

# Informatics Student Course Feedback 2017/18

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2017-18>

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2017/18 academic year, in response to the following questions:

- What would you say to students interested in taking this course?
- What did you find most valuable about the course?
- What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?
- Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

Each course organiser receives this report as well as statistics on multiple-choice responses. All these reports, together with student feedback about individual members of teaching staff, are collected and sent to the Director of Learning and Teaching.

Please note that these are personal responses from individual students: some courses only have a few responses and a small sample can be unrepresentative.

Stereotyping and bias, especially unconscious bias, is a serious concern in any survey gathering personal responses. All students received the rubric below before completing the surveys, and you can read a brief introduction to issues of unconscious bias on the university web pages at <http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>

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## **Rubric given to all students taking the end-of-course feedback survey**

We value your opinions on the courses you take here at the University, as they allow us to shape future delivery and development. We welcome constructive comments about your courses, whether positive or negative, and ask you to give details about any issues in order to help the course organiser to understand and address them.

We encourage you to be aware of the potential for bias in the completion of these questionnaires, so we have developed resources which may be helpful to you:

- Equality, Diversity and Unconscious Bias (<http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>)

You also have a responsibility to provide feedback in a manner which does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy:

- University of Edinburgh Dignity and Respect Policy (<http://edin.ac/1Cq0VZY>)

The results of the questionnaires will never be analysed in a way that seeks to identify individual students from their responses. However, should you wish to remain anonymous, please do not identify yourself in your answers to the survey questionnaire implicitly or explicitly.

## Comments Report

What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?

- Attend the tutorials! And do the tutorial work. It doesn't take very long, and really helps you get to grips with the material.
- Attend tutorials! Tutors are non-judgemental and enthusiastic.
- Complete all the (slightly obscure) tasks that Ian sets; they are actually helpful in the end.
- Do the reading before lectures and if you have time, do more than is required - most of it is interesting and even if not directly used in class, it can help you understand more advanced concepts.
- Do the tutorial exercises and go to the tutorials! The tutorial exercises are quite similar to the actual exam questions and you have already done half your exam preparation if you participate in the tutorials.
- Do the work that is asked, and you'll need to cover very little in revision time!
- Enjoy it! And do the extra reading.
- Go to tutorials, do the homework
- I would advice him/her to attend every tutorial.
- It's a very well organised course with a great lecturer and useful topics. Try the extra tutorial questions too if you have time, as they are good practice and definitely help you gradually prepare for the exam.
- Just do your stuff - go to the lectures, do the tutorial exercises and you'll be fine.
- Make sure you complete the tutorials in proper time and not in a rush, that way you'll take the information in.
- N/A
- Not too sure, it's very well paced and balanced
- Prepare that there is a lot of theory which is need to memorise.
- Study systematically and pay attention to the tutorial exercises.
- Tutorials are the most important thing
- keep working on tutorials and enjoy how this could help you in the future
- not sure
- self-study
- watch lectures online, much easier to keep up with content

## Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Getting started with data science
- I don't know, it was quite basic, there wasn't much that I did not know before, so it was a bit pointless.
- I really liked the clear structure of the course. Especially the tutorials were helpful, as the questions were quite similar to actual exam questions. I also really liked the "real world examples" which made the course much more interesting and not just theoretical.
- I think it was generally a decent course, however the strikes really made the course unorganised and made it a hassle to deal with.
- Ian Stark provides extremely well organised/presented resources that massively aid students in progressing with the course. He is engaging and clear, and has reasonable expectations of his students.
- Ian Stark! (honestly, he is a fantastic lecturer, he's very well organised, passionate, cares about his students and their learning, spends time answering any questions, and even manages to make databases seem mildly interesting)
- Incredibly well organised and stimulating course in a topic I had previously not enjoyed.
- It is a nice overview of the various types of data.
- SQL
- Sql
- The concept of corpora was interesting, and entity relationship models were interesting
- The course content is easy to understand most of the time
- The extensive structure of the course was amazing and really helped to develop a sense of place of each unit.
- The lecture slides are very well put together. Homeworks are great for ensuring repeated exposure to the material.
- The lecturer puts a lot of time and effort into the course which is very much appreciated.
- The lecturer seems to be very interested in it.
- The range of subjects covered without compromising depth
- The skills from INF1-DA are widely applicable in programming. I have some experience from before, but had a big knowledge gap when it came to databases and this course really helped to fill it up a little.
- The tutorial exercises were quite useful - another way to force myself to go through the notes and lectures; a practical test of the skills we were studying. Also they often resulted in some quite cool things - I'm personally quite interested in languages, and SQL and XPath did not disappoint.
- The tutorials and the structure of the lectures was good i.e the colouring of the slides for what material was important or generally the flow of it.
- The tutorials were extremely helpful - my tutor explained the concepts very well and was always happy to give any help or feedback we needed.
- The ways to organize data
- Tutorial is very helpful. It help me to understand the lecture better.
- Tutorial worksheets were well organised and clear.
- Very wide overview of varying range of topics. Clearly presented and well developed. Lots of extra reading provided.
- XML

## Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course? (continued)

- corpus
- lecture slides were detailed enough
- lecturer
- tutorials

## Comments Report

What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- I was thinking there would be more technical analysis skills rather than overview, like of actually processing data to find a result
- -
- For lectures, possibly leave the non-examinable interesting stuff till the end of the lecture if possible
- I feel like this course could benefit from some kind of coursework element, not sure what kind though.
- I hate striking!
- It was often hard to read the slides and listen at the same time because there was a lot of text on the slides. On the other hand, I found the explanations on the slides very helpful for reference, e.g. when doing exam questions.
- Less mentions about stuff outside of the course and less distractions in the slides
- Less revision in every lecture.
- More open-ended extension exercises in tutorials, rather than just based on past exam questions.
- More questions/practice. For example tutorials should have questions that are more about the understanding of the material and online assessments for the 'calculation' questions eg tuple relational calculus and stats. Moreover, sometimes there wasn't enough examples on what to do i.e xpath expressions wasn't in the lectures but was in the tutorial (this was before the strike anyway).
- N/A
- No strikes
- None. Please keep this course exactly as it is!
- Not going on strike, it was annoying from a student's perspective. I can understand why lecturers are going on strike and I hope that they will get a good pension, but it doesn't seem fair that students are punished for stupid things done by UUK. I was a bit disappointed that the otherwise so well organised lecturer let us down that much because of the strike. None of the other courses expected us to catch up material on our own by watching old lecture recordings that don't fit well together. Apart from the strike issue, the course is good. I don't see much possibility for improvement, only making it a bit more challenging would be nice. Maybe providing some additional material or more challenging exercises. Of course, I know one could do something like that in free time on their own, but it is easier to stay motivated if one gets some kind of feedback in an advanced tutorial or something like that.  
And please, if the lecturer could talk more slowly.
- Not sure I would! On the whole it was pretty great.
- Please explain the missing stuff because of the strike next semester.
- Strikes have severely disrupted this course
- The lectures just seemed too dry and boring sometimes because of the content, but the lecturer did his best by going beyond the course and talking about interesting stuff like the Facebook graph search, skyscanner etc.  
Also, sometimes the lecturer talked too fast
- There could be more exercises.
- Try not to run over. We feel rude leaving while you're still talking, but we have other lectures to get to. Perhaps if you don't manage to cover all of the content, finish off in the first five minutes of the next lecture.
- Just leave w3school to us is fine.
- none

## Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- All things are clear
- Did not feel tutor knew subject very well and did not fill me with confidence.
- I had a really great tutor which helped. The tutorial sheets were great for exam prep, and our tutor discussed things beyond that.
- I haven't been able to attend a single tutorial for this course (sick leave and strike)
- I liked that additional exam practice was included at the end of each tutorial sheet.
- My tutor from workshop has been friendly and interactive. However, our tutorials can be summarised into the explanation with reference to the mark scheme that we are the accessed to after tutorial.
- Pretty key to making you actually take in the material rather than just hear it
- Really helpful
- The tutorial sheets are excellent as they contain worked examples
- Tutor is patient and knows much things
- Tutorial is fine, get more details from the lecture.
- Tutorials are pretty boring when you do everything at home and have 0 questions. Would be nice if they weren't obligatory.
- Tutorials are too easy.
- Very good student tutors, and helpful worksheets
- Workshop disruption (due to strike) has not been accounted for in examinable material. This is a shame as the tutorials that did happen were enormously helpful, and I feel I have missed out crucial pieces of the course as a result of missed tutorials. Sara was fantastic. Incredibly clear with explanations and very encouraging.
- good
- none