

Meeting SAT Computer 31-01-2024

Present:

- Louise Meier Carlsen (Co-HoSP BSWU)
- Therese Graversen (HoSP BDS)
- Luca Maria Aiello (HoSP KDS)
- Alessandro Bruni (substitute HoSP KCS)
- Malthe Rødsgaard Pabst Lauridsen (student rep. KDS)
- Lena Winther Jensen (student rep. KSD)
- Cristina Avram (student rep. BDS)
- Paolo Tell (guest)
- Marc Kellaway (ProCoor SD, Secretary SAT CS)

Absent:

- Mette Holm Smidt (ProCoor BDS/KDS)
- Allette Bjørn Bundgaard (ProCoor SWU/CS)
- Trine Møller (Study & Career Guidance)
- Patrick Bahr (HoSP KSD)
- Dan Witzner Hansen (HoSP BSWU)
- Theodor Christian Kier (student rep. KCS)

1. Approval of agenda:

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting 13-12-2023

No comments to the minutes received within the 10 working days period. Minutes approved.

3. Course evaluation autumn semester 2023

a) BDS

Therese: Overall, I think everything is fine and as expected. Foundations of Probability has been running for the first time, and generally people have been happy. I have also looked at the exam results, and things seem to have gone well.

I have noted that Machine Learning has a lower rating than usual, and the exam also went pretty underwhelming with only 47% passed. We also had a very low attendance for the lectures, and generally had a sense of less activity and working with the material. This is a bit concerning, and perhaps we need to look into this and teach more on "how to study."

Software Development and Software Engineering is rated a bit lower than usual, but this might have to do with the course now being mandatory for all BDS students and not just the Tech Track. In general, people are happy enough with the course, but maybe it is too big. I am discussing with Paolo whether we should change something. A few of the students have already asked me if they really need to learn this stuff, but I think they do.

Paolo: The course is a replication of what we usually do in the CS department, which might not be totally applicable for data science. Only 11 respondents also make it difficult to say something from the numbers. The exam went pretty well, and we tried during the course to fix the issues expressed in the running feedback we received. Reding the comments I would argue that the ratings are strangely low, as the comments were overall positive.

Therese: I need to mention that Paolo took over the course on very short notice as the original lecturer couldn't make it. The course is also fairly popular as an elective for the GBI students, and the course description says it is tailored to both programmes. Perhaps we need to change this for the next time to align expectations a little more.

Kristina: I have heard from some students that is a lot harder following when the course does not take place in an auditorium, and the lecturer does not use a microphone.

Paolo: Usually, we are open for using a microphone if someone mentions this.

Malthe: It is really nice that you made a separate Foundations of Probability course. This works better than the way it was structured when I was doing the bachelor. Regarding Software Development, I took it last year, and also found it difficult to link it to the rest of the data science programme. I think it would be nice if you could make this more explicit.

b) KDS

Luca: We had five courses in the fall semester. The response rate was lower compared to last year. Students only respond if heavily solicited, so I have to remind the teacher, and the teachers have to mention it in class. But this year the evaluations opened a little too late, at a point where some courses had no classes. Perhaps we could open the form earlier?

Marc: I have also heard the same from the Games programme, and will pass it on to Christian, who is handling the evaluations in SAP.

Luca: Compared to last year, the scores are a little lower. Advanced Applied Statistics is still critical, even though we revised it a lot from the previous year, and the score has a slight improvement, which also can be seen from the feedback. The rest of the scores are fine except Seminars in Data Science.

For Advanced Applied Statistics the criticism in 2022 was a bit across the board, saying the material presented was either too basic or too hard. An action point for the 2023 version was then to cut some of the material and adopt a book to make the course more structured. From the evaluations the level now seems to have been spot on, but everyone has said that they hated the book – it seems to be both bad in itself and in the integration with the other material, so we need to find a better way to integrate it, or perhaps abandon the book entirely. An additional complication is that one of the teachers left ITU, so we need to find a new teacher. But overall, I am happy the issues with the course are now more focused.

