

Sol Course Proposal Review Form

Version: Nov 2021

Reviewer Name: Björn Ross

Name of Proposed Course: Foundations of Cognitive Modelling

Date of review: 19-24 November 2021

Instructions to reviewers: please read through the course proposal and answer the reviewer questions below. Return your completed review form to iss-bos@inf.ed.ac.uk by the review deadline. If you are new to the School or to reviewing course proposals, it may help to read some of the guidance provided to course proposers, mostly included as prompts in the course proposal form itself (including links to external reference materials).

1 Course overview and case for support (Sec 1 of proposal)

1.1 Course name and acronym

Given the course description, are the name and acronym appropriate, or would you suggest any changes?

Appropriate.

1.2 Summary and Description

Do the Summary and Description make the course sound attractive, including a student-friendly overview of the learning aims, content, and style of the course, and (if need be) who the course is aimed at? Are there any issues with content or wording that you feel should be addressed?

Summary description:

As a minor suggestion, in “to explore a topic in cognitive science in depth” you could say “topic of their choice”, to stress the role of the students choosing or self-proposing topics. That would probably make the description sound more attractive, and it sounds a bit vague otherwise.

1.3 Target audience and contribution to the School’s curriculum

Please comment on the case made for this course and its contribution. For example,

- Is there good evidence that it would attract students, or is otherwise necessary (e.g. strategically)?
- Do you have any concerns about how it would fit in with other courses (or even concerns about other courses that come to light here)?
- Is the description of the target audience consistent with the requested SCQF level? Are there any cohorts of students (degree programmes or years) that may not have been considered, including students from outside the School?

Note that even if a course is academically sound, BoS can still reject it if the case for support is not convincing (ie if developing and delivering the course is unlikely to be a good use of resource).

The proposal is inconsistent about who the course is intended to be optional for.

Under “what is the target audience”, the proposal says “It will also be available to PPLS MSc students on the following degrees ... and to UG4/5 students who have passed CCS.”

Under “Is this course restricted to students on a specific degree?”, the proposal says “The course is restricted to students on the Cognitive Science BSc, MSc and MA”.

Is it open to non-CogSci BSc students and to PPLS MSc students, or not?

Related question: As the classification as Level 11/Year 4 correct? IRR, which it is intended to replace for CogSci students, is classified as Level 11/PG. But then IRR is not available to UG students at all, whereas FCM is intended to be available to UG4/5 students who have passed CCS. From what I can see, classifying it as a Year 4 course means that it will be listed in *all* the UG DPTs, and that will probably lead to more people wanting to take it than if it wasn’t listed. That might lead to disappointment because of the quota. So maybe classifying it as a Level 11/PG course would prevent that? Not sure.

1.4 Learning Outcomes

Please comment on the Learning Outcomes. Questions to consider include:

- Are the verbs specific enough that it is clear what type of assessment could be used for each Learning Outcome, and what level of cognitive skill/understanding is needed (e.g., Bloom’s taxonomy low levels such as recalling or defining, medium levels such as applying or explaining, high levels such as evaluating or designing)?
- Are the Learning Outcomes appropriate to the level of the course, and at an appropriate level of generality?
- Are there any LO’s that you feel are missing, or other suggested changes?

Appropriate

1.5 Other comments

Do you have any other comments about anything in Section 1 of the proposal?

Graduate attributes

Are these in the correct format? In other course proposals I’ve seen (EFI), they are whole sentences, which makes them sound very similar to learning outcomes. The way it is done here actually makes more sense.

Additional Information, Assessment:

I am not sure if students know what “weekly brief responses” are (respond to what?), it might be worth including some more detail in DRPS, also on length (to make clear that you are not expecting them to write hundreds of words each week).

