

# Informatics Student Course Feedback 2020/21

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2020-21>

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2020/21 academic year, in response to the following questions:

- What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?
- 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, tutorials or labs on this course
- Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility
- Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course that would help us improve our approach?

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

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## 1. Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11) [INFR11017\_20-21\_SV1\_SEM1\_ONLINE\_CACORE19] -

1.7) What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Clear, well spaced deadlines and well defined coursework tasks were very valuable.
- Design principles, ethics rules, the experience of how to optimize a system.
- Great instructors, open to feedback, and redesigning Learn is a very cool assignment
- Learning about usability principles.
- Live classroom sessions were helpful and tutorials and coursework gave good practice of material.
- Strengthened my ability to cooperate.
- The coursework task was very interesting and useful.
- The coursework was definitely the most valuable aspect of the course since we got to apply what we were taught in the lectures and tutorials.  
The tutorials were also well organised and their purpose is well-defined in relation to the coursework. I definitely had to apply something from every tutorial in the last coursework.  
Dr Constantin's random HCI facts at the beginning of every lecture were also pretty informative and I liked them a lot.
- The courseworks
- The courseworks are all very applicable to real life prototyping and usability testing.
- The industry insights, and supplied learning materials for reading up more on the techniques we covered so that we can apply them later in life. Learning different ways of thinking for approaching usability problems, or just things to look out for in the first place is extremely valuable.
- The professors has been very much organized and helpful
- The real-world applicable learnings (designing UX, working in teams, running studies, legal issues, evaluating UX, interacting with people — everything I've taken away from this course will be extremely valuable to me).
- The structure is organized well. It describes the whole process of design. The coursework is very useful.
- The topic of the course is interesting, the course material (slides, videos and reading) were generally good.
- There are both group projects and individual assignments.
- We covered lots of practical and very useful topics, that we applied in the coursework - the topics and assessment were very well aligned.
- teaches useful real world skills
- the content of the lecture was important and useful, but it wasn't employed correctly in the course work

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

- Coursework 1 instructed "Export all wireframes to PNG", and we were required to submit this exported version of the balsamiq project.

This was clearly so that future courseworks could still use that balsamiq project in case the trial expired, or other technical issues.

However, we SHOULD have exported to BMPR. This is a balsamiq project file that can be reuploaded/imported and further designed upon and changed. The zip file containing PNGs is not helpful (unless manually editing using an image tool like Photoshop, as some students asked about doing on Piazza).

I am sure this eliminated lots of options for people during coursework 3. Luckily in my case one group had a working google drive link to a BMPR (the other two had links to expired balsamiq.cloud projects — probably because the instructions on how to set up balsamiq, using specifically a GOOGLE DRIVE INTEGRATION, were not released/made clear until coursework 1 was well underway).

So improvements:

- share BMPR (not PNGs) between coursework groups
- release instructions on setting up Balsamiq on Google Drive ahead of any coursework releases, and make the instructions visible/obvious

In the end neither of these were really consequential, merely inconvenient, because of the excellent communication with the course staff, ever-present on Piazza and in live classes to resolve any issues brought up. However, it would surely be more ideal to not have these issues in the first place.

- Feedback for coursework would have been helpful for subsequent coursework. Group project with user studies was hard to do remotely.

- Feedback that is more personal to my submission as well as giving a reason for every mark lost on a coursework.

- Give proper feedback and give marks back on time

- Grades are not released on time. I'd appreciate if we could receive feedback sooner.

- Grading has been very slow and vague

- I feel that it was not well explained how to do evaluation. This portion of the course seemed to lack clear structure. I did not quite understand how the presented qualitative data analysis methods are used and for what purpose.

It was not always clear from coursework feedback how one could have done better.

- I think the course focuses far too much on running usability studies that I feel like I have not learned anything else besides that. It might be the case that HCI is perhaps all about usability studies, but I had incredibly high expectations from the course when I was reading its description, thinking that I could learn a great deal of UX design principles with respect to the newest developments in computing --- say, the advent of touchscreen, and NLP virtual assistants (e.g. Amazon Alexa). In general, what I expect from a course I take in the University is that it will either (a) make me a better practitioner of computer science, or (b) broaden my horizon such that I know there is more to CompSci than programming and teach me things that I probably would not learn in the industry, or (c) both! Reflecting upon HCI, I sadly cannot say that the course has helped me in any of those ways.

