

UG4/5 Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting

11:00am, Thursday 6th April 2023

Microsoft Teams

Present: W. Magdy (UG4/5 Year Organiser), R. Finlayson (Teaching Administrator), C. McWilliam (UG4/5 Rep), M. Sonowal (UG4/5 Rep)

1. Introduction and overview of SSLC

The meeting opened with a brief introduction on the purpose of the meeting, mainly to gain feedback over the past semester so as to help enhance student's experience, and to offer student representatives a chance to talk to the Year Organiser directly.

2. Comments on UG4/5 Courses

[Note: All feedback from this meeting was sent to Course Organisers with the offer to comment on/respond to. Any feedback from the Course Organisers that was returned is included in the minutes]

ADBS

No feedback for this course.

AGTA

No feedback for this course.

ASR

No feedback for this course.

CG

Rep: Students said the course was interesting, but it was difficult to find the time to go to the lectures and connect with the material. Students would instead learn what they need to for the coursework; the coursework load was a lot as it took time to get used to the tools required for it. An interesting course but a lot of work for 10 credits.

[Response from Course Organiser, A. Vaxman]

"Thank you for the feedback on the course. I wholeheartedly agree with what's being said. I Preferred to keep the course in the same structure as previous years since the entire course team was new, and particularly myself. I believe the course should be revised somewhat so that the exercise difficulty would be scaled down and made more tight with the lecture material. I am glad the students enjoy the material of the course which is a good overview

of classic and contemporary techniques in graphics, with an emphasis on rendering and visualization.”

CiC

Reps: I’ve heard very good things about this course. People seem to like it, mostly because but seems like a change of pace from other Informatics courses.

IMC

No feedback for this course

MLP

The main feedback was regarding the courseworks. The first two courseworks are worth 50% of the final mark, and there is very little time to complete them. The ML models themselves take a day to run; perhaps the course organisers could work with models that don’t take a long time to work, or even just a heads up that some models will take a day to run.

With regards to CW3, the MLP cluster gets too busy, mostly because everyone is using it at the same time. Some students were using Google credits from other courses. It would be great if there was more computing power dedicated to this.

The second semester consisted mostly of guest lecturers, which was great. It’s a good course in terms of content, but if the courseworks were a little better organised it would be great.

MLT

No feedback for this course.

NLU+

Reps: I’ve heard quite positive things from others about this course, perhaps because it was done by those who did FNLP last year and are interested in this area.

PPLS

Reps: This is a very interesting course and has good content.

PMR

No feedback on this course.

QCS

No feedback for this course.

SEng

Reps: Students quite like it, but I think some students went in thinking it was a systems course and it wouldn’t involve written reports.

Usec

No feedback for this course.

TTDS

Reps: This is a wonderful course and we learned a lot in both semesters. The workload in semester 1 was a bit heavy, but not for everyone; everyone did finish the end. It was good that you never got stuck, and if there was a problem it was just a matter of finding the bug and fixing it.

The feedback and response time on Piazza was brilliant, often just a minute or so. The only feedback I would offer is that it would be great to have a bit more communication about what is going on in the course, like saying that labs are coming up this week.

W. Magdy: The workload was designed to get you ready for the market after graduation, and we do have labs every week. I'll take note about emails saying what is coming up, as that is a good idea.

PROJ

Reps: The project can be a very individual experience, and it depends on the supervisor you have. Some are very accommodating and other are hands off.

In terms of the overall organisation of the course, it would be great if we could be made aware of things earlier. There is a timetable of event son the webpage, but we wouldn't get updates on things happenings until around a week before. The deadline was also announced later on that expected. It would just be nice to have more clarity about things that are happening with regards to the course.

Because the course is one end goal (40 credits at the end of semester 2) and there is no deliverable content in between, if a student or a supervisor goes off track, it can be hard to recover. We were checking in weekly with Bjoern at the weekly rep meetings, but maybe just a small checkpoint somewhere at the end of semester 1 (worth 2% of such) to incentivise people to stay on track might be a good idea. It also might encourage students to not start work so late, making for a heavy workload in semester 2.

3. Comments on Other Courses

CS

Reps: There was a mix of feedback for this course. The first half of the course was very much enjoyed; the first coursework was formative and the second one summative and enjoyed by students.

Around week 7 or 8 when coursework 3 was released, the course went downhill. The coursework was a lot to do for someone who hasn't done security before. This year there feels like a lack of support in Piazza; responses are vague and unhelpful, just directing students to use the tools. Students often try to help each other.

On the one hand people are enjoying the course, but there is a lot of grumbling about coursework 3.

SDM

Reps: The only issue was a timetabling one. There was a Q&A session every Thursday that was more like a sit-down lecture than an informal question session, but it unfortunately clashed with a Computer Security lecture. Hopefully this will change next year, but it was an issue this time around, since the Computer Security course is mandatory for a lot of degree programmes.

4. General Issues about the Year and Specific Courses

Reps: We've already brought up issues with the opening hours of Appleton Tower, and how we would like it to be 24 hour access again. Neil told us that it's in the hands of the University and not the School, but even still, we would add our names to push for 24 hours access to return.

5. Comments on Computer Facilities

Reps: Some DICE machines in some of the labs are temperamental and don't work well. What might be nice is a FAQ page or a guide on how to fix common problems, like a handbook of "try X, Y, or Z."

Also, sometimes Appleton Tower can get very busy, especially at the end of semesters. Remote DICE doesn't work too well with slow internet. There was some talk of getting more DICE machines installed in other places (the library, or Forrest road for instance), and it would be good if this happened to help lessen the demand in Appleton Tower at least.

R. Finlayson: Computing Support used to do an introduction session for new students in welcome weeks, which might be worth bringing back so as to at least give new students a better understanding of how to overcome issues with the computers.

6. Comments on ITO Support

Reps: No feedback, but they have been helpful for the last few years.

7. Any Other Business

None

Meeting adjourned.