Present: V. Nagarajan (chair), M. Gospodinov (rep), N. Nardelli (rep), A. Verkaik (rep), A. Lascarides, P. Patras, M. Herrmann, C. Edminson (Secretary)

1. Introduction and Overview

The meeting opened with a brief introduction on the format and purpose of the meeting.

2. Comments on Courses

*AI Large Practical (AILP)*
Students felt this was a good course and provides a good introduction to research. They would have preferred a larger practical element.

*Algorithms and Data Structures (ADS)*
Students enjoyed the course. The coursework was problematic and students would like a revision lecture. There was concern that the course focuses primarily on algorithms and that increased focus on data structures would be desirable.

*Foundations of Natural Language Processing (FNLP)*
Students very much enjoyed this course. They felt the second coursework was better since the first assignment was more guided, however many students also reported that they enjoyed the guided nature of the work which provided a much needed introduction to Python. There was a suggestion that some students would prefer the labs to explore a different area rather than the coursework itself and that they could be made optional.

*Computer Science Large Practical (CSLP)*
Students felt this was a very interesting course. They felt that while C as a language was difficult to learn, it was very useful. It was suggested that more opportunities to ask questions and obtain feedback would be beneficial. However, students admitted that many did not submit the formative assessment which would have been a useful feedback opportunity. It was also suggested that Piazza could be of use within CSLP to facilitate peer support as this works well in other courses.

*Introduction to Vision and Robotics (IVR)*
The feedback for this course was generally positive. Students enjoyed the inverted lecture system though felt this could be developed further. Perhaps students could review lectures at home and use the lecture time more like a tutorial, though this may place more responsibility on students to watch the lectures. It was reported that students enjoyed the labs, though attendance decreased throughout the term due to increased focus on SDP.

*Computational Cognitive Science (CCS)*
A number of students reported that the lectures felt quite complicated and rushed. It was easy to lose track of the topic part way through a lecture though students who spent additional time reading the material could then catch up. They felt that the description of the course is not well connected to the material taught.
Computer Design (CD)
Students reported very positive feedback for this course. The lectures and labs were very valuable and the assignments helped students to better understand the course material. It was noted that many Electronics students take this course and there was a clash between a lecture in Electronics and the Tuesday tutorial slot which made tutorial allocation very difficult.

ACTION: K. Hardman to look at a new timeslot for the Tuesday CD tutorial.

Database Systems (DBS)
Students felt that the lectures were good in general. However, they had found it hard to grasp material on normal forms -- in particular, they felt that the material was treated slightly differently in the lectures when compared to other online discussions of the same material. They also felt that it would also be beneficial for tutorial sheets to be available online as students had to attend the tutorial to get the sheet and therefore were unable to complete this in their own time.

Introductory Applied Machine Learning (IAML)
There was concern over the marking of the IAML assignments. The grading rubric differs from that used in other course as 70% is the maximum mark for getting everything correct and any mark above that is given based on students doing extra work. However, the additional marks are very subjective and depend on the interpretation of the marker. One marker in particular appeared to be much stricter than the others. A clearer marking rubric would be preferable. There are four pieces of coursework which students reported took around 20 hours each, therefore 80 hours in total. It was suggested that the coursework should be reduced to 2 pieces so that students have more time to think about each piece of coursework.

It would also be useful to have more resources to study. At present there are only the past exam papers which do not include solutions and as there are only three tutorials there are even less opportunities for feedback. More tutorial sheets with solutions would be beneficial.

If possible, it would be useful if the tutorial and lab were on the same day but alternating weeks

ACTION: V. Nagajaran to provide feedback to course lecturer.
ACTION: K. Hardman to consider potential for alternating lab/tutorial group

Logic Programming (LP)
Students enjoyed this course, they felt the coursework was good. Students queried why two exams are required for this course as that increases the exam load for students who take logic programming.

Operating Systems (OS)
The students appreciated the fact that coursework was released early which was beneficial, and the tutorials were good. Piazza was also very beneficial in this course. However, the students also reported some complaints. They felt that the lecturer used slides from another university and didn’t appear to know them very well, though they understand that this is the first time the lecturer is covering this course. Students felt it would be useful to have more support on C, perhaps the first coursework could be a guided project in C.
Professional Issues (PI)
Students could see the benefit of a course which focuses on report writing and presentation skills. It was good to have the input from external people, especially those within industry.

However, students felt that the tutorial exercises seemed arbitrary and didn’t encourage any high level learning. Students are concerned that they don’t know what to expect on the exam as there is no clear curriculum and the topics were very wide ranging. A number of students saw the importance of presentation practice and set up an independent group to practice. They were grateful that Phil Wadler came along to the session and provided feedback. It may be beneficial in future years to build this into the course.

