Informatics Research Methods

Class Representative Review 2002-03
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Overview

This was generally quite a successful course in that I feel it achieved what it set out to do. Some people may have felt that certain parts of the module were not particularly relevant to them, but I think this depends on what the individual's expectations are. For a student looking for a general overview and orientation towards research in informatics, it was a worthwhile experience. This was especially true for anyone looking into possible research in a particular area, as it provides motivation and a structured context in which to do so.

Lectures

The lectures were on the whole useful and informative. They helped to form a general picture of what research meant in the context of informatics, which by nature is very different for more classical sciences such as Chemistry & Physics. The initial lectures given by Alan Bundy in particular raised issues that were perhaps intuitive, but would not be immediately apparent without years of research experience. The Guest lectures were relevant, but were understandably brief given the time available.

Paper Reviews

The paper reviews gave a good opportunity to form an opinion on research being carried out in the field. The chosen papers where both interesting and well suited for the purpose. The feedback given was helpful in advising further reviews and I believe the exercise as a whole inspired confidence in completing this type of task in future work.

Presentations

Good presentation skills can only come through practice, and therefore any opportunity to do so is probably a good thing. The feedback given from both Alan and our peers was mostly informative and useful. In future though it may be useful to give more guidance in completing the task. Perhaps a lecture dedicated to presentation skills would be welcome.

Grant Proposal

The difficulty of this task was probably increased with the loss of the Artificial Intelligence library at South Bridge. In addition, in the case of MSc students at least, it was difficult to find a problem to focus on a specific problem suitable for the task. Nevertheless it was another worthwhile exercise that give valuable experience.