

Meeting SAT Computer Science 25-05-2023

Present:

- Dan Witzner Hansen (HoP BSWU)
- Marco Carbone (HoP KCS)
- Therese Graversen (HoP BDS)
- Patrick Bahr (HoP KSD)
- Luca Maria Ariello (HoP KDS)
- Marius Thomsen (Student rep., BSWU)
- Sofie Kramshøi Nielsen (Student rep., KSD)
- Lena Winther Jensen (Student rep, KSD)
- Paolo Tell (Guest, faculty)
- Trine Møller (Observer, Study and Career & Guidance)
- Mette Holm Smith (Observer, Prog Coor BDS/KDS)
- Allette Bjørn Bundgaard (Observer, Prog Coor SWU/KCS)
- Marc Kellaway (Prog Coor KSD) (Minutes)

Absent:

- Louise Meier Carlsen (Co-HoP BSWU) (afbud)
- Simon Johan Skødt (Student rep., BSWU)
- Maja Styrk Andersen (Guest, KSD)
- Theodor Christian Kier (Student rep., KCS)
- Juraj Septák (Student rep., BDS)
- Jesper Bengtson (Guest, faculty)

Minutes:

1. Approval of agenda

Point 5 was moved to the first meeting after the summer break. Apart from this, the agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting 26 April 2023

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

3. Information

Nothing for this point

4. Update from study programmes

Lena: I have some questions from the students regarding the recent exam in Introduction to Database Systems. I assume you have already been updated on the issues in the days leading up to the exam as well as during the exam itself. The students have been wondering how much the examiner is allowed to change the approved tools in the guidelines for the exam just before the exam, as there was some confusion here. SAP did help sort it out, but then the new tools did not work properly. From what I've gathered you are not allowed to change these things just before the exam.

The students also talk about whether there is any proofreading before the exam, because there were a lot of errors in the exam set. It also seemed that parts of the exam set were generated by ChatGPT. Finally, the

students also wonder how close to previous exams an exam set is allowed to be, because the questions were very close to those from last year.

Patrick: The issue with aid for the exams was that the official course description was inconsistent. The internet is not allowed, but the description underneath mentioned online material. The exam form had changed, but the text underneath had not been updated, and that was what the update on Piazza was about. The CM also said that he had mentioned this during one of the lectures, but I can see the problem with the inconsistent description in the course base. That is not good.

The usual procedure with the exam questions is that the examiner makes the exam set, and then send it to the external examiner to check, but unfortunately errors still get through, and in this case, we had two typos which were confusing for the students. Due to this, 30 minutes of extra time was added for the exam.

Regarding the exam questions: Some of the questions can be reused from previous years. It is very difficult to come up with new questions for everything, so there will always be some similarity to previous exams. I looked at the course evaluations and it seems that the CM was encouraging the use of ChatGPT, so I do not see anything wrong with using it as a tool in making the exam set also.

Lena: My fellow students have the feeling that this was just a previous exam set put into ChatGPT to make a new set.

Patrick: I think it was just for the basic questions. It is not easy to get so much variety.

Lena: Another question that gets asked a lot is that we were told we would not be able to rely on that the exam looking the previous sets. A week before the exam the CM cancelled the lecture and gave us a trial exam instead, but it did not show what the real exam would look like. I created a google form where around half of the students participated, and would like to share and discuss the findings here with SAT at a later point.

Luca: How is different from the official evaluation?

Lena: The course evaluations closed just before the exams, and the students felt they also needed to give input on the exam.

Patrick: This will be good information to share with SAT and the CM.

Marius: I have also heard complaints about exams being very similar to previous years. Besides, I have yet to have a written exam at ITU without mistakes in the exam set.

Patrick: Regarding the similarities: One thing is that the questions were similar, but they were still different, so what was the exact problem?

Lena: The structure had been changed a lot since the last exam – where we before needed to write the answers it is now a multiple choice. This means that people have no idea on how it will be graded.

Patric: And this was also different from the trial exam?

Lena: Yes, the trial exam was basically questions from previous exams collected in a new set, so it didn't at all show how the real exam would look.

Patrick: I think usually some form of alignment of expectations should be set before the exam.

Luca: Any other news or updates?

Sofie: You already know we send survey to the students, and I just wanted to highlight something positive this time: I have gotten comments on how the student community on the SD programme is very positive and encouraging. Of course, the programme is very hard, but the students also feel that they learn really much.

