

MSc Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
11am-12pm, Monday 27 November
Appleton Tower, 6.16

Present: P Jackson (chair and MSc year organiser), K Lee (Administrator), E Muller (rep), L Havens (rep), L Wong (rep), S Stewart (Secretary)

1. Introduction and Overview:

The meeting opened with a brief introduction on the purpose of the meeting, mainly to gain feedback to help enhance student's experience for semester 2 and beyond.

2. Comments on MSc Courses:

ANLP

No complaints reported regarding this course.

BIO1

Tutorial/class sizes not proportional – The rooms are too large compared to the class size and therefore it was found that there was a mix of students taking and not taking the tutorial, which made the teaching style odd – students suggest that a smaller room would be better for future.

CDI1

Overall view that the course is good. There appears to be a challenge with the course set-up in terms of balancing those with good understanding and knowledge in the English language and those who do not. It is felt that this set-up may discourage discussions during the class; and is suggested that possibly changing the set-up would encourage more discussions.

CDI2

Overall view that the course is good – fewer students in this course compared to CDI1.

CCN

Lectures focus too much on broader topics. It would be more beneficial if lectures or labs were more focused on what the assignment would be like. There appears to be a disconnection between lectures and practicals; it would be beneficial if labs took first half an hour introducing assignments.

IVC

No complaints reported regarding this course.

IRR

There is a variety in the way tutors conduct each of their tutorials, i.e. some have too little guidance and set work, or too much. Students would like to see more consistency across the board – more uniform of structuring and conducting tutorials. One hour weekly tutorials are not felt to be beneficial – suggested that drop in sessions may be more beneficial.

IJP

Needs to be more structured from the beginning with the possibility of smaller assignments. Most of the teaching involves doing the recommended reading and assignments. Interim things to do would be beneficial such as exercises (Lecturers did give exercises when students asked for them). The labs lack structure – students not clear what there was to gain from attending when there were no assignments to do. The textbook does not provide sample solutions for everything – would be good to have sample solutions to assignments available, beneficial to learn from. Pointers to resources would be useful.

Only two lab assistants during session leading up to assignment deadlines – be beneficial to have a couple more TAs to assist students, so that it is less overwhelming for the TAs.

NC

No complaints reported regarding this course.

RSS

Fairly well structured. Venue issues reported, and hardware failures so students could not do work at times.

3. Comments on other courses

MLP

Assignments took long periods of time to run (practicals); had to 'hunt' for computers to use due to large cohort of students attempting to run long practicals. The assignments themselves had bugs in the code that needed fixed after the assignment was released which meant that some tests needed to be re-run. Tutorials were understaffed which caused frustration for students. Would be beneficial if possible to get funding/support for resources that provides more space, such as from Google/Amazon, due to some students needing to rent out these services for additional space to run tests.

MLPR

Very good – lots of online support for students.

IAML

Well-structured. Solutions posted at the end of labs were useful, as was that homework was based on labs and extended.

College of Art – for feedback -

- Histories and Futures of Technology

Would be beneficial if the lectures could be recorded.

- Data Science for Design

Diversity in technical skill amongst the students which was a challenge. The TAs were very useful, and the flexibility of the projects was appreciated as they provided a good balance for each individual student (students could focus on what they wanted).

4. General Issues about the year and specific courses

See individual courses for feedback.

5. Comments on Computer Facilities

MLP – Overload of using computers; advice on how to run coursework in background so that others can use machines. Advice on how to prioritise of running experiments (NIS process); opportunities advertised of using additional resources such as Google/Amazon – possible funding for this?

PATH – Information services was very slow.

Piazza – Would be appreciated that if classes are based on using this for lecturers to email students when changes occur. Is discussion for students on this compulsory? Would be beneficial for important information on the course to be located at the top of the webpage so that it does not get lost.

6. Comments on labs, study spaces and social spaces

Level 9 – MSc invited to use this space exclusively over the course of the summer.

7. Comments on Computing Support

None to report.

8. Comments on ITO Support

None to report.

9. AOB

Action Points

ISS to set up calendar with coursework deadlines – DONE

Advice on how to present course pages – Feedback to Stuart Anderson

MLP – Feedback to Steve Renals (course lecturer) about Google/Amazon resources

Computing Support – computer etiquette in running experiments in the background – what is the strategy for this? Computing support to feedback this to ITO and course lecturers/course secretary of who does what in terms of communication to students.