

Course Report WASP Graduate School

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WASP Project Course, 6hp

Semester: Autumn 2021

Number of registered students: 64

Answering frequency (course evaluation): 37,5 (%)

Examination results

Number of students examined: 64

Fail: 0 (%)

Pass: 100 (%)

Brief summary of student viewpoints and suggestions

Selection of quantitative results

- | | |
|---|------|
| • What is your overall rating of the course? | 3,25 |
| • Did you enjoy the course? | 3,00 |
| • Was it time well spent? | 3,00 |
| • Do you think the project selection offered in the beginning of the course was sufficient? | 3,25 |
| • Did you enjoy the project topic that you were assigned? | 3,63 |
| • Did the collaboration work well in the group? | 3,46 |
| • My previous knowledge from research and courses made me well-prepared for the project. | 3,71 |
| • Rate the participation from the academic supervisor. | 3,79 |
| • Rate the participation from the industrial supervisor. | 3,09 |

"Strengths" according to students²

- Nice project and enjoyed working with the other PhD students and supervisors.
- More than 40% of the participants agreed "much" or "very much" to that the project selection offered was sufficient. 75% enjoyed it "to some extent" or more.
- Close to 55% of the participants enjoyed the project topic they got either to the extent "much" or "very much".
- 50% of the participants graded the collaboration in the project either to the extent "much" or "very much".
- Close to 55% of the participants thought knowledge from their research and courses made them well-prepared to the extent "much" or "very much".

¹ The report should be written by the examiner together with the teachers and possibly others, such as teaching assistants

² Based on both quantitative results and key viewpoints from students' free-text answers

- More than 60% of the participants rated the academic supervisor to either grade 4 or 5 (average 3,79).
- 50% of the participants gave the course an overall rating of the course of either a grade 4 or 5 (average 3,25).
- More than 40% of the participants enjoyed the course to the extent “much” or “very much”, close to 60% to the extent “to some extent” or more”. Less than 5% did not enjoy the course at all.

(the free text questions were mainly phrased in way to get detailed *negative* aspects to be able to improve the course, hence, the obtained positive free text comments are very few)

"Weaknesses" according to students²

- Lack of project management in the projects.
- Some of the projects were not sufficiently well-prepared with data and/or functioning system to work with.
- Lack of enthusiasm and time allocation from some project participants.
- The covid situation reduced the number of meetings possible. A final F2F meeting would have been appreciated.
- The spread of the participants over the country makes it harder to collaborate physically.
- Too many AI and ML projects.
- The system we worked with was not sufficiently well prepared and documented.
- The project topic was not sufficiently close to my research.
- Varying knowledge due to varying background.
- More than 60% of the participants gave the industrial supervisor grade 3 or less, 35% grade 2 or less (average 3,09, compared with 3,79 for the academic supervisor).

Comments from teachers on the implementation and outcome of the course³

- Before this year’s version of the course improvements were made to try to improve the performance of the supervisors and make clear what the expectations on them are, to explicitly ask the author in the project proposal form to guarantee that data etc. is available. Furthermore, the project proposal process was changed such that more proposals initially could be accepted and students could prepare proposals themselves. The number of proposals was brought down to the desired number using a sifting process involving the students.
- I think the technical results of the projects are, as far as I can judge, in general very good despite that the background of the participants is not always a perfect match for the available/assigned projects. I think the competence broadening and cross-disciplinary collaboration is an important part from the course perspective, more important than a perfect end result.

³ Including changes effected during the course

- Even though there are comments regarding the content of the available projects, I think that the new two-step model where a large initial group of projects is offered and sifted down by the students to a more manageable size is the right way and should provide sufficient possibility to choose. The students had the possibility to propose projects themselves, but still, to get groups of a sufficient size they need to attract sufficiently many colleagues to actually be able to run them.
- Despite improved information, it remains a challenge in some cases to get the industrial supervisors sufficiently involved both during the course and in the preparations (provide data etc.).

Proposed changes/comments/measures

- The project group structure and project management needs to be looked over. A project leader has not been sufficiently clearly assigned (that specific word has not been used) but from the role description this is clearly a responsibility for the industrial supervisor. The instructions tell that this person should “plan, supervise and manage the project”, this has not been the case in at least some of the projects. Would it be better to assign a student to be project leader? And to use the explicit word “project leader”.
- The ambition level of supervisors needs to be further improved, in particular for the industrial ones. Even though this has improved for this year’s course (it should explicitly be confirmed in a check-box) that data and resources are available for the project, this is missing in some cases.
- The covid situation made meetings and collaboration harder. It was mentioned in one comment that they would have liked a face-to-face final presentation. Hopefully this is not an issue next time.
- To inspire for collaboration, a mandatory collaboration week (or days) can be introduced.