

UG5 Staff Student Liaison Committee

Thursday 23rd March 2017, 2pm-3pm

Room 1.20, Informatics Forum

Present: Mahesh Marina (chair, Year Organiser)
Lena Reisinger (UG5 Student Representative)
Lukas Danev (UG5 Student Representative)

Attending: Rob Armitage (UG1 Administrator)

Apologies: Gregor Hall (UG4/5 Administrator)

1. Course Issues

RSS – The course was described as enjoyable, with the format improved over the previous year due to its increase from 10 credits to 20 credits. Time spent on the course was evenly split between exams and coursework, reflecting the number of credits. Other positive aspects include the lecture specialisation from various academics, and the December exam meaning the semester 2 workload was easier to manage. An issue raised was the difficulty of understanding Michael Herrmann’s slides as they were too dense to read in the time available, and a number of students avoided this subject area knowing they would be able to work on alternate assessment questions. Additionally, the slides did not always reflect what was covered in the lecture.

RL – The feedforward structure was praised; receiving clarification and expectations from the set questions before the deadline was found to be very useful. The discontinuation of tutorials was found to be a hindrance in some cases, as the tutorial content was presented in lectures when there were better ways that time could have been used. There were some problems in the course that were not sufficiently explained which then affected the understanding and completion of coursework. Since the coursework deadline was just after Creative Learning Week many students spent a large portion of that week focused on this course specifically, not being able to devote time to other work. It was felt that there was too much work for a 10 credit course therefore it was difficult to judge the quality of the content.

Action: MM to discuss with the lecturer options for giving more focus and to consider bringing back tutorials.

CCN – The course was described as enjoyable and the 100% coursework format was beneficial, although more opportunity to ask questions during lab sessions and on piazza was requested. The work done in lab sessions did not seem to be relevant to the final grade so many students chose to not attend unless they were interested in gaining additional

knowledge. The UG/MSc mix was not a hindrance to the way the course was tailored and was considered beneficial for sharing knowledge between students of different backgrounds. It was noted that the MSc students had more time to devote to the course as their project was due in the summer, whereas the UG project was due during the semester. An issue raised was that the coursework focuses on a relatively small part of the course and can be expanded.

Action: MM to discuss with the lecturer an increased capacity for asking questions and the option to expand the coursework to cover more of the course content.

BIO2 – The material was useful and interesting. An issue raised was that completing the work required more knowledge than Informatics students would generally have, therefore they would need to learn more than what was presented and discussed in lectures to be able to understand the material. The BIO2 lecture summaries did not continue after week 2 and it was requested that they should continue throughout the course as with BIO1.

Action: MM to look into BIO2 lecture summaries being provided throughout the course.

ES – The lab instruction was good, however the volume of coursework was judged as too large considering it was worth only 12.5% of a 10 credit course. Coursework assignment 2 was significantly more difficult than assignment 1, and it was difficult to work on outside of lab sessions as there were frequently questions that needed answering.

Action: MM to discuss with the lecturer altering the coursework, i.e. increasing the course to 20 credits instead of 10, reducing the coursework so it is more manageable, or increasing weighting of each assignment.

Coursework-only courses – It was agreed that gaining a mark of 70% was achievable in the estimated working time, however gaining a mark in the 90-100% range in that time was practically impossible as the required effort increased disproportionately to the increase in marks for the higher grades.

Action: MM to inquire about making coursework easier so getting 100% is achievable.

Other courses – Neither class rep had received any complaints other than the above via the Facebook group or via email; MM stated we can reasonably assume that there are no major problems.

2. Facilities and Support

The display of instructions in Forrest Hill for running long jobs has been received well. Students are happy that the instructions are visible and clear.

The ratio of resources to students was commented on, specifically the difficulty of finding a machine during busy times. However, students are aware when the busy periods are and can make efforts to avoid them, and that there is a large enough number of machines in Forrest Hill that you will be able to find one if you check every room.

There are ongoing issues with printing. In some cases you have to send a job several times for the printer to register it. Tickets have been put into Computing Support but the reps did not know what else could be done.

3. Projects

The overall feeling was that completing the project was found to be easier than in the previous year due to the increase in experience. No issues were raised.

4. **Administration**

No issues or comments

5. **AOB**

As a response to the lack of feedback on some courses, MM stated that we could increase awareness of class reps so future cohorts will know the process for raising issues.

Action: ITO to advertise reps more throughout the 2017-18 academic year so the 2018 SSLC meeting is representative across all courses in the year.