I am also not sure if students know what “Students/groups will also have a formative oral presentation in the first semester.” means. This could maybe be clarified (e.g. they do not count towards the final grade but will be marked according the same rubric as the presentations in semester 2). (Also typo)

2 Course delivery, assessment, resourcing (Sec 2 of proposal)

2.1 Use of time

After reviewing the proposed content, use of timetabled activities, and plans for assessment, please comment on the use of time, in light of the guidance to use no more than 6-7h/week for a 10pt course, or 13-14h/week for a 20pt course, including all course activities. For example,

- Does the course appear to be keeping within those guidelines, is it over-ambitious, or is that difficult to determine based on the proposal so far (and if so, why)?
- Is the balance of activities reasonable (e.g., will students have enough self-study time outside of timetabled activities and assessment)?
- Do plans for support activities (labs, tutorials, etc) look appropriate or could they be improved?
- Are there any inconsistencies between what is stated in the text, and the “breakdown of activities” table? (This table is notoriously confusing; if you’re not sure just say so.)

Yes this seems reasonable.

There are no tutorials or labs but the seminar is highly interactive so no need for additional support.

I am not sure how the hours that the students are supposed to spend on assessment are accounted for (e.g. writing weekly responses, preparing presentations). I assume that they will be allocated to directed and undirected learning activities. This also makes it hard to judge whether students will have enough self-study time, but it sounds like they will.

2.2 Assessment and feedback

Aside from the amount of time spent on assessment (discussed above), are there any other issues with the plans for assessment and feedback? For example,

- Is the number of items of assessment reasonable (normally, no more than 1 summative coursework for a 10pt course, or 2-3 for a 20pt course)?
- Is it clear which learning outcomes are assessed by each piece of assessment, and that all LOs are covered?
- Are there any concerns about whether the assessment will scale effectively if the class is larger than expected, or whether the assessment design will make it difficult to align marks with the Common Marking Scheme (e.g., due to automarking)?
- Do the plans require tight turnaround times which may not be feasible?

Yes, all reasonable, all LOs covered.

Scaling of assessment may be a problem if the course is much larger than expected, but that's why there is a quota.

2.3 Decolonisation, inclusion, and ethics

Are you satisfied with the plans for making the course inclusive and decolonising the content and delivery (including designing for accessibility; gender, racial, cultural, and other issues)? Do you have any suggestions for improvement in these areas?

Good plans are in place.

If the course proposal does not already mention social or ethical issues related to the course topic, should these be addressed in the course somehow? This is especially relevant for 20pt courses. If so, please provide suggestions if possible. *(Note that if others agree, the proposer may be asked to modify the course description, Learning Outcomes, and/or Graduate Attributes, as appropriate.)*

It might be helpful to integrate a discussion of research ethics in the context of cognitive science, either in the lecture materials or in the papers to be presented by students.

2.4 Resource requirements and other comments

For now we will mainly have SG and/or BF evaluate the resourcing section, but if you have any comments about that, or anything else to say about Sec 2, please say so here.

3 Sample course materials and publicity (Sec 3 of proposal)

Do you have any comments about this section? *(You may wish to consider whether the materials provided teach or assess the types of learning outcomes listed in Section 1.)*

They are excellent and very detailed.

4 Requisites, timetabling, and other details (Sec 4-5 of proposal)

4.1 Delivery period and requisites

Do the delivery period and co-/pre-requisites present difficulties for any particular cohort of students? If so, who? *(Consider all years/degrees for whom the course is intended, both UG and PGT. Note that most PGT students will not have taken any of our UG courses, so "other requirements" or recommended prerequisites should often be used instead of required prerequisites).*

None that I am aware of.

4.2 Other requirements

For courses open to PGT students or other courses without formal prerequisites, does the “other requirements” box provide sufficiently specific guidance about required background in mathematics, programming, or other areas, and is it reasonable to expect most target students to have this knowledge? Please highlight any concerns.

All good. Typo in “see permission”

4.3 Tags

If this is a level 9-10 course, do the chosen tags (Sec 5) seem appropriate? If not, please suggest changes. (SG will also review this section, in case you’re not sure.)

Looks good