

The University of Sheffield
Department Of Computer Science

Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting
Monday 24 January 2011
G22 Regent Court
13:15

MINUTES

Present:

Kathryn Roden [KMR]	Acting Chair and Minutes Secretary	Carl Clegg [CC]	Year 1 Computer Science
Mark Hepple [MRH]	Director of MSc	Robert Spick [RS]	Year 1 Software Engineering
Steve Maddock [SCM]	Year 1 Tutor	Adam Petterson [AP]	Year 1 Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence
Zoe Fletcher [ZCF]	Departmental Administrator	Henry Sternberg [HS]	Year 3 Enterprise Computing
George Wilson [GAW]	Senior Programmer	Ruoran Lin [RL]	MSc Advanced Computer Science
Dave Abbott [DJA]	Technical Support Manager		
Helen Moore [HM]	Faculty Librarian		

Apologies: Li Li (MSc Student Representative), Tom Crayford (Level 2 Student Representative).

1. Welcome and apologies

Noted: In the absence of the Chair of the meetings AJHS and the Director of Teaching (SDN) KMR acted as chair.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

Noted: (item 2 in previous minutes) GAW confirmed that he has spoken to CiCS regarding getting a top up machine in the Lewin Computer Room and they can't do this.

Noted: (item 3.1.2 in previous minutes) ZCF spoke to the Department of Psychology regarding PSY1 being oversubscribed and Computer Science students not being able to register on the module. They responded by saying that they over recruited by approximately 50 students this year and hope to not let this happen again.

Noted: (item 3.3.1 in previous minutes) AJHS spoke to the lecturer of COM3310 regarding the issues raised by HS: that lectures often over run and that there seems to be too much content in the lectures for the time allocated. The IBM lecturer is aware of the problem, but at the moment cannot devote time to restructuring the course for this year, but will consider doing this for next year.

Noted: (item 3.3.2 in previous minutes) AJHS contacted AV services to make them aware of the audio frequently cutting out in St Georges Church. HS confirmed that this is no longer an issue.

Noted: (item 3.4.1 in previous minutes) in response to students comments regarding the time it takes to log into the DCS machines at busy times DJA commented that they have started a project to monitor this issue. It is an ongoing process but they are aware it is happening and trying to resolve the issue.

3. Teaching Related Matters

3.1. Level 1

3.1.1. Course delivery

Noted: The ITMB L1 representative, Nick Ross, (not present at meeting) commented that some of the ITMB students feel that there is too much emphasis on Java.

Action: Action to be taken to TeachCom for discussion.

Noted: It was reported that some students have expressed concern regarding the demonstrator used for COM1002. Some students find the demonstrator hard to understand and others have noted that he regularly has to correct his own working and is often corrected by students in the session.

Action: KMR to feedback to course lecturers

3.1.2. Library and IT

Noted: It was noted that the printing service at the University takes too long. As the student representative (Nick Ross) was not present at the meeting we were unable to discern if this was in relation to using printers in the department or in other computer rooms, or actually about the University Print Service.

Action: Nick Ross to clarify this point at the next meeting.

Noted: Some students have been confused by the COM1001 website as it needs a different encoding to view it properly.

Action: L1 Representatives to send a detailed email to KMR so she can pass it onto the course lecturers.

3.1.3. Resources

Noted: Many students have complained about LT17 as there is a lot of noise from the builders around the lecture theatre.

Action: Level 1 Student Representatives to speak to lecturers involved and ask them to feed back this issue to ZCF. ZCF will then see if there is an alternative venue for the lectures.

Action: ZCF will also email RoomPark and cc in Malcolm Butler (Faculty Director of Operations) regarding LT17 as there has been an ongoing history of problems with this venue for lectures.

3.1.4. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement

Noted: It was reported that some students enjoy the regular assessments for COM1003 however some students reported to feel a bit overwhelmed by the number of assessments in all areas.

Action: KMR to feedback to lecturer

Noted: Some students were concerned with lectures happening in reading weeks. SCM commented that the reading weeks are suggested reading weeks only and that some lecturers may move lectures into reading weeks if they have had to cancel a previous one. MRH added that reading weeks are done on a per course basis.

Action: SCM to ensure that this information is clear in the UG hand book for next year.

Action: ZCF to remind staff that this information needs to be clear for students.

3.2. Level 2

3.2.1. Course delivery

Noted: It was noted that students were not able to find the syllabus covered in each lecture for COM2003. However the student representative was not at the meeting to ask.

Action 1: KMR to ask student to expand on this comment for the next meeting.

Noted: MRH commented that there was a page in Georg's personal space (exercise sheets), but it wasn't linked from the departmental pages.

