

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?

- Embrace the forum. Ask questions, respond to questions, instigate discussions, question answers.
- Have some experience in programming and Java to be able to achieve a good mark.
- Not value for money.
- Read the Blue Jay book in advance and get as much knowledge about the general constructs of Java before the course begins.
- You have to be fully committed to doing this course especially if you have zero background in programming. There is no way to get around to pass this course. You have to work for it!

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- A starting places for learning Java
- Hands on experience with using Java
- It is a self-learning course in a very well-made guideline with a support from community. I think practicality of this course is very high as now I am confident to create something that can be used for real world applications or at least have enough knowledge to understand how java-programmed applications are made in what logic behind.
- Self discovery of Java
- The comprehensive approach to the whole development process from inception of ideas to the coding.
- The forum. The response time of the tutors was remarkable and always helpful.

Comments Report

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

- As someone new to Java & programming, I feel this course was not properly suited as the course title suggests. References to people who already had experience kept being made, showing this course had a range of students with different experience which I felt it was trying to cater to rather than ones new to the subject.
Also, as a distance learner, I feel more videos/lectures would be good as solely learning from a textbook it hard and I could have done a lot of this without being on this course.
- Better inter communication between students
- Can't really suggest any. I don't think I'm a particularly 'natural programmer'. I struggle with the structured formality of 'proper programming' and I struggled(still struggling!) with this course. I did not find the course format easy to deal with but I suspect that is my problem rather than the material. As someone with no programming experience (other than other DSTI courses) there was a lot of material to digest and felt several times that it was getting too much(even thought of withdrawing at one point to focus on other courses but seem to have passed a watershed moment on the learning curve now, so glad I persevered.)
- I think forum and lab sessions are a good concept but I feel there is a room for improving engagement levels - something like combining lab session and forum together to form a sort of more two-way community feeling where I actually want to do something to find out answers for others' questions. Right now, if I read questions and don't know anything about that, I just skip the post.
- It needs actual structure. If you have no experience with Java (like myself) you are basically just told to go through a book and ask questions. So what is the added value of doing a module at university like this.
- Paradoxically, the forum. As a distance learning student, I would love to see more engagement on discussions about various aspects of the module and coursebook on the forum.

Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- As a distance learner, this was my only 'face time' so was really useful, but would have liked more structure or exercises to go through so we used all the time properly.
For distance learning, think more sessions would be good but Emily had been great.
- Great course, and my tutor was very helpful.
- Really enjoyed the course. I would definitely recommend this course to my friends and hope that the next modules on my MSc follow as a good a process.
- The students are varied and there was no structure. It was a bit like 'come with a question' but there was no exercises and we couldn't show our code for the assignments.
- Yes helped somewhat for pointing me in the correct direction. As a distance learning student I think the course format puts us at a disadvantage over on site students. I felt I was very much on my own at times with only the book and the website videos(and piazza of-course). The tutors were flexible on when they could supply help which is essential for distance learning students fitting in with work commitments.