Report - AH2170 - 2020-12-13

Respondents: 1
Answer Count: 1
Answer Frequency: 100.00%

Please note that there is only one respondent to this form: the person that performs the course analysis.

Course analysis carried out by (name, e-mail):

Michele Simoni

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS
Describe the course evaluation process. Describe how all students have been given the possibility to give their opinions on the course. Describe how aspects regarding gender, and disabled students are investigated.

The course evaluation survey has been given at the end of the course. The survey has been accessible for a couple of weeks.

In addition, two informal surveys were given at the begining and halfway through the course for an additional feedback.

DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS
Describe which meetings that has been arranged with students during the course and after its completion. (The outcomes of these meetings should be reported under 7, below.)

No physical meetings were arranged due to the Covid situation. However, students were encouraged to contact the teacher and the assistant to share their feedback on the course.

COURSE DESIGN
Briefly describe the course design (learning activities, examinations) and any changes that have been implemented since the last course offering.

The course design was based on previous years' versions: lecture plus labs. Examinations consisted of three home assignments on application problems and in the labs, and one exam.
Slides material have been renewed and a few topics in the realm of Machine Learning (e.g., clustering, model training) have been introduced in the course. The first assignment has been replaced with a more relevant application. The lab activities have been updated to include exercises with the Python programming language.

Due to the Covid situation, 50 percent of the lectures and 100 percent of the labs were conducted remotely.

The exam was also conducted remotely as a take-home.

THE STUDENTS' WORKLOAD
Does the students' workload correspond to the expected level (40 hours/1.5 credits)? If these is a significant deviation from the expected, what can be the reason?

The students responses seem to vary considerably. The majority of respondents indicated to have spent an approximate amount of 14 hours work per week, which is below the total expected to reach the 7.5 credits. However, this could partially explain why the grades obtained in the first exam were lower than expected.

THE STUDENTS' RESULTS
How well have the students succeeded on the course? If there are significant differences compared to previous course offerings, what can be the reason?

The results of the first take of the exam were not particularly high (less than 10% A grades).

I cannot compare the results with previous offerings since this is the first time I give this course.

STUDENTS´ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTIONS
What does students say in response to the open questions?

Most of the students seemed to have enjoyed the course and its content. Students understood the value of the concepts and methods learned in class. The Case Studies have been useful for the understanding of the topics.
Labs and Case Studies seem to have been the most challenging part of the course due to lack of familiarity with the Python programming language and absence of in-person interactions (due to Covid).
The first take-home exam was considered too demanding.

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' OPINIONS
Summarize the outcome of the questionnaire, as well as opinions emerging at meetings with students.

Students seem overall satisfied with the topics taught in the lectures. In-class activities were considered clear and interesting. Labs, which were given fully remotely, were not easy to follow mainly due to connectivity problems experienced by the teaching assistant.
Students would like to receive more feedback on the Case Studies.

OVERALL IMPRESSION
Summarize the teachers' overall impressions of the course offering in relation to students' results and their evaluation of the course, as well as in relation to the changes implemented since last course offering.

The feedback received showed some positives and negatives aspects. The meaningfulness of the course, its objectives and contents were positively evaluated.

Most of the weaknesses emerged from the evaluation relate to the labs and Case Studies. These activities were unfortunately the most affected ones by the Covid situation. Remote teaching of applications involving programming skills has been more challenging than expected. Students could not easily communicate with each other and share feedback with their peers.
More feedback from teachers on Case Studies will be needed, but at the condition that students fully comply to the given deadlines (no recommended submission dates).

All in all, considering this 2020 situation, the course was positively assessed.

ANALYSIS
Is it possible to identify stronger and weaker areas in the learning environment based on the information you have gathered during the evaluation and analysis process? What can the reason for these be? Are there significant difference in experience between:
- students identifying as female and male?
- international and national students?
- students with or without disabilities?

No significant difference between groups based on gender or disabilities. International students have given higher ratings to the course.
In general, some students seemed to have weak knowledge and skills (stats, math, programming) to keep up with the pace of the course. This is an issue that might need to be considered at the program level (prerequisites for acceptance).

PRIORITIZED COURSE DEVELOPMENT
What aspects of the course should be developed primaily? How can these aspects be developed in short and long term?

Modify schedule to give more buffer between lectures and labs.
Better integration of labs into the course.
Update the last two Case Studies with more relevant topics.
All these points could be rather straightforwardly addressed in the next offerings (hopefully back to normal conditions).