



Annual Monitoring - Departmental Report Form (Academic Year 2006-07)

Chair of Departmental Teaching Committee/ Director of Studies	Dr Steve Hailes (2006/07) Dr Graham Roberts (2007/08 i.e. at the time of writing this report)			
Number Enrolled in department		Full-time	Part-time	Total
	Undergraduate	173	9	182
	Graduate taught	96	1	97

A.

- i) commentary on student recruitment and student performance overall;**
ii) difficulties experienced and action(s) taken to resolve these.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Undergraduate programmes. In common with the rest of the sector, we have experienced a decline in applications for UG programmes (from a peak of 1609 in 2001 to 560 in 2006), although candidates' entry qualifications are still very good. We have a smaller than normal Year 1 cohort, and a total undergraduate population of 182 (209 in 05/06). The average A-level point score on entry for the 2006/07 cohort was 26.6 (home) and 27.6 (overseas). This represented a continuing increase compared with the previous year (26.4 and 26.5 in 2005/06). The gender balance in our undergraduate student population remained at similar levels to previous years (30 females; 152 males).

Graduate programmes. Applications for graduate taught programmes were similarly lower and resulted in smaller than expected groups. As always, the actual numbers of students enrolling can be quite disappointing compared to the numbers who have accepted their offers, especially in the case of overseas applicants.

Recruitment initiatives The department has paid particular attention to recruitment in 06/07 to showcase what we offer and make sure our candidates get the best possible service during the applications process. Initiatives included:

- Review of our UCAS Open Day processes. Lots of improvements to our processes and resources on-line for candidates (see http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/admissions/ug/ug_applications.htm, including a new on-line booking form for candidates to select the interview dates that suit them thus making the whole process more streamlined and efficient).
- Printing of extra advertising items to distribute to UCAS applicants. Postcard-style adverts, designed by Hype! that are very eye-catching and have gone down well.
- Streamlining the way we handle applications to make sure we do not lose any good candidates; keeping in touch with candidates in the time between receiving our offer and taking up the place in the new academic year.
- Advertising in a number of selected media (careers literature and websites) including Dr Job, the Guardian, New Scientist, and a subscription to GoogleAdwords.
- A series of posters to promote our graduate programmes, sent to other HEIs.
- Development of a suite of MEng Computer Science programmes with specialisms in Software Systems Engineering, Intelligent Systems, Vision Imaging and Virtual Environments, and Data Communications and Networks (approved for 2008/09).

A bid was made for funding from the CRAS Student Recruitment Fund to help meet the cost of these initiatives. We were disappointed that despite our strong case and support from the Faculty, no funding was awarded.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Annual Monitoring reports on the department's programmes are at <http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/Qualityassuranceandannualmonitoring.htm>

Student performance during 2006/07 has remained at our expected levels. We recruit well-qualified and motivated individuals, and their results have lived up to our expectations. The undergraduate programmes produced a good number of first and 2:1 degree results, while the postgraduate programmes had a healthy number of Distinctions. The external examiners frequently commented on the quality of the students work and their results.

B. Commentary on reports of Chairs of Boards of Examiners

Reports have been written by the Boards of Examiners as listed below:

- Undergraduate programmes in Computer Science
- MSc Computer Science
- MSc Data Communications, Networks and Distributed Systems
- MSc Intelligent Systems
- MSc Software Systems Engineering
- MSc Vision, Imaging and Virtual Environments

The reports reflect on the examinations processes and comments made by the External Examiners. In all cases, the assessment arrangements have been very satisfactory, with the exception of issues to do with UCL's new student information system: Portico. The difficulties with exams processing in Portico are well-documented, and much work has been done to improve the situation for the future. We are very keen to work with the Portico project team to continue seeking improvements and ensure the integrity of our examinations results and awards.

Chairs of BoE reports are published on the department's intranet (accessible to Computer Science staff only) at <http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/teaching/staff/AnnualMonitoringProgrammeIndex.htm>

C. Commentary on resourcing issues and action taken or planned

The department continues to provide excellent facilities within a tight budget. We have a dedicated Technical Services Group which looks after the department's computing facilities, and they work hard to keep our equipment up-to-date and functioning well.

The Department will benefit from a new computer laboratory for 2007/08, part-funded through collaboration with various financial institutions. This is an exciting new venture and we are looking forward to our first cohort of students on our new MSc Financial Computing.

D. Examples of good practice or prizes or accolades awarded to students or staff

- The following is a selection of student prizes and nominations:
 - Wiley Prize – 1st year: Awad MACKIE.
 - Wiley Prize – 2nd year: Michael DONNERER.
 - Wiley Prize – 3rd year: Bethany JONES.
 - Undergraduate Sessional Prizes: Tim BENNETT, Alexander GILLIS, Lucasz MUZIOL and Stefanie FOERCH.
 - Neoworks Prize Best performing fourth year student: Jason TATTON.
 - Neoworks Prize Outstanding Contribution to the Social and Intellectual life of the Department: Bence PASTZOR.
 - MSc DCNDS Prize for Best Group Project: Mark FOO, Brent MENDELSON, Matthew PENN, Mehdi SALEHI, and Kiarash VOSOUGHIAN.
 - MSc DCNDS Prize for Best Overall Student: Brent MENDELSON.
 - Departmental Nominee for the Goldsmid Medal and Prize: Justin LOW.
 - Departmental Nominees for the Dean's List: Jason TATTON, Sunpreet GREWAL and Mohamed OSMAN
- Professor Mark Handley received the 2007 Roger Needham Award from the British Computer Society and gave the annual Roger Needham Lecture on 13 November 2007 (see <http://www.bcs.org/server.php?show=nav.9564>)
- Spring 2007 Away-Days for all academic staff plus senior support staff, held at Mitchell Hall (Cranfield). This was an informative and very useful 2-day event comprising strategy discussions and presentations on current work and research.
- Alex McKenzie was awarded the 2005 SET Computational Science Student of the Year award sponsored by Microsoft Research.
- Major new initiative in the area of Financial Computing, including a new MSc to commence in 2007/08, plus the setting up of a specialist computer laboratory which acts as a Virtual Trading Floor (see http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/financialcomputing/mscfc_laboratory.htm)
- MSc Software Systems Engineering students undertook their group projects in collaboration with Citigroup (see <http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/csnews/MScSSECitigroup.htm>)
- The new Centre for Computational Statistics and Machine Learning, based in Computer Science, was launched on 20 April 2007 at a high-profile event which included the Inaugural Lecture given by Professor John Shawe-Taylor (see <http://web4.cs.ucl.ac.uk/research/csml/launch/CSMLProgrammePoster.pdf>)
- Inaugural lectures were given by Professors Ann Blandford and Angela Sasse on 7 March 2007.

E. Major changes envisaged and main forward-looking recommendations for action

- Development of new structures for our 4-year undergraduate programmes, enabling students to specialise in one of four themes (implementation for academic year 2008/09). Undergraduates are often interested in specialising in certain areas of the discipline, perhaps for career purposes. So, by offering recognised routes for them to follow, and awarding degree titles which reflect this, we aim to strengthen their career prospects
- Development of a new MSc in Computational Statistics and Machine Learning, in collaboration with the Department of Statistical Science. This programme will draw on the expertise of new staff in the Machine Learning area (Professor John Shawe-Taylor et al) and provide a unique new specialist degree.
- Further publicity and marketing initiatives, to build on successful work done in 2006/07.
- Further review of UG teaching (setting up of a 'ginger group' to take initiatives forward).
- Major review of the structure and contents of the department's existing specialist MSc degree programmes. It is proposed that some of the MSc titles should change, to reflect the changing nature of the discipline. This review will need to address UCL's requirements that we move from MSc programmes comprising 7 taught courses + project, to 8 taught courses + project. It will also look at changes needed as a result of the move to a Common Timetable, including moving examinations from April to May where necessary.

G. Confirmation that the Departmental Teaching Committee has received an annual summary of the operation of peer observation in the department (i.e. a statement confirming that peer observation of all relevant staff has taken place in the preceding 12 months according to UCL policy) - please confirm that the annual summary has been forwarded by the Departmental Teaching Committee to the Faculty Teaching Committee.

All teaching staff were asked to undertake Peer Observation of Teaching. Those instances of POT which did take place were recorded but take-up was not universal and the onwards reporting to Departmental and Faculty Teaching Committees did not happen. This process will be chased more rigorously for 2007/08.