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

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 good at logic
- Do take it if you're interested in databases and want to learn SQL. You'll learn both so make sure you're comfortable with learning the theory behind databases.
- Go for it, especially if you finally understood Computational Logic at the end of first semester first year and if you enjoyed INF2D -Agents and Reasoning
- Guess you can take it for easy 20 creds. Compared to other courses the coursework is super light and causes no problem.
- If you're into logic and sets and all, definitely take this course.
- It's a really good course if you don't know much about SQL. If you already know plenty, it might not be able to teach you a lot.
- The lecturer explained all concepts and detail and gave examples until most students felt comfortable with the concept. He is also approachable.
One of the most well organized coursework that I have completed. Special care was given not to overbear students and give them the marking criteria. At the same time we learned a lot.
- Would recommend; workload is reasonable and at a good level.
- Continuously study, ask for help as soon as you need it and don't wait, and start early on the homework.
- Do the tutorials.
- Take the course with Paolo if you can, he has pretty fun lectures and does a really good job of explaining the course concepts.
- Thinking critically when using SQL and it is helpful to spend much time figuring out questions.

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- A good balance of theoretical background and practical skills in databases meant it's one of the few courses I've done at uni which was both interesting and actually useful beyond academia.
- Dr Guagliardo is obviously passionate about the subject which made lectures more interesting. Tutorials helped my understanding a lot. The assignments we're good as an intro to SQL.
- Easy coursework, teaches you how to write SQL if you didn’t know before. Quite easy overall
- It gives deeper and more detailed explanation to concepts which we have only learned the basis for.
- It was not just about SQL but about the real world applications and difficulties too
- It's good to finally be comfortable with SQL.
- Learning SQL better
- Learning SQL to a decent extent.
- Learning how to use advanced SQL and the value of a DBMS
- The lecturer explained all concepts and detail and gave examples until most students felt comfortable with the concept. He is also approachable.
One of the most well organized coursework that I have completed. Special care was given not to overbear students and give them the marking criteria. At the same time we learned a lot.
- Seemed very disorganized at the beginning. Although it got much better as the semester continued, it was still a little scattered via Piazza and tutorials.
- The assignments have been very useful for building up my PostgreSQL skills and they were actually pretty fun to do. Additionally, lectures are very helpful and fun to attend since Paolo uses a lot of helpful examples in lecture.
- The assignments!
- Tutorials are good complementary to lectures, and coursework are helpful as well.
- learning SQL

Comments Report

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

- I would have liked examples done on the board in lectures to be available online as they're quite unclear in videos
- If the feedback tells us what end cases were included in the databases on which the tests were done, it would help us learn from our mistakes.
- More challenging assignments.
- More useful workshops?
- No feedback on why marks lost on coursework.

There is too much content for the lecture time given. Almost every lecture over-ran and the content is not very engaging.

- None.
- Remove a lot of theoretical parts (i.e. equivalence of RA and RC, really?) The theory is super super abstract, super hard to understand and utterly useless (or someone please tell us what it is used for!). Not so much SQL as I expected, much more theory than I wanted. They removed parts of XML, which is kind of sad. Perhaps it would be better to explore other types of databases, do more practical stuff than explain in super much detail about formal database constraints. Have a look at the exam papers and you'll understand what I am saying.
- Some handwritten feedback on the coursework - what could have been improved with queries rather than an automated score.
- The lecture recordings could cover the board at all times.
- n/a
- Besides the SQL stuff that is covered, it's tough to see what the point is behind a lot of the other material covered in the course especially when thinking about how it would be used in real life. It just seems like a lot of theoretical concepts that don't have much of a real-world application if I'm not planning on building a DBMS program. The fact that none of the material covered in lectures (except SQL) is used in the assignments helps further this divide between applicable and non-applicable concepts.
- Maybe provide a roadmap as to how the various topics relate to, and build on, each other.
- More practical knowledge. most of the material seems to be highly theoretical
- More structured lectures instead of running over almost every lecture. Providing extra help for the assignments or just understanding the difficult subject matter.
- We didn't always have time to finish topics in class, and I think we rushed sometimes. I wish we had taken more time at the beginning of each class to finish up what we had done the class before and summarize the context for what it was we were learning about!!

Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- Etienne did a good job of making sure everyone understood the basics, while also going into more detail on interesting side notes or real world applications
- I like that some tutorial sheets had more questions that we could solve in the tutorial hour. This means that we can practice on our own later.
- Tutorials are very helpful.
- Tutorials were the most valuable classes in the course
- Tutorial sheets were usually a bit too long. My tutor usually struggled to get through explaining one worksheet during our 50 minute tutorial.
- Tutorials did not help clarify much. The one and only lab was so short that the information provided on piazza was almost more helpful.