5. Programme specific employer panel report

Moved to first meeting after the summer break.

6. How we evaluate course evaluations

Sofie: I have not really prepared for this as it was Theodor who asked to get this point on the agenda, but I can tell what we discussed in the Board of Studies. We can see that it differs very much between the different SATs how the course evaluations are handled, and we feel that we here in SAT-CS did not have enough time to discuss it last time. I think this is a problem, since it is difficult for just one student member of SAT to insist that we take the time to go through the evaluations properly. It is also hard to tell our fellow students to do the evaluations, when it is hard to see directly how they are used.

Marc: The SAT secretaries had a meeting with Christian, who is the quality coordinator at ITU, regarding how the evaluations are handled in the different SATs. We also talked about how the deadline for the Study Programme Report makes it difficult to set enough time aside for a discussion of the evaluations – especially in SAT-CS with 5 study programmes - as we basically need to do both at the same meeting. This doesn't really make sense, as the discussion on the evaluations is meant to feed into the Study Programme Report. The best would be if we could move the deadline for the Study Program Report, but seems it is not something we can do, though Christian will look into it.

We also talked about what was possible for the individual SATs within the given deadlines. We do not need to have one of our six meetings pr. semester each month, but might decide perhaps to have two meetings in the month we have the evaluations. Or we could decide to make the meeting with evaluations longer, or agree to drop other points for that meeting. Also, Christian will try to make an overview of quality process as a whole to make the connections more understandable.

Marius: It is insane that we do not have access to the written comments. With such low participation, we cannot really say anything from the numbers alone. This means that we cannot really say anything as students, as we do not have the necessary information.

Marc: Just to clarify: You are not expected as students to discuss from the numbers alone. The idea is that the head of programme give a presentation in SAT of the findings and their thoughts on the evaluation, and *this* is what you should discuss and add your views to. And then this should feed into the Study Programme Report, which is where the action points will be.

Marco: I agree with Marius that comments should be available for all of SAT - apart from personal comments regarding the teachers. I would be against any more expansion of the evaluations with more questions or similar. But one thing we should take into account when we talk about using more time for the course evaluations is that we already spend a lot of time here talking about problems with the courses. Maybe we should find a way to optimize this?

Sofie: What the board wants to change is the process around the evaluations, not the evaluations themselves. We were concerned about the very different approaches on the individual SATs, and would suggest that we got a more fixed form of what the HoSPs need to deliver, to have a better basis for the discussion. I know this might put more work on the HoSPs, but it might help in streamlining the discussion.

Marius: One of the reasons we see such a low response rate is that it is hard for the students to see the results, so we should work on being more clear on what actually happens based on the evaluations. Perhaps we could prioritize the courses before the discussion, and then discuss the problematic courses first, then the courses doing very well, and then the average courses in the end.

Luca: So, there is a desire for a structure to the discussion of the evaluations.

Dan: One of the reasons the students do not see any effects is that they in general only take the course once. This means that they do not see the changes based on the evaluations we make for next time round. We have initiated evaluation workshops for all SWU students, but unfortunately not many students have showed up. The point of these meetings would be to inform the students of what we have done and on what it is based. So, we intend to improve the communication between the programme and the students. Regarding the structure: We should spend time on problematic courses, but also on why the issues were not brought up while the course was running, as it is too late to fix things when we get to the evaluations.

Luca: Somebody proposed to write down the feedback. I opposed it because written feedback backfires. I would rather have a structure for the discussion.

Patrick: I agree with Dan. We already have structure for discussion of problematic courses in SAT.

Marius: We should also discuss the good courses, as we can learn a lot from them.

Dan: Students should first bring the problems to the CM, and if they are still occurring contact the HoSP. If there is still an issue, then it should be brought up SAT. Also, often individual issues seem to get generalized.

Marc: We are having the evaluations on the agenda next meeting. I will put the report up after this meeting, so all can have time to prepare.

Marius: This is an excellent possibility to try some of the approaches to handing this.

Sofie: We might also try to have two meetings in the months with the evaluations.

Marius: Should we change how we do it in June?

Luca: I am against written feedback shared beforehand, but maybe it would be helpful to have a formal structure we all follow.

Sofie: I think the least invasive thing would be to have two meetings in the months with the evaluations.

Marius: I think we should pick one of the suggested templates. Either prioritized or something written from the HoSP.