For Seminars in Data Science the main criticism in 2022 was that the exam form was unclear and felt disconnected from the exercises, so the main action point was to get the exercises better integrated into the exams. For 2023 there still seems to be some minor points on clarity about the format, which we should be able to handle in the first lectures. The major point we need to look into is that the different segments look to be uneven in difficulty.

Data in the Wild has been a bit declining in the scores. In 2022 the criticism was that there was too much overlap with BDS, so we took action to replace some of the basic content with new content. However, in

2023 we still have the same complaints, so I think the issue has to do with the way the programme is designed, as the course was meant to bridge the gap between students from BDS and students from elsewhere. We might need to address this with a reform of the programme at some point in the future. What I think we can do at the moment is to rearrange some of the lectures – maybe next time replacing a few of the more basic lectures with more advanced stuff, but still give the possibility to get some of the core material for people who need to catch up on the basics.

Malthe: In general, you captured what I have heard regarding Advanced Applied Statistics. The problem is that the book is really applied, but it is not clear how or why we are applying things. The teachers also seemed to have a hard time understanding what was happening in the book. It was nice that they were open about it.

Luca: The book is terrible. Do you think a book is still needed?

Malthe: Personally, I found it nice to have a book, but I might work if you could sample different books. It is just important to have specific chapters or pages correspond to the curriculum.

Luca: It could be possible, but very time consuming.

Paolo: I have experience using more books, but the students then complain on having to buy different books.

Allesandro: I also have had issues with variations in syntax and notation between books.

Luca: Something needs to be done about the course. Integrating the book was not a good idea, as the book should be abandoned. It is probably hard to find one single book for this – we searched a lot for that.

Lena: Did you look into what they used on similar courses at other universities?

Luca: We looked into it, but found no other book.

Therese: Otherwise, the course material could be changed a bit. There is a very weak foundation to build on, so it would be hard to find a book covering all the relevant topics without being too hard. Perhaps the course could focus on fewer topics but a little deeper.

Malthe: The curriculum seems not too big when studying the course. But the book wasn't any help - we mostly used Google. I know from taking the BDS bachelor, that it does not right now have the greatest foundation in statistics, but this should change with the new structure. Regarding Seminars in Data Science, it did not feel clear why we should bring the exercises to the exams. We spend only the last five minutes on the exercises, so it felt a bit rushed. I do understand the point on integrating things, but it did not really work.

Luca: The idea of the course was to allow the students do delve deeper into topics and learn how papers can be applied – so that was the connection. The earlier iteration had no practical exercises, as the idea was it should be a preparation for the Research Project, but then nobody read anything, and the criticism was that there not was anything practical. Then we integrated the practical parts, but since it was not a part of the exam, nobody did them. So now we have chosen to integrate the exercises in the exams. The idea is that you need to be able to explain something complicated in a very short time, but perhaps we need to make this clearer at the start of the course, and perhaps also train this during the course.

Malthe: I just found the exam format a bit rushed, and exercises seemed not really integrated.

Luca: It is! Probably is a binary kind of check – did the students actually do this? – so I think it was on purpose. I can understand that if you do not expect it, then you are prepared wrongly, but if we primed you that you should be able to read a paper in depth and then present it in short, then the exam might feel more practical. So, we need this to be made clearer in advance.

Malthe: Regarding Data in the Wild: The information for what was wanted for the exam project was a little unclear, and the early communication on how the exams would be did not fit with actual exams. Also, it was a little unclear about the topics, and had a bit too much overlap with the bachelor.

Luca: I think the teacher shared examples of successful projects, but it could be more clear. We will work on this.

c) KCS

Alessandro: I have briefly discussed the evaluation with Marco. Many courses have very few responses, but overall, they are fine. There are only two courses that require discussion. Introduction to Machine Learning is slightly below the threshold. It is a completely new course, and Dan has made a lot of material, so I have had a discussion with Marco on what needs to be fixed. In addition to being a first time run it is also now mandatory for all KCS student, so it got the whole cohort, and not just the students choosing it. Software Ecosystems will next year have a different teacher, so it might be potentially different.

