevant contacts for coursework deadline extension or other concession requests (ITO, year organiser, PT), DICE related problems (Computing Support), course material (course lecturer), …
Q & A