Software Engineering Large Practical (SELP)
Students felt this course was excellent and that this was the best piece of coursework students have undertaken. Each student received six pages of individual feedback. Positive comments include ‘Allan Clark deserves a prize, he should teach everyone else how to teach all courses. If the school reached Allan Clark’s standard then the whole school would be at a very high level’

Software Engineering with Objects and Components (SEOC)
Students reported no complaints.

Undergraduate Research Proposal (URP)
Students felt the course worked well due to its flexibility. They felt this was a good experiment and should be continued. There was good support from the supervisors, however additional lectures on how to do a research review would have been beneficial. Students feel that number of pages required for the report could be reduced.

Agent Based Systems (ABS)
Students reported that the course is ok and that Michael Rovatsos is a good lecturer. A number of students questioned whether the textbook is relevant. Some students found the coursework problematic as the environment was similar to prolog but very difficult to use.

Compiling Techniques (CT)
Students felt this course was ok overall. There was concern that the first part of the coursework was not very well specified or well documented. The task of building a compiler was a good idea, however the most interesting parts were already done by the library therefore students felt they didn’t learn as much as they could have. The second piece of coursework was better however also not very well documented.

Computer Architecture (CAR)
Students reported no complaints about this course, however it would be helpful to have tutorial solutions available. Students understand the reason these are not released however this does make it difficult to revise. Students would recommend this course to others.
**Software Testing (ST)**
There were concerns about the structure of tutorials. The tutorials directly relate to the coursework and only students who have received 100% on their coursework can meet a tutor. Students feel the barrier to entry is too high and should be 6/7 out of 10. Students question whether tutorials are more important for students who are struggling with coursework than those who have answered everything correctly.

**System Design Project (SDP)**
Students were very concerned with the amount of time this course takes up which leads to other courses being sacrificed. On occasion, information from the lecturer and the TA is contradictory. The grading rubric is problematic due to students being limited to 6/10 with only 1 student per group allowed to get 10. This can cause negative dynamics within the group. Students commented that Garry Ellard is great and has a very positive impact on the course.

**Computer Communications and Networking (COMN)**
Most students enjoyed this course. The assignments took lots of time but were fulfilling.

**Computer Security (CS)**
This course has been a major issue for students. Students recognise that the lecture had special circumstances and missed many lecturers, however they feel that the School should have done something at an earlier stage such as involving another lecturer in the delivery of the course. Students haven’t covered topics that may appear in the exam therefore they feel help needs to be provided to the class to overcome this. The coursework was released very late and that resulted in the deadline being pushed back into the revision week which students feel have negative consequences on exam preparation. There was a suggestion that that coursework should be waived due to these circumstances.

**ACTION:** V. Nagarajan to liaise with Director of Teaching regarding a possible solution to this situation. (UPDATE: V. Nagarajan has communicated the issue to the DoT)

**Enterprise Computing (EC)**
Students are concerned that they don’t know what will be covered in the exam as the curriculum is very vague. Topics are very wide ranging and not well connected. This course could be good if it was just a practical rather than having the exam element.

**Introduction to Theoretical Computer Science (ITCS)**
Students feel this is a great course with an excellent teacher. The coursework is well defined and took an appropriate amount of time. It may be useful to include some preparation for this material in 2\textsuperscript{nd} year, perhaps within Inf2A.

**General Discussion on over-assessment**
It was felt that there is a big jump from 2\textsuperscript{nd} year to 3\textsuperscript{rd} year and that although coursework is supposed to take 25 hours, in reality this is closer to 40/50 hours. This is the case for the majority of courses with a few exceptions such as FNLP where the coursework load is appropriate. The coursework load results in many students choosing not to attend tutorials in order to spend more time on their coursework.

For a number of courses, the assignments do not correlate well with the taught material for example in Compiling Techniques and Operating Systems.
3. Comments on Facilities and Support

Students feel that the facilities are not great, better screens would be welcomed. The SDP lab can be very unpleasant however this is because the course requires students to stay day and night and therefore no-one takes responsibility for tidying up.

4. Admin Support

Students would like information on how the Honours Project is allocated. Although this is a fourth year project, the allocations take place in 3rd year. Students believe this process should be more transparent.

5. AOB

Students reported a unanimous feeling that exams should be split between the first and second semester. They feel this issue has been raised repeatedly and that they do not agree with the reasons given for scheduling all exams in Semester 2.

ACTION: V. Nagarajan to investigate this matter further and provide further information.
(UPDATE: Feedback from I. Stark has been relayed to the ug3-students)