

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 18 November 2009

G22 Regent Court
14:15

MINUTES

Present:

Mike Holcombe (WMLH)	Chairman	Jonathan Chow Man Chun (JCMC)	Level 1 Student
Kathryn Roden (KMR)	Minutes Secretary	Tom Crayford (TC)	Level 1 Student
Zoe Fletcher (ZCF)	Departmental Administrator	Vaclav Hudec (VH)	Level 1 Student
Steve Maddock (SCM)	Year 1 Tutor	Henry Sternberg (HS)	Level 2 Student
Amanda Sharkey (AJCS)	Year 3 and 4 Tutor	Paul Dilly (PD)	Level 3 Student
Siobhan North (SDN)	Director of Teaching	Tony Mustow (TM)	Level 3 Student
Mark Hepple (MRH)	Deputy MSc Director	Dung Nguyen (DN)	Level 3 Student
John Derrick (JD)	Head of Department	Leon Derczynski (LD)	PhD Student
Dave Abbott (DJA)	Technical Support Manager	Anne Mugai (AM)	Union Link
Helen Moore (HM)	Faculty Librarian		
George Wilson (GW)	Senior Programmer		

Apologies: Richard Clayton (Director of Teaching), Karthik Divakaruni (MSc Student), Xin Sun (MSc Student)

1. Welcome and apologies

Noted: WMLH welcomed the committee and acknowledged the apologies.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

Noted: (Item 2 on previous minutes) SDN commented that there will now be a trial session in March for first and second year students, where they can look at their

exam papers and see their marks. She also commented that any students who are worried about their exam marks should speak to the module lecturer.

Noted: (Item 6.6 on previous minutes) WMLH commented that the guidelines for the Transfer Report for PhD students state that it should be 50 pages which were decided at the last ResCom.

Action: WMLH to ask Georg Struth to circulate email to all PhD students with the information about the length of the Transfer Report.

3. Teaching related issues Level One

3.1. Course Delivery

Noted: COM1005. Some students have commented that this module isn't very interactive. AJCS commented that as it is a lecture based course it is hard to be interactive. TC also commented that some of the guru lectures are hard to link with what the students are studying. AJCS responded that it is hard to make the guru lectures fit with the curriculum.

Noted: COM1004. JCMC commented that some students have been struggling with practical classes. SCM stated that it is a hard module to teach due to the range of students on the course. The practical classes are designed to help students learn things.

3.2. Library and IT

Noted: HM reminded students about the computer booking system in the Information Commons and that students should cancel their booking if they don't turn up. However, she did mention that if a booked computer is not taken, it will become available after a short time.

Noted: Some students have commented on the number of chairs in the Lewin Computer Room and wondered if they could have some more for when more than one person needs to sit round a computer. Also if students want to use their lap top they are using up chair space. This can cause problems during lab sessions. DJA responded that this would not be possible due to health and safety limitations. SCM commented that to get round this problem he split his first practical into two sessions. At the moment this seems like the only solution, but there are extra resource costs involved.

Noted: JCMC asked if a list of printers could be put up as it isn't always clear which ones to use.

Action: JCMC to show GW what the problem is after the meeting.

3.3. Resources

Noted: VH commented that there can be problems with the touch screen units on the printers in the Information Commons.

Action: HM to take this issue to staff in the Information Commons.

Noted: DE asked if students are allowed to book DCS rooms for meetings (especially in relation to COM1001).

Action: ZCF to look at which rooms are available for students to book if 154 can't be used and to see if the Computer Science Society room can be made bookable.

3.4. Other

Noted: JCMC reported that one of the Chinese students is struggling with the English aspect of the course, and hasn't been able to enrol on any English courses as they are all full. SDN commented that the Study Skills courses from Student Services are highly recommended and HM suggested the English Language Teaching Centre.

Noted: TC reported that it may be interesting if students could get interviews with feedback from people in industry. He commented that Reading University run 'interview days'. SDN commented that this is in trial at the moment. WMLH suggested contacting the careers service for additional help with interviews.

4. Teaching related issues Level Two

4.1. Course Delivery

Noted: Some students have issues with the Pattern Processing module. There have been some issues with the timings of deadlines for assignments. SDN commented that since the course lecturer has left the department it has been hard to find cover. They are trying their best to help students. JD commented that they are continuing to keep an eye on this module. SDN also commented that they may change the weighting of the marks and allocate the best mark to the students.

Noted: Some students find it hard to concentrate when there is no gap between double lectures; COM3410 was used as an example. The course lecturer had specifically requested this time slot and it is hard to change half way through the course.

Action: SDN to speak to Tony Simons.

5. Teaching related issues Level Three

5.1. Course delivery

Noted: Some students felt COM3250 is poorly presented.

Action: WMLH to take comments to lecturer.

Noted: Many students are having problems with COM4290, with many students dropping the module. JD and SDN commented that the course is being reviewed to make it more relevant in the longer term.

5.2. Resources

Noted: Some students have reported issues with programs not working (Exceed and Linux don't boot) and that some of the computers are very slow. DA commented that there will be a new Linux desk top by Christmas. They are aware that there is a problem with slow computers, and they are looking into the situation. He also explained that the rooms get upgraded every three years, so the next upgrades won't be planned until the summer.

5.3. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement

Noted: One student felt that their supervisor didn't really care about their students. SDN commented that they would like to know if lots of students are having problems with a particular supervisor.

Noted: Students were disappointed with the module choice this year, and felt that the cancellation of some modules removed potential interesting modules. WMLH commented that staff leaving has had consequences on the module choice.

6. Teaching related issues PGT

6.1. Other

Noted: Some students felt that there is not enough time to get from lectures in the Mappin Building to the Arts Tower. ZCF commented that she doesn't normally book lectures in the Arts Tower, but for this module it was necessary. She suggested that if the students continue to have problems they should speak to their lecturer as there may be a room available in Hicks.

7. Teaching related issues PGR

Noted: Some students have reported that it is hard to get an RTP waiver. They feel that having to do an RTP can be a waste of time. SM commented that the RTP is not just about teaching, but about graduate skills too.

WMLH commented that in some other departments there are RTP modules related to submitting the transfer report.

Action: WMLH to speak to the Director of PGR admissions (Georg Struth) about RTP modules.

8. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 17 March 2010.