

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?

- Go with whatever your supervisor suggests as they have the final say
- It is compulsory but it won't give you much (or any) useful advice honestly. Mostly likely you need to find the answer by talking to your project supervisor.
- Look at the good IPP examples on the wiki. Talk to your supervisor to ask what they want the IPP to be like.
- Select your tutor carefully and don't be afraid to ask them what they plan to do in their tutorial slots. Also, make sure you contact your supervisor timely and often enough. They're supposed to conduct a part of the 'teaching' for IPP, so if they don't contact you, then it's up to you to make sure you get your supervision.
- Since the supervisor is the marker, I'd advise future students to get in touch with their supervisors ASAP to find out what exactly they want/expect. The IPP tutorial classes are only helpful in a vague big picture sense. (Unless you're unlucky and there's another strike and what happened to me happens to you: My supervisor was on strike and ignored me for 3 weeks plus so I could do pretty much nothing except email her multiple times and cross my fingers in the hopes of a reply... In which case, LOL sorry. Nothing you can do about it....)
- The quality of IPP really depends on how good and interested in it your tutor is.
- Unfortunately, you are forced to take this course. Too bad.

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Alex - our tutor - was very involved in the course, very approachable, and it was good to talk about the project to him to understand how to write a solid IPP.
- Communication skills. Since our IRR tutors were in charge of teaching us about the course BUT our project supervisors were marking AND deciding the format (like what needs to be included in the report/how many sections/what sections etc.) - the only valuable skill I gained was learning how to run between the two to find out what exactly I needed to get done.
- Great explanation of scientific writing and doing research (even beyond IPP activity), insightful discussions with the group
- Not useful at all honestly speaking
- Presentations are interesting in tutorials to find out about other students' research
- The tutor helps me a lot in organising my IPP
- Waste 1 hour per week in a regular fashion.
- Writing a project/research proposal it's a valuable skill. Furthermore, it is useful in preparation for the dissertation since there is actually not much time for that.
Planning is a boring but necessary step for a project.

Comments Report

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

- I think there should be coordination between the IPP tutors and the MSc projects supervisor so that everybody is on the same line.
- Instead of 1-hour group meetings, it could be more beneficial to have one-to-one 10-minute meetings.
- More coordination between supervisors and the IPP course.
Make clear what the IPP tutor and the supervisor should do.
What's the purpose of the tutorials in the first place?
- No meetings with IRR/IPP group, instead just meetings with supervisor. Or make sure that the different groups are actually following the same schedule and content.
- No, cancel this course, keep the wiki page and that's enough.
- Not enough time to work on it because the projects were assigned too late in the course
- Return to pass/fail as it is very difficult to establish a standard across the board when the requirements from each supervisor are so different, and numerical marks will be difficult to standardise. Maybe push deadline back a bit later as the period for completing IPP ran concurrently with the strike and many end-of-semester deadlines.
- Standardize the proposals (format) across ALL supervisors and projects and provide students with an objective marking scheme/ list of things we need to do.
- The tutorial section is not suitable here, switch to a workshop, lab or discussion between students with similar project. Instead of gathering the same group of students in IRR and force them to attend a weekly tutorial.
- Unify the content of the tutorials! I think it's very strange that depending on the tutorial you go to, you can have a completely different IPP experience. Some people did not have tutorials for a few weeks, others had them weekly; some tutorials taught things that are important for writing the final report (risk analysis, plagiarism, etc.), others focused on figuring out your topic and research questions. So either unify the tutorial contents, or have the tutors publish a short text about their plan for IPP, so that students can make an informed choice.
- This course was mainly useless! Just a waste of time. The meetings with my supervisor are very beneficial but I still don't understand why we have an IPP tutorial. Except the first tutorial we did not do anything.

Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- No student comments