Reports from Year representatives

HONOURS YEAR

ACCOUNTING
Students would prefer to have semester 2 coursework deadlines after the dissertation deadline or less coursework in semester 2. Students would like if lecturers could send PDF files of handouts and journals which would save time for the students and make them easier to read. Students find group discussions helpful and would like to have this incorporated into all classes.

Response from Margaret Stewart: It is not possible to have all the coursework handed in after the dissertation, the general essays are to be handed in after the dissertation and the exams are not far away. Students should be preparing for the exams as they are for 1st and 2nd semester classes and are taking place in a condensed period.
It is felt that the timing is fine as it is as students have had many months to manage the dissertation process and should have time for coursework.
It is not possible to reduce the coursework as it is necessary to maintain the high standard of the degree.

General comment from Juliane Thamm about journal article distribution:
Please note we are unable to distribute journal articles for copyright reasons, we can only provide links to the material but not the full articles. Please also familiarise yourselves with
the online facilities of the library, this will help you for all classes and your dissertation research.

40425 Advanced Management Accounting
Student thought that presentations, worked examples, group work and having answers best enabled the learning process for this class. The students found the lecturer to be very helpful. Some students would prefer to hear from the lecturer rather than student presentations. Some students find that the unclear structure leaves them wondering what they have gained. They would prefer to have presentations that are relevant to exam topics and would like to have time to go over answers. Some students complained that the answers given were incorrect which they already find difficult.
Response from Julia Smith: The lecturer is glad that the students find the learning process (and the lecturer) helpful. On the ways in which the course is taught, it was made clear from the beginning that these classes would take the form of seminars. Students would be best prepared to gain the most from the class by doing the assigned reading beforehand, through their own preparations for the two presentations, and by participating in class discussion, and asking questions following the presentations. Indeed, in recent weeks, the discussion in class has been lively and well