Luca: Lets each present in a ranked order and present in some prioritized way – negative, positive, neutral. At least some slides should be presented.

Marco: Why do we have to make slides?

Luce: Just to clearly present your own reflections and intended actions.

It was decided to extend the June meeting by 30 minutes.

7. Feedback for the Research Project introduction

Sofie: This is based on a discussion with Marc and Patrick, as I had some ideas for how to improve the Research Project process. The points are based on what I heard from the 1st year KSD students at an event on the Research Project I arranged, were 40-50 people showed up.

Marc: The overview of the study programme for KSD, KDS and KCS now links directly to the Research Project wiki. But of course, we still need to tell the students that it exists.

Marco: I read the points this morning and discussed it with Allette. We suggest that we link to the wiki in the semester mails to the students. And that we send the people who register an email with info on the wiki.

Sofie: Something that also came up was that the intro lecture with Luca was good, as the students feel unprepared in how to do research. We should definitely keep this, but perhaps have it earlier? Or more lectures like this?

Luca: I have also requested to have it earlier.

Sofie: Also, there is a request from the students to be given access to “exemplary” research projects as a help in how to structure and approach the project.

Dan: It can be difficult to define what is exemplary, as this is very much up to the supervisor. The best way is that the students make an agreement with the supervisor on scope.

Sofie: I am only suggesting it because I know it was helpful for me, even though the supervisors were not the same.

Dan: I think the scope or structure can be very different between areas. When we have the intro to the bachelor project, we recommend the students to look into an area they like, and then use the meetings with the supervisor before the writing starts to make agreements on scope and structure.

Sofie: The best would be if older reports were available in some sort of database.

Marco: I would love that. We've been trying to do this for a lot of years.

Sofie: Meanwhile, until we have that, why not put up some exemplary individual projects?

Dan: We might do this.

Paolo: I sit in the Library Committee and we are trying to get as much information out as possible for the library and participate in the introductory weeks. Why is this information not coming out?

Sofie: We do not have mandatory workshops in relation to Research Project, but perhaps something could be arranged. The librarians really want to come and do some workshops.

Paolo: Usually we contact the head of programmes.

Sofie: I was trying to set something like this up for all students.

Trine: I have a colleague who does a general thesis workshop, perhaps she could also do something?

Sofie: It would probably be nice if it was something dedicated specifically to the Research Project.

8. AOB

Patrick: This is about Summer University. The department is looking into what courses to offer next year, and we would like to hear what you think is important as students.

Marius: Summer University is nice because of the different pace, structure, and atmosphere. And it gives us a lot more freedom in when to take other courses. Especially on SWU where there is minimal flexibility, it is nice with the flexibility from the Summer University. It is also nice that it gives you a chance to focus on just one course.

Trine: We do a lot of study planning with the students, and I've noticed, especially from SWU, that if you fall behind at fourth semester, you cannot catch up. Perhaps more of the mandatory courses could help?

Dan: We know, but it is also a matter of resources.

Sofie: I took a summer course in Algorithms and Data Structures, and was really happy with the flexibility and the ability to focus. I think it is very helpful and think you should keep it. I think the way the Algorithm summer course is run works well. It is tough, but works very well.

Marco: There are also negatives. It will never be the same when doing the same number of hours over shorter time.

Sofie: Some students find it nice to only have to focus on one thing. Maybe Introduction to Database Systems would be good as Summer University course also – and perhaps other of the big courses.

Lena: I am in agreement with Sofie. The Summer University courses are a good opportunity to manage your time, and give people a chance to finish the programme in the planned time with less stress. I also agree regarding the algorithm course – there are great benefits for having this as a Summer University course – and agree that Databases could also be a good Summer University course. I think the especially the courses with greater scope benefit from also being offered as Summer University.

Therese: I understand the idea of spreading out the course work, but from a teacher's perspective it is very hard work to re-structure a course as a summer course. If you are supposed to be able to teach at all times, it also makes it difficult to do other things like conferences and similar. Also, instead of taking a course, it is also possible to just take up the book and read it over summer.

Luca: If anybody has taken the Applied Information Security summer course – we know it has been a lot of work with too many hand-ins each week, but also depends a lot on the person doing the course and how you structure it.

Therese: One point I want to emphasize: The quality is easily the first thing to suffer, when you have to design a Summer University course. It is especially hard for the advanced stuff.