Informatics
Teaching Festival 2021
Welcome Talk

Björn Franke, 07/06/2021
Informatics Teaching Festival 2021
Why this Teaching Festival?

• Experience of **unplanned change** in teaching
  • Online teaching delivery - new logistics and work flows
  • Online assessment - from clean room exams to take-home exams
  • “**Crisis** mode” → increased workload → increased **stress** levels

• **Reinvention** of our teaching in reaction to the Covid-19 crisis
  • Reduced curriculum delivery - more team teaching
  • Course and assessment changes motivated by online migration

• How does the recent experience **change the future** of our teaching?
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More changes experienced in the current year

- Decolonising the Curriculum
- Ethics Templates in UG/MSc Projects
- Export Control Licenses for Teaching
- Decentralised Teaching Duty Allocation
- New Teaching Support Policy
- Centralised Extensions and Special Circumstances Processing
- On-Going Mitigating Measures around Covid-19 Situation
- People and Money
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More changes to come

• Attainment Gap
  • Academic Student Support
• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
• Online Degree Programmes
• University Curriculum Transformation Initiative
• Post-Covid Teaching in Informatics
Workload and Assessment
Hypothesis:

Much of our students’ workload, and also of our own, is a direct result of how we approach assessment and, in particular, the volume of assessment we hand out.
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Managing our Students’ Time
SCQF CREDIT POINTS EXPLAINED:
Notional Learning Hours
The allocation of SCQF Credit Points does not refer to a perception of ability, nor is it based on age or experience but is worked out by those with an expert knowledge of the subject who make a professional judgement on how many hours it would take the typical learner, (not those who complete the learning outcomes quickly nor those that require additional time), to achieve the learning outcomes at a given level. This is described in the SCQF Handbook (2015) as:

“... the time required for a typical learner at a specified SCQF level to achieve the learning outcomes. The amount of time taken by actual learners in reality may differ, but this does not affect the number of SCQF Credit Points awarded.”

The estimation of the time required is referred to as notional learning hours. One SCQF Credit Point represents a notional 10 hours of learning.
For example, activities before delivery might include:

- preparation such as reading materials provided prior to delivery;
- self reflection on prior knowledge and experience and how it links to the delivery;
- personal programme planning;
- using libraries or learning resource centres for reading and research.

Some of the more obvious activities for actual delivery are:

- attending and participating in formal teaching sessions;
- practical work in laboratories and other locations;
- relevant Information Communication Technology (ICT) activities;
- self directed study using online or text-based open learning materials;
- involvement in informal learning such as community groups, youth groups, outdoor activities.

For after delivery, notional hours might include:

- private study and revision; on what has been learned;
- assessment of learning;
- application of knowledge and understanding and skills within the workplace.

It should be noted that this list of suggestions is not exhaustive nor are the activities mutually exclusive.

Essentially, covers everything we consider “student experience”!
Example: Assessment Workload Equivalence Guide, Ulster University

- 20 credit point course
- 200 notional hours
- 20% - 40 notional hours for assessment
- Assessment equivalence table

Informatics courses are typically way beyond!

Do we need similar assessment guidance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>WCE</th>
<th>Notional Assessment Work Hours</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written essay</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam / test</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journal/log</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab/practical report</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group assignment</td>
<td>750 words per member</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual presentation</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>20 h</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viva/oral exam</td>
<td>20-30 minutes</td>
<td>20 h</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group presentation</td>
<td>10 minutes per member</td>
<td>20 h</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio of evidence</td>
<td>6000 words</td>
<td>40 h</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal, small project</td>
<td>4000 words</td>
<td>40 h</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project/dissertation</td>
<td>8000 words</td>
<td>80 h</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Highlights 1

• Notional hours may not be what you think they are
  • Hours for a typical learner at that target level of your course
  • If your TA/PhD student can do the coursework in 10 hours, the notional hours of the coursework are likely to exceed 30 hours for an MSc student

• Only 80% of notional hours are actually available for a course
  • 20% programme level and other activities
  • Not all of the notional hours fall within semester weeks
    • e.g. significant amount of exam revision after end of semester
    • This further reduces the time available for course delivery
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Highlights 2

• Max. 20% of notional hours for assessment
  • 2h exam corresponds to notional 20h
    • Entire assessment budget for a 10 credit point course
  • 2h exam & 2 1000-word reports use up entire assessment budget for a 20 credit point course

• We **systematically overassess** across all of our courses
  • High student workload!
  • High staff and teaching support workload!
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Some suggested strategies

• Review the amount of assessment for your course - do less - align with learning outcomes!
• Avoid student expectation of becoming a 24/7 lecturer
  • Avoid email overload - establish communication ground rules, e.g. 24h turnaround during weekdays - no emails on weekends; all communication via VLE channel/Forum - no individual email; 3bf4 Forum policy - facilitator role rather than answering each questions
• Workload management strategy – „little and often“ being recommended as better than less frequent, longer time allocations
• “Managing workload by good course design”
  • Avoid „just in time“ course alterations
  • Don’t leave students confused, anxious and unclear about what they are meant to be doing
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Further Reading...

• Stephen Bright: eLearning lecturer workload: working smarter or working harder?
• Ulster University: Assessment Workload Equivalence Guide
• SCQF Credit Points Explained: Notional Learning Hours
Fast and Effective Assessment: How to Reduce Your Workload and Improve Student Learning
Glen Pearsall
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Events Schedule

• 20 interactive events spread throughout this week
  • Talks, Panels, Case Studies, Social Events

• https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/ilts/2021/06/02/informatics-teaching-festival-2021-sharing-experience-and-planning-for-online-and-hybrid-teaching/

• Many thanks to the organisers!
  • Informatics University Teachers
  • Informatics Learning Technology Service Team
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Informatics Awards

• Reminder!

• Informatics Awards Ceremony
  • Friday, 12noon-1pm

• Final Reflection