

School of Computer Science and Engineering
Education Committee Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 13 September 2024

PRESENT:

John Shepherd (Chair)	Paul Hunter
Aditya Joshi	Rachid Hamadi
Alan Blair	Rahat Masood
Ali Darejeh	Raveen De Silva
Andrew Taylor	Raymond Wong
Angela Finlayson	Sara Ballouz
Arash Shaghaghi	Sasha Vassar
Armin Chitizadeh	Sebastian Sequoiah-Grayson
Basem Suleiman	Sebastianus Kandi
Bruno Gaeta	Shikha Mishra
Chun Tung Chou	Shiling Wu
Eric Martin	Sonit Singh
Fethi Rabhi	Sushmita Ruj
Flora Salim	Victoria Jenkins
Francisco Cruz Naranjo	Wayne Wobcke
Hammond Pearce	Yuchao Jiang
Helen Paik	Yuekang Li
Jewel Choi	
Nicholas George	
Oliver Diessel	
Nil	

APOLOGIES:

IN ATTENDANCE: Maria Kim (Secretary)

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The Chair opened the meeting at 12.03 pm.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2024.

Resolution:

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. REVIEW OF ACTION SHEET

The Committee discussed open action items from the meeting held on 7 August 2024. The action sheet was updated.

4. ITEMS FOR DECISION

Not applicable.

5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

5.1. Software Engineering Review

Fethi discussed the importance of aligning course content with industry requirements and accreditation standards, suggesting a focus on project management and software design.

- **Industry Alignment:** Fethi emphasised the need for course content to reflect industry changes and requirements, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the workforce.
- **Accreditation Requirements:** Discussions included the necessity to balance course content with accreditation demands, particularly in project management, to meet educational standards.
- **Software Design Focus:** The consensus was to have a dedicated software design and architecture course, recognising its growing importance in the software engineering body of knowledge.
- **Curriculum Recommendations:** Fethi proposed several curriculum-based recommendations, including focusing on core software engineering principles and minimising project sizes in certain courses to reinforce these principles.

5.2. Student Requests to Review Exams

The Associate Head of School (Education), Andrew Taylor and the Head of School, Professor Sowmya, discussed student concerns, requesting academics to review the exams to discover ambiguities and identify improvements.

There needs to be consistency regarding what messages to send to the students about exam marks reviews.

- **Academic concerns:** There is currently no policy at the school level. Academics need to engage in discussions to ensure consistency. They must also ensure that there are no systematic errors, for quality control. A formal request and a review of the results should be submitted.

5.3. Thesis Presentation and HDR Reviews

Sebastian, Hammond, Sushmita highlighted the decline in presentation quality in online formats, advocating for a return to in-person presentations to improve learning outcomes and professional preparedness. In-person presentations are crucial for preparing students for real-world scenarios where they must present their work confidently and competently.

There was discussion about making undergraduate theses available (e.g. on TMS). CSE needs to check how other schools are doing this. A formal process should be in place for students to express their agreement or disagreement to make their thesis available online.

- **Quality Decline:** Academics expressed concerns about the noticeable decline in the quality of online student presentations, suggesting that in-person presentations foster better communication skills.
- **Professional Preparedness:** In-person presentations are crucial for preparing students for real-world scenarios in which they must present their work confidently and competently.
- **The importance of Policy:** Policy changes to bring back in-person presentations, emphasising the importance of face-to-face interaction for effective learning and assessment.

5.4. “Advanced” Courses

DHoS emphasised the importance of clearly defining advanced courses to effectively communicate the rationale to the ACS and other stakeholders by exploring options to include a review of the length of prerequisite chains, course learning outcomes, and the vocabulary used within those outcomes. Academics need to keep working on this.

5.5. 3778 (Comp Sci) Course Rules

DHoS discussed 60 UOC courses and 36 UOC electives.

- **60 UOC of level 1 course, including core, general education and free electives:** Alan clarified that the 60 units of first year courses, not for general education. If you do two first year general education courses, students can achieve 72 units of first year courses.



Hence, students can do half a degree as level one courses.

- 36 UOC of free electives: Andrew highlighted the reason for the request for CSE to implement changes is not clear, as the popularity of computing degrees lies in their flexibility, attracting many students to pursue them in joint degree programs. DHoS has followed up on this matter, but no responses have yet been received. DHoS will communicate with Stuart Clark (Faculty Governance) that nobody has objected or commented on the current rules.

5.6. MyExperience 24T2

DHoS discussed the MyExperience 24T2 survey outcome. CSE is in line with the faculty, despite the fact that our courses are much larger than the average faculty courses. Overall, the MyExperience survey had a positive outcome.

- School policy on MyExperience of final exams: There is currently no school policy in place, and it is optional to distribute the survey to your students after the exam. Typically, the post-exam survey focuses specifically on the final exam. Conducting these surveys consistently is beneficial for gathering data, particularly in addressing student complaints. This information can also be used for communication purposes.

5.7. Assessment Review 24T2

DHoS discussed the significant fail rates in specific courses, highlighting the need for a review of assessment strategies and the potential impact on student progression. Overall common pattern is in-term assessments scored high and invigilated exams scored low.

- High Fail Rates: Substantial fail rates were observed in some courses, which could indicate issues with assessment design or student understanding of the material.
- Review necessity: The discussion underscored the necessity for a thorough review of assessment strategies to identify and address the underlying causes of high fail rates.
- Progression Concerns: The impact of fail rates on student progression was a concern, with the potential to hinder students' academic journeys and necessitate curriculum adjustments.
- Late Thesis submission: DHoS discussed that many thesis results were submitted late, and the results were not finalised on time. Chun Tung suggested utilising the thesis management system better, allowing academics to submit marks immediately.

6. ITEMS FOR NOTING AND INFORMATION

6.1. Report(s) from Committees Outside CSE

The CSE Head of School gave an overview of the preparations for accreditation in 2026 has started, with most of the work expected to be completed by late 2025. This process includes curriculum mapping. HoS encourages academics to participate in the accreditation setup, and Jas has recommended involving the deputy directors of studies directly in this process.

Academic Calander: Wayne discussed the challenges and limitations of the current term model, including the inability to start terms earlier in the year and the potential shift back to semesters. The committee will discuss this further at the school level.

Term Model Challenges: Wayne outlined the difficulties with the current term model, such as the inability to align term breaks with school holidays and the constraints on starting the academic year earlier.

Semester Model Consideration: The possibility of shifting back to a semester model was discussed as a potential solution to the issues faced with the term model, though this would require significant changes to course offerings and schedules.

Faculty Discussions: Wayne mentioned that faculty discussions are ongoing regarding the academic



calendar, with the semester and term models being the primary options under consideration.

APC Programmatic Assessment: DHoS briefly mentioned the discussions around programmatic assessment, indicating a shift towards more structured and consistent evaluation methods across programs

6.2. Report on Cyber Security Programs Working Group

The Deputy Head of School stated that they are working on specialisations and an honours year, but implementation will not occur next year, looking at 2026.

6.3. Report on UNSW Online

Review is due in 2025 for Cyber Security. Reverse ENG in Cyber Security has the intention to cancel due to low enrolment Security. Reverse ENG in Cyber Security has the intention to cancel due to low enrolment.

6.4. Report on Workload Committee/Formula

No report was provided.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1. Extended Algorithms Course

Raveen addressed that students had concerns regarding the Extended Algorithms course moving to T3 and its impact on progression.

Resolution:

The Committee members neither agreed nor declined the offer.

JOHN SHEPHERD
Chair



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