Report on COMP 8705, Semester 2, 2015

Course Title. Professional Communication II

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Number of Students. This is an ENG double-badged course with an overall enrolment of about 80, 37 of which are CS students.

Suitability of Prerequisites. Prerequisites are suitable and include Professional Communication I.

Composition of Student Cohort. About 50% domestic and 50% international students, however feedback was given by 93% international students.

Relevance of the Course for Students. Judging from the free-form responses of students in the SELT evaluation, some students appear to under-appreciate the relevance of the course as it is not a hard technical course.

Suitability of Learning Offerings and Assessment. The assessment is varied (individual participation in discussion forum, group presentation and both individual/group presentation of a design). Groups are multi-disciplinary/multi-cultural. The assessment is practical and modelled after a real-world task and gives the students to demonstrate their knowledge and approach. Assessment is suitable for the task. Learning offerings are a two-hour lecture and tutorials which appears appropriate.

Feedback and Availability of Resources. Availability of Resources was good, and feedback was given through wattle for group discussions, assignments and discussion.

Percentage of Student Feedback. 15 students gave feedback out of a total of about 80 students enrolled in the course.

Recommendations. There appears to be nothing wrong with the course as such and the criticism addresses items that are unavoidable for a course of this nature: It is not perceived as a hard core technical course that leads some students to question its worth and value. International students find it harder to achieve high marks and appreciate the course due to linguistic and cultural differences. Moreover, the course has been extensively re-designed and ran for the first time in its current form and will therefore require some fine-tuning.

We make the following recommendations.
1. To give more consideration to the linguistic and cultural background of students in the context of feedback and assessment

2. Emphasise both structure and the particular goals of individual assessment items more clearly