

Meeting SAT Computer Science 1 March 2023

Present:

- Dan Witzner Hansen (HoP BSWU)
- Marco Carbone (HoP KCS)
- Therese Graversen (HoP BDS)
- Patrick Bahr (HoP KSD)
- Luca Maria Ariello (HoP KDS)
- Louise Meier Carlsen (Co-HoP BSWU)

- Marius Thomsen (Student rep., BSWU)
- Theodor Christian Kier (Student rep., KCS)
- Sofie Kramshøi Nielsen (Student rep., KSD)
- Juraj Septák (Student rep., BDS)
- Simon Johan Skødt (Student rep., BSWU)

- Paolo Tell (Guest, faculty)
- Mads Kjeldgaard Caspersen (Study & Career Guidance)
- Mette Holm Smith (Observer, Prog Coor BDS/KDS)
- Allette Bjørn Bundgaard (Observer, Prog Coor BSWU/KCS)
- Marc Kellaway (Prog Coor KSD) (Minutes)

Absent:

- Jesper Bengtson (Guest, faculty)
- Sara Gjerløv (Observer, Study and Career & Guidance)

Minutes:

1. Approval of agenda

Agenda approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting 1 February 2023

No comments to the minutes were received within the 10 working days period, so the minutes are approved.

3. Information

Allette: We are today joined by Mads from the Study & Career Guidance, who is sharing the spot with Sara.

4. Update from study programmes

Theodor: Not much to say from KCS. As we are divided into electives it is difficult to say something general. The teachers are nice and the courses good. Issues with delayed grades again.

Juraj: Nothing new to report from BDS, all is as usual.

Marius: The SWU 2nd semester courses were off to a great start and is going fine. For the First Year Project the transition into the project work had a bit of a bumpy group creation. The issue was that the groups was released on GitHub, but students was not able to see the other members of their group, and as there was no lectures on the day the groups were released, people were a bit confused. It got resolved through Discord, but perhaps could be facilitated in a more structured fashion next time.

Dan: Any observations from StudyLab?

Marius: No, since Study Lab are mostly on the same time as the exercises in Algorithms and Data Structures, I have not participated in Study Lab yet.

Dan: The exercises shouldn't overrule the Study Lab. Is there a need for extra Study Lab hours?

Marc: It might be a structural thing and not an issue, as some Study Lab sessions – as requested by the course manager – are thought as part of the exercises in Algorithms, giving the student the choice of either participating in the exercises or getting help in Study lab.

Simon: Nothing to report from SWU 6th semester.

Sofie: Not much to report from KSD, as I am on the 2nd year and does not have as much to do with the students on the 1st year, but I made a survey to get some information. The 1st year students are very stressed out as usual. I have talked with the people doing their research project on wellbeing at the KSD programme and will try to get them to visit SAT to share their main points. As I am graduating this summer, I am trying to find another representative from KSD, preferably from the 1st year, so there might be visitors to the upcoming meetings. In general people I have talked to are worried that SAT might be too much additional work.

5. Dates for the remaining meetings spring semester 2023

SAT agrees to continue the meetings in the spring semester on Wednesdays 14:00 – 15:30 with meetings placed week 13 (March 29), week 17 (April 26), week 21 (May 24) and week 25 (June 21). The date for the last meeting (June 21) might be reconsidered when the students know their exam schedule.

6. Hearing X-form autumn 2023 - Analysis, Design and Software Architecture (BSWU).

Paolo: The course exam used to be a project followed by an oral exam. Currently it is just a written exam. The X-form suggestion is for a group project and an individual written exam, both graded.

Marco: I find this problematic. I have same problem in a course where we need to test basic individual skills before the group exam, which we do by having mandatory elements in the course before the exam, so I cannot see the need for a graded submission.

Dan: Right now, with the current format, a central part of course is not being tested. This is why the X-form is suggested.

Marco: We already have D-exams with submission of a hand-in and a following oral exam available. Why do it have to be written and not just oral?

Dan: It would take longer time with an oral than with a written exam, so the format is more suitable.

Marius: Is the main reason for the written exam scalability?

Paolo: This is one reason, but not the only one. We also need to see if the students can programme before we test the other parts of the ILOs.

Marius: I think written exams makes sense if point is to test basic stuff. The preparation time is less for a written exam than for an oral exam.

Dan: When you do programming, it can feel more comfortable on a computer than on a whiteboard, which is another argument for a written exam instead of an oral.

Allette: It is pointed out in the hearing that the reexam is only oral. How to test the ILOs here, if both a submission and a written exam is needed for the ordinary exam?

Therese: My concern would also be that the reexam is oral only. Also: What is the written exam on exactly? Is this only low level goals, so it is like a written version of the D-exam?

Sophie: I think the scheduling team has a good point in their hearing statement, that this would be one more thing for the students to do in the exam period.

Paolo: Don't we think this process is too bureaucratic? The fact that there already three written exams, cannot be the justification for blocking an attempt to heighten the quality of the examination.

Marc: No one is blocking anything. The point of the X-form hearings is to ensure all relevant points are taking into consideration before the board of studies make a decision. The individual exams do not exist in a vacuum, but need to be seen in a larger context which means that other perspectives than that of the course manager are just as relevant.

Allette: This is also part of the democratic process. As we are focusing on workload issues at the ITU, it is important that the student representatives can have their say.

Dan: I think the teachers should have the integrity to decide on how to test the best way. But everything should of course be within the ECTS-model, so the workload should not be increased.

Marius: I think that it is a relevant point, that the submission will be more work for the students if it is graded.

Sofie: I agree with Marc, that this process is important, and that there are valuable comments from the hearing in the appendixes. I also agree, that if the project is graded, the students will need to work on it in a

different way and be more anxious. With an oral exam following a submission, you have the possibility to defend your work. Here we remove this option.

The following summary of the discussion has been passed on to the Board of Studies:

Hearing answer from SAT:

The student side expressed concern that the new exam form will cause added workload and stress for the 3rd semester students, as a project submission are added to the existing 3 written exams. The students argue, that preparing a project for submission and grading is more work demanding than just writing the project as part of the course. Especially as the project is not followed by an oral exam, and has to stand on its own.

The teacher side did not share this concern, arguing that splitting the exam into two parts would lighten the workload of each part, thus not resulting in greater workload overall. Additionally, the new exam form will align better with the ILOs.

The discrepancy between the suggested exam form for the ordinary exam and reexam was also discussed, but no agreement as to whether this would be an issue or not was reached.

7. Follow up on BSWU-student presentation and statement from last meeting

Dan: Two weeks ago, me and Louise met with three of the students again and had a discussion on expectations, as well as got more details on their comments. Largely, we figured that many of the issues mentioned should in principle have been handled between the students and the teachers. We think it used to be like this before, but after Covid it seems that the students do not know these well-established procedures. We need to rebuild this, as it is important with face-to-face meetings between students and teachers to prevent escalation. As a starting point, me and Louise will have informal semester meetings with the BSWU-students, starting here in the spring semester.

Louise: We also discovered that a lot of the issues raised had been taken care of, but the students do not necessarily know this, as they rarely take a course a second time. These semester meetings can also be used to inform the students on the changes made on the background of the evaluations and similar.

Theodor: You say that the issues were due to Covid, but one point is that we should be better to inform the students on SAT and similar options. But I think students already try to use these channels, but feel they do not get any results. So, I think this is not only due to Covid.

Sophie: I recognize students being reluctant talking to the teacher, and think this also has to do with the fact that ITU has no open-door policy, with the teacher areas placed behind locked doors. On other universities this is more informal. Perhaps it could be improved by office hours for all teachers?

Marius: I agree that office hours would be great as an incentive for students to show up for a talk, and better than just open doors, as you then would not know when the teacher would be there. Two hours a week would be great. I also disagree that students are not aware of issues being solved – I seem many of them being solved. But many of the issues were not course specific, and these are not solved throughout of ITU. Also, not all teachers are nice talking to, or are in the habit of giving replies to questions during lectures, that are not accommodating for dialog or further questions.

Paolo: I have had four years of office hours. Zero students have shown up.

Therese: I second this.

Luca: Me too.

Sophie: But this is about culture. People need to be used to them.

Dan: I have experienced the same thing. I do not see the problem in writing the teachers instead. Last year on my course only 12 students showed up for the exercises. Only at the time of the exams any students approached me. Office hours would also take hours away from other options.

SAT decided to follow up on the points from the SWU students at the next meeting.

8. Course evaluations autumn semester 2022

a) KSD

Patrick: Three courses are below official threshold. *Applied Information Security* had a new course manager, and have received comments about teaching style. Hopefully this can be addressed for the next time the course runs. *Data Mining* shows a significant improvement, but is still below the threshold. *Software Engineering* continues to be a stumbling point for the students. The CM and I have talked and worked out a plan. One issue is that this is a first semester course on software engineering, so the students can have difficulties gasping what they are supposed to learn, but we have talked about possible ways to make it more concrete for the students, and will include more of this in the upcoming semester. Otherwise, I see an improvement for the scores for the 1st semester. I am happy with the improvement for *Introductory Programming*.

Sophie: Can you elaborate on what is planned to be improved for *Applied Information Security*? I got a lot of complaints on this course.

Patrick: Nothing has been decided yet, but we have been starting the planning for the coming semester. The main issues I have talked with the CM about are that specific exercises were problematic and needed revision, and that the mini projects were disorganized and need more scaffolding to help the students. Anything missing?

Sophie: I think more feedback on the assignments are also needed. Students on the course did not get any feedback, and when pressed, the teachers only gave them two words, which is not really usable.

b) KDS

Luca: In general, we have had a good evaluation. We are slightly below the threshold for *Seminars in Data Science* – the lectures work well, but the exercises are not very well aligned with the lectures. We have tried to solve this with a new format from next year. The most critical course has been *Applied Advanced Statistics*, but the good thing is that the critique has been very constructive, and the CM agrees. There has been too much material as well as some repetition in material from the bachelor, so we have changed the

name of the course and reduced the material so we can dedicate more time explaining the concepts. There has also been some difficulty in the coordination of the lectures between the teachers – especially one new teacher got a low score - but we have had a talk now. The course will be getting a major overhaul for next time.

c) BDS

Therese: In general, everything went well, with just one problem with *Data Science in Society*. *Software Development and Software Engineering* got a low score, but I do not really get why, as people in general were satisfied in the comments. As you know, we have an application to get the exam down to two hours. We also have an issue with students needing to be able to use Java, and it takes times to get them up to scratch. *Network Analysis* got a low score, since the book are so good, that people do not feel the need to go to the lectures.

Marius: Any plans for getting people to show up? Perhaps the teacher lectures to close to the book?

Therese: I do not think this is necessarily a bad thing. In theory you can just read the book then, and if you understand everything be ready for the exam. I see no problem in this.

d) KCS

Marco: I think the scores are ok for KCS – more or less everything is good. The thing that is worrisome are *Software Ecosystems*, which is one of those software engineering courses that have the usual issue with workload. The students might have misunderstood what they needed to do, and I guess it is something we have to look into, but as this is just the first time the course run, I am not too worried.

Theodor: The response rate seems ok for KCS, which is surprising as only one of the teachers on my courses remembered to tell us to do the evaluations.

e) BSWU

Louise: The numbers are pretty good, though a bit lower than the DoE would like. One of the courses has not changed anything, but still received a lower score than usual. There have also been changes to *Grundlæggende Programming*, which the students seem fond of. I will start to coordinate the first semester to ensure better onboarding and reduce workload. We might also look at the ILOs for the programming courses across the programme, so the students will not be tested twice in same things.

Simon: I am at the 6th semester, and just did a survey, where especially *Digital Transformation and Business Models* got a lot of comments. It is suggested establishing a clearer connection between the reading and the lectures – this has been the source of a lot of frustration for the students. It could also be an idea to introduce more feedback during the course, as a lot of students were surprised that they were failing. And I also got some responses that the students are unsatisfied with the lecturer.

Louise: Dan and I have reviewed the comments on the course also, and have a dialog with the CM. We are aware of the issues.

Dan: The course has never gotten the highest evaluations, but that does not necessarily mean, that it is a poor course, but can also be due to the tendency among SWU students to rate the more discussion based or abstract courses lower than the programming courses. But there are still several things we need to improve on the course, and that we need to discuss with the CM. Please send us an email with the points you have.

Louise: Also, a lot of students mentions the relevance, so the students do not find the course irrelevant, but there are still the other points to look into.

Dan: In some courses it is also more of a 1:1 between readings and lectures, while on other courses the readings are more like the background or starting point for the lectures.

Simon: I think it is like this, but here the students cannot see the link between the readings and lectures at all.

Marco: *Projektarbejde og Kommunikation* also got a low score.

Marius: I can say a bit on this. It is two very different courses merged into one, and the way they are taught are very far from each other with very different approaches, which might be difficult to understand for the 1st semester students. The course might need to be balanced better.

Paolo: Do people find the course useful?

Marius: A lot of people like the course, and put a lot of work into it.

9. Study Programme Reports

The point was postponed to the next meeting.

10. AOB

SAT had nothing for this point.