What improvements could be made? Assuming that you won't simply redesign that curriculum, please at the very least update the course descriptions. This is the summary from PATH:

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The design and implementation of efficient, effective and user friendly computer systems, including software objects and physical internet-enabled things, depends upon understanding both the technology and its users. Only then can designers be confident that these information appliances will be properly matched to the skills, knowledge and needs of their users. The study of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) seeks to combine perspectives and methods of enquiry drawn from disciplines such as Interaction Design, Psychology and Sociology with the tools, techniques and technologies of Computer Science to create an approach to design which is both relevant and practical.

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- We have not learned how to **design** "efficient, effective and user friendly computer systems"; in fact, the focus is exclusively on "understanding both the technology and its users". Users, users, and users. It's like watching Steve Ballmers saying developers repeatedly: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhh\\_GeBPOh](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhh_GeBPOh)

The most prominent feeling I have had was that we were being taught the fundamentals of HCI (yay) but without being taught what the experts have learned from years and years of cumulative collective experience. To make an analogy, it's like studying Software Engineering and being taught the first principles but not the design patterns. Reinventing this wheel wasn't fun.

I am incredibly beset that I took this course and regret it deeply that I wasted 10 credits at level 11 of my final year on it.

- I understand that there are a lot of students taking the course and a limited number of markers. All the same, it's not very nice to get the feedback for the first two coursework pieces a day before the deadline for the last, which is (in a general sense) a combination of CW 1 and 2 and have to redo a large portion of your already done report. Personalised feedback is almost nonexistent for the coursework and seems arbitrary at times.

Really, the resources allocated to a course should be proportional to the number of students taking it. Is this a failure of our School? Should the number of students per course be restricted somehow? I am not very knowledgeable about this so I will not speculate on it further. What remains is that it's a shame that the feedback was such low quality, I really enjoyed the coursework and would have liked to learn from my mistakes.

- I wish there to be more design works of different systems

- I would love to have the lecture mention more about each week's related topics/examples.
- It was almost perfect, if it wasn't for very delayed feedback with some marking mishaps along the way.
- No idea.
- Proper coursework feedback and actual explained marks
- The course should be 20 credit
- The feedback is vague and is not very informative and useful.
- The feedback was certainly lacking, I got only one sentence of feedback for my report and then the feedback was deleted. Also would have been nice to get the CW1 feedback before CW3 because we had to improve our CW1 designs.
- The group coursework was pretty massive for a 10 credit course. If the 2nd assignment was easier, I think it would be okay.
- The quality of feedback should be improved as well as the feedback dates should be earlier.
- This course does not really well-suited for virtual-only learning, I do not know how you see this course can ever be well run without at least some physical activities. Thus, I would ensure that hybrid learning is actually possible for this course before running it again
- making coursework more related to the content especially CW3.  
giving more constructive feedback and on a shorter notice, it doesn't make sense to submit CW3 while awaiting the mark of CW1.  
making labs a compulsory part of the course their content is very interesting but not all students attend them.  
balancing the weeks content some weeks have multiple hours of lectures some less than an hour.  
the amount of work isn't proportional to the course credit I spent more time on this course than on the 20 credits courses and got better marks on them.