Action: ZCF to ask the departmental support secretary to look into this.

3.2.2. Library and IT

Noted: It was reported that bookings for group rooms can overlap and sometimes the booked rooms can be locked.

Noted: HM commented that she didn't think it was possible for room bookings to overlap and that it could be due to meetings which have over run. If a meeting has over run then it is the next people's responsibility to make sure they leave as staff do not check to ensure a meeting has finished on time.

Action: HM to raise issue with IC.

3.3. Level 3

3.3.1. Course delivery

Noted: Some students have expressed concern regarding the aerospace engineering module. Some of the quizzes can be a bit ambiguous and there can be some problems with the way questions are worded and there are also often spelling mistakes.

Action: KMR to get more detailed information from HS and feedback to appropriate member of staff.

3.3.2. Other

Noted: One student reported that they were not able to access a previous dissertation on-line. GAW replied saying that he puts them on-line and that there was a bit of a delay this year due to changes in the way the data is processed. KMR commented that in the situation where the project is not on-line students can ask to see the hard copy which is kept on file in the store room. KMR commented that confirmation from the supervisor will be required before the projects can be handed out.

3.4. Level 4

3.4.1. Course delivery

Noted: Students have requested that when they receive their marks back, from the aerospace computing module quizzes, they would also like to have their answers returned.

Action: KMR to email course lecturer.

3.5. MSc

3.5.1. Course delivery

Noted: Some student's have expressed concern regarding the demonstrators in their lab classes. The MSc student was not present at the meeting to ask which modules the students were having problems with.

Action: KMR to email student to find out which modules the students have the issue with and feed back to lecturer.

Noted: It was requested that lectures put all their teaching material on MOLE rather than in different places. ZCF commented that this can't be enforced. HS commented that one lecturer had their own personal website where they put teaching information but they had a link to it on their MOLE page. MRH added that where teaching material is not on MOLE there should be a link to the lectures personal sites.

Action: ZCF to send a reminder email to staff.

3.5.2. Library and it

Noted: Students commented that the computers and file systems go wrong frequently. For example the PDF viewer wasn't working and

neither was Office. Also, students were not able to log into Linux. DJA commented that this is an ongoing problem that the support team are aware of. There was an episode last semester where many of the systems went down for about 10 days. Support have now made sure that there are alternative PDF and Office suites in case this happens again. Support have also upgraded Linux to a new level of authentication.

Noted: Students have commented that some of the computers can be very slow to respond, sometimes taking up to 5 minutes to save a .txt file.
Action: DJA to look into this problem.

Noted: Students have noted that there are potential design flaws with MOLE. MRH commented that we should wait to see what the new version of MOLE is like before taking any action on this point.

Noted: Students commented that the cover sheet printing system wasn't working. ZCF commented that there were problems at the start of the year and we couldn't get them fixed as the member of staff responsible for the system (from CBE) was away.
Action: Any further issues with the cover sheet printing system will be reported to the faculty user group by a member of the administration team.

3.5.3. Resources

Noted: Students have reported that they can often hear loud noises from outside the lecture theatre but did not specify which lecture theatre.

Action: KMR to email student to find out which lecture theatre the students were having the problems with.

Noted: Problems with the air conditioning in the Lewin Computer Room have been reported. DJA commented that the system can take a while to respond.

Noted: Students have commented that they cannot use the computer room when it has been booked and would like to arrange a room which the students can use all of the time. SCM responded that if it is just general computing students can use any of the other computer rooms in the University.

3.5.4. Strengths of the course and areas for improvement

Noted: The student commented that each module asks for different tools and that it would be better to have a page to give an instruction and direct links to these tools, especially when there are restriction on the tool version.

Action: Student rep (Li Li) to clarify this point at the next meeting.

3.5.5. Other

Noted: The students wanted more information on how to register for the British Computer Society. KMR commented that application forms are normally on the shelves outside reception.

Action: KMR to email the MSc tutor, the UG Director of Teaching and the departmental BCS contact to ensure that information about registering is up to date in the student hand books.

Noted: Students would like access to an internal phone with a list of useful contacts such as SSiD and CCiD. GAW commented that there is an internal phone in the Lewin Computer Room.

Action: DJA to put up a notice in the Lewin Computer Room about the phone and to point students to the on-line phone directory for useful numbers.

Noted: It was noted that some students have problems when logging into the wiki pages on the intranet. Some students need their dcs passwords and others need their CiCS ones. DJA commented that the wiki is going to be updated soon and so this shouldn't be an issue for much longer.

4. Date of next meeting

Noted: The next meeting is on Wednesday 16 March 2011.