Lena: As far I have heard from SD students taking CS courses they are happy. It's been challenging, but the courses are good.

Malthe: I talked to some of the CS students on the Intro to Machine Learning, and they found it quite difficult. They said it went well, though, so they were probably just out of their comfort zone.

Lena: Challenging is also good sometimes.

Alessandro: We will iterate on the material.

Therese: After the course has been made mandatory, will the programmes change the machine learning specialisation?

Alessandro: I have no information on that yet.

The course evaluations from KSD and BSWU was postponed to the next meeting.

4) SAT talk SAT

Luca: Last year we agreed to do a little catch-up as part of the yearly cycle of meetings. There was also a consensus that we wanted to focus on planning ahead rather than just on current issues. Anything you think we might want to take up at a later meeting? Something regarding the development of the programmes or planning?

Malthe: Maybe we could talk about whether we should have some sort of specialisation packs or recommendations for KDS?

Luca: Next year we will have the formal evaluation of KSD, so I agree that now would be a good moment to reflect on this.

Marc: I will add this to the agenda for the April meeting.

Thereses: What we did today, discussing the curriculums, was very relevant. We are also looking into the progress between BDS and KSD, so this would be relevant to discuss.

Luca: And find the synergy between the programmes.

Lena: I'd like at some point a general talk about how exams work, how we plan and run exams, and how the communication around exams work. I have experienced some communication, that has been very non-inclusive for neurodiverse people.

Therese: We have also been discussing this on the faculty level.

Lena: We do not necessarily need to change anything, but I think we should talk about it. For the exam I am talking about, from the communication from the teacher it looked like we had to go in there with no notes and just talk about the curriculum, but then at the exam you were expected to give a presentation anyway. Also, something like the planning, where we all had to meet up at the same time, but you are not given a specific timeslot. If you have for instance ADHD, these kinds of things makes the exam more difficult.

Therese: It is difficult to do otherwise since people are not showing up.

Marc: This is also noted as something we might talk about at a later meeting.

5) Research Project introduction

The point was postponed to the next meeting.

6) Information from the Student Counselling

Trine couldn't make it for the meeting.

7) Information from SAT Members

Cristina: I have had an anonymous feedback form out for the 1st and 2nd year BDS students and got a bunch of feedback here. There are some things related to what Lena said about the Machine Learning exam, with someone saying it is annoying having to wait that much. For Machine Learning a lot of people also complained about the external examiner – said he was rude and asked weird questions.

Paolo: Sometimes this is about aligning expectations between the teacher and the external examiner, as it could be a misaligned attempt to help the students.

Cristina: From the Machine Learning exam there was also the complaint that some topics were easier than others.

Therese: But even if they draw the easy topic, they are still questioned about the other areas.

Lene: I think this will always be the case with exams that some topics feel more interesting or easier than others.

Kristina: There has also been some feedback that Linear Algebra is too difficult for 7.5 ECTS, but I think this is just due to the transition between high school and university. People also complain about noise in the auditorium.

Therese: There has definitely been a change in how to people attend lectures.

Lena: I had one student, who told me he had access to the internet during the exam in Introductory Programming.

Marc: I do not think that was supposed to be possible. I will pass this on to the Exam Team in SAP, so they can look into whether there have been technical issues.

8) AOB

Paolo: The library might be able to get digital versions of books available for students, so if you plan to be using lots of books for your course, check with me or Sara. I also want to mention that the library can provide courses and workshops for students and staff on seeking and using literature. At the moment this is only used at GBI, so as Head of Programmes you could think about whether such a workshop could be of use in your programme. As student representatives, you should also know, that you can go to CUBE to get help finding literature. Not all know this, so please spread the word.

Therese: ITU has a GDPR course for students you should be aware of also: <https://itustudent.itu.dk/Study-Administration/GDPR/GDPR-awareness-course>

The student representatives have decided that Lena will continue as the SAT CS representative in the Board of Studies.