## 2. Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11) -

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

- A lot of writing assessment
- Even though the course is not hard, you should learn it in detail so that you can get good marks.
- Find group members as fast as possible.
- Get a good team for the courseworks and practice with figma. Figma is the easiest to use in my opinion. Also set your figma link to view only so other students don't edit your project.
- Go to the tutorials, while they're not mandatory if you have a good TA they're quite fun
- Prepare yourself with questions prior to the class.
- Read the requirements carefully before the coursework
- Start coursework early, listen to the lectures.
- Start the coursework early
- This course is very enjoyable. It's good to take to balance out any math heavy courses.
- This course is very practical and hands and not just about designing computer systems.
- Use all the resources, including discussion forums, tutorials, and essential readings. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Watch out that this 10-credit course is as hard as most 20-credit courses. Start coursework early, ask questions and get feedback as much as possible.
- When doing coursework, make sure you have answered the question that is being asked.
- everything is in the lectures. they are easily labelled out by topics so go through them to know better what the coursework requires.
- handpick your course group most of the time will be lost on trying to get them to work.

### 3. Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11) -

<sup>3.2)</sup> Please add any other comments you have about workshops, tutorials or labs on this course

- I don't think the tutorials had much value, but I suppose that's more of a fault with what's possible or not with remote learning.
- I enjoyed the practical tutorials. Learning through experience was really nice. However, the tutorial on qualitative data analysis did not help me understand how it is useful.
- My tutorials were very dry, I might as well have just done them by myself, reading through the worksheet, rather than attend and listen to someone else reading through it. This probably depends on the tutor, I guess.
- Those are helpful.
- practical and useful
- some tasks take alot longer than the allocated time slot.
- the tutors weren't fully invested in the tutorial and couldn't encourage the student's (at least in comparison with labs in my other courses)

#### 4. Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11) -

4.1) Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility.

- Having access to all the lecture recordings ahead of time and seeing them all organized by week in Media Hopper Reply was AWESOME! More courses should do this!
- I really appreciate how quickly the instructors are responding to students' questions on piazza. Lack of TAs for grading definitely slowed down grading, and I feel like I am lost sometimes when I am doing the coursework with in insufficient feedback.
- Learn marking system is clearly awful. Wiped all my feedback (apparently).
- Very good
- easy to access although coursework section is very confusing (some info says the coursework in not publish and some says it is)

## 7. Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11) -

7.1) Reflecting on your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course, what has worked well for you?

- All was online.
- Everything.
- Flipped classroom works really well in remote model.
- Getting hold of group members was a bit harder than it should have been, and I think the tutorials would have been better in person, but otherwise everything was great.
- I liked the flipped classroom format with live Q&A sessions. Preparing for them in advance made them interesting.
- I think it is only online teaching and learning, but delivered well.
- Quite ok
- The forum has been helpful that students can post questions and lecturers answer them quick quickly. Thank you all for the effort this year!
- The lecture recordings could be replayed for many times.
- The online tutorials were helpful but most of the time we can't finish the materials on time. The lecture recordings are just recordings from previous years, and I found them pretty well organized. The live lecture clashed with another synchronous lecture that I have in the second half of the semester, so I can't attend, and thus not able to ask questions. Since everything is online, there is not any "hybrid" teaching; I was hoping the tutorials, which are pretty small, could be moved offline though.
- This course was all online, however it still worked well because the course was well adjusted for this.
- This was not an instance of hybrid learning it was a virtual-only course. The tutorials were insightful and interactive despite being virtual.
- no hybrid approach, was all online
- recorded lectures are the best. I can pause to relisten parts im unsure of. and also watch them at my own pace since there's no live lectures.
- this is a group heavy course so it was hard doing it online

7.2) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience of hybrid teaching and learning on this course that would help us improve our approach?

- Clarify the marking scheme approach at the beginning of the course, and there will be fewer problems from complaining students.
- Don't call it hybrid teaching when everything is online.
- I do not know how you see this course can ever be well run without at least some physical activities. I would ensure that hybrid learning is actually possible for this course before running it again
- Maybe change the coursework somehow because it was difficult to manage a group project and lab studies without any in person Meeting.
- More notification with confirmation reflection
- No
- None.
- Sometimes there will be microphone issues with lecturers.
- no hybrid approach, was all online

10. Thank you -

10.1)

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your response and comments will be fully considered.

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Please provide any additional comments you may have about the course, the teaching on the course or the resources that support it in the box below.

- I spent 112 hours on this course. i rarely did any reading or pre-tutorial preparation.
- Quite good it would be better with notification mechanism