

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

1. Introduction to Modern Cryptography [INFR11131_20-21_SV1_SEM2_ONLINE_CACORE19] -

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

- A lot of theoretical explanations
- An interesting and broad view of different algorithms and methods.
- Let me have a certain understanding of information security.
- The course was well structured, it was understandable and challenging at the same time.
- The feedback on incorrect coursework answers are comprehensive and useful!
- The materials of lectures and assignments are released on a regular basis and well-organized.
- some important concepts became clear. but a lot of the proofs looked very similar and therefore confusing.
- • Super interesting material.

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

- 1. Some tutorials/example questions could be added.
- 2. Lecturers could explain more details instead of reading the powerpoint because some of the concepts are quite hard to understand.
- 3. The number of assignments could be less, and the weight of each assignment could be more because the time for the four assignments is quite constrained.

- Add tutorials.

- All the proofs looked very similar.
one thing we should focus on is proving why something doesn't work.
I think its easier to understand why things do once you understand that.

- Although hearing an lecturer explain slides, especially when discussing formula, the actual further insight through lectures is not substantial such that just reading the lecture slides is sufficient to get most of the course content.

- I think the video of the lecture needs to be improved and there should be more explanations and notes rather than just reading the PPT in the video.

- The assignment briefs could be a little more detailed, as many of us asked for clarification on various points, but were good overall.

- There is a lot of reading from the slides during lectures, in fact, I stopped watching lectures because the content was the exact same, with barely any extra examples or explanations of the content. Furthermore, the coursework could be more engaging. It only focuses on proofs and theoretical concepts, but I think it would be valuable to have some hands-on experience to fully understand some concepts.

- • More and more examples and exercises.
 - As an example, I did not find the given examples in the lectures enough to truly understand proof by reduction.
 - Given that it's such a fundamental technique in cryptography, much more emphasis and exercises should have been given to aid in understanding it.
 - Even if you choose not to host tutorials, releasing an exercise sheet with solutions a week later would help tremendously.

2. Introduction to Modern Cryptography -

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

- Make sure you are confident in your ability to understand and formulate your own mathematical proofs, if not you may struggle getting back up to speed and doing well in the courseworks.
- The maths side can be difficult, as can the intuitive leaps, but it's a very interesting course with friendly and helpful lecturers.
- This is a very interesting class, and it requires your intelligence. You also get a sense of accomplishment when you successfully attack or come up with a new defense.
- You can find more questions on the Internet, or you can read the textbook for better understanding.
- its hard definitely. but rewarding. not too bad.

3. Introduction to Modern Cryptography -

^{3.1)} Please add any other comments you have about the presentation of course materials online and their accessibility.

- Good accessibility, course materials is structured well in a schedule layout and everything is easy to find, personally one of the best ways to present the information!
- It was a bit annoying that the lecturers usually simply read out the slides without any additional information.
- None.
- good.

6. Introduction to Modern Cryptography -

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

- All online lectures. Not feeling well.
- Having newly-recorded lectures was great, it felt like the lecturers actually cared about the content and we could be more confident that we weren't missing new advances.
- It worked well because I can re-watch the lecture for many times.
- The courseware is very useful, I can check my notes at any time.
- no hybrid teaching, online only. Learning has been hindered as this course would benefit greatly from tutorials explaining coursework content
- nothing. keeping up with classes and assignments has been very tough.

6.2) 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?

- Live interactive classrooms work well- we clear our doubts and it is more to the pace.
- N/A
- None.

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.

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.

- None.
- Thank you for all of your work and help!