

# 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>

This information is provided for students and staff at the University of Edinburgh: **you may not redistribute or reuse it without permission**. If you would like the information in another format or want to use it in your own publication then please contact the Informatics Teaching Organisation at <http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/contact>

## **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?

- Be prepared to learn everything on your own. Lynda tutorials were infinitely more helpful than the book.
  - Don't be scared of trying different approaches for the final project - quite often it is not as scary as it sounds.
  - Study the textbook (I prefer to buy your own copy). Plan your work before start coding. Ask the instructor about anything may lead to misunderstanding. Work hard, and enjoy your course.
  - Take this course but make sure to ask very specific questions to the lab assistants to get the needed help.
  - The second assignment is a huge jump from the first. Prepared to work on it early
  - read the book, it is very useful
- do your own research and work before de lab sessions and just clarify your ideas with the demonstrators

## Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- A lot of practical experience, programming an app from scratch is challenging but once you finish you can feel that you have gained a lot of experience
- Assignments gave a good focus and opportunity to learn with good guidance given in the tutorials.
- Gives the students a real feel of what it's like to work on java projects.
- I learned many things I never used before.
- The course introduced object-oriented programming in Java well.
- The final project was very useful (and I would claim that doing it individually would be the best - it pushes you to deliver your own ideas, rather than relying on someone else to come up with a fix). I found it fun to work on it - feeling now much more confident about OOP in general (and using it for developing something user-oriented). Also, I appreciate the fact that the first assignment was a good foundation base for the final project - it was very easy to follow the instructions, hence learn a few useful implementations for the final project.
- The lab tutors were very approachable and helpful
- The practical aspect of learning through the project was very helpful. The tutors in the lab sessions were incredibly helpful especially because there was limited other guidance.
- Although I have taken other programming courses, I learned new concepts in this one very useful.

## Comments Report

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

- Change the text book or give us the answers to the exercises, otherwise we won't have any kind of feedback while studying outside lab hours or if we are without an internet connection to ask in Piazza.
- I would like to have a more structured course with more exercises at the beginning in the lab sessions (non-graded ones) so that we know exactly what level of Java programming we should be at for the first and then second assignment. Also getting the answers to the first assignment back would be helpful to understand the concepts and have an extra example of the programming.
- I would prefer if there was some mandatory sessions during the semester to review the assignment with the instructor. Until the last minute I was discovering some (important) requirements.
- I would think that if there were some lectures on approach to software engineering, tackling problems, designing UX etc (rather than Java itself) - that would have been amazing. Otherwise the only teaching we get is from the lab assistants (who were brilliant), only regarding the implementation, rather than the "big picture".
- Incentivise going to tutorials. The whole point of university is to strongly incentivise the student to learn stuff. Other courses are much stronger on this, since exams and assignments often depend on material covered in lectures and tutorials. Here there are no lectures, and no incentives to go to tutorials until right before assignments are due.
- Maybe a couple more lectures on some fundamental java related aspects would have been helpful.
- More lab tutors per session. 2 is insufficient.  
The lecturer should also chip in and have more lectures (not just 2) to help explain concepts. It is an introductory course after all.
- Some additional lectures to the students new to java on some basics and techniques of programming in java would be useful and would help to improve their interests in the course.
- There was virtually no instruction, not even getting started, which was really disappointing considering this was supposed to be an introductory class. At least getting started there should have been basic instruction to main concepts that would have been useful to know.  
The book was not helpful in the least. I had to find online tutorials to understand what was going on in the projects.
- Give a summary of good practices for java programming.
- Most of the labs are during the assignment and you cannot really talk with the demonstrators trying to improve your work. If your approach is wrong, I feel that it will keep stay the same after the course

## Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- Good time to interact and compare codes with other students.
- Lab assistants were amazing, especially Kristjan Liiva - his advice was always useful, fully explained (with examples and questions to check your understanding).
- The lab assistants were always very helpful. Having more structured labs could be an advantage in this course. Also, in the week leading to assignment 2 being due, it would be helpful to have more labs and lab assistants. Every lab the last week the lab assistants were overwhelmed by the number of people that needed their help and couldn't help everybody appropriately.
- The tutors were very very helpful. The only problem was that there were not enough of them.
- Tutors were the best part. Kristjan was especially amazing. Jaw-dropping devotion to students and just deeply helpful at times when he was most needed. 10/10.