

Compiling Techniques (CT)

Response to student feedback in 2021/22 course survey

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

- "I liked how open ended the expert tasks of each coursework was. It allowed us to get creative and implement things in anyway we wanted. The courseworks were fun, but I feel we were often provided with too much skeletal code for helping things. As a result it felt more like coding assignment questions rather than building our own compiler from scratch. It would have been nice to work on a single codebase from start to end rather than having our code replaced (and many other significant parts added to it) by the teachers code in each subsequent assignment"
- We appreciate the constructive feedback with respect to the mix of template code we offer and freedom of implementation. This is the very first year that we run this course and we hope to have found a good balance. As we run this course over the years, we hope to increase the freedom we can offer.
- "I believe that the initial expectation to complete 4 courseworks back-to-back, with no gaps in between, was an impractical and unfair proposal. The reason being is that most courses I've taken up until now or at least I am aware of e.g. Computer Security, COMN etc. all had between 1-3 courseworks that were spaced out across the semester, which meant that most of them allowed us to apply for an extension if we needed one. I believe that the initial expectation to complete 4 courseworks back-to-back, with no gaps in between, was an impractical and unfair proposal. The reason being is that most courses I've taken up until now or at least I am aware of e.g. Computer Security, COMN etc. all had between 1-3 courseworks that were spaced out across the semester, which meant that most of them allowed us to apply for an extension if we needed one. So in future, based on my experience of the course this semester, I believe that as their standard, CT should have 3 cws (or less) that are spaced out across the semester (with enough of a gap in between (particularly one that spans Flexible learning week)) so that a student would be able to apply for an extension if need be. Either that, or I believe that each coursework should be allocated more time, i.e. at least 3 weeks or more for each one as opposed to the initial 2 weeks for cws 1 and 2 and 3 weeks for cws 3 and 4."
- We also appreciate the feedback with respect to the coursework and the strikes. First and foremost, This semester indeed suffered from strikes, which negatively affected the students. We very much want to apologize for these consequences. Second, while this course historically always had four courseworks, we agree that three might be more appropriate. We will be working towards this change in future iterations.

Tobias Grosser and Michel Steuer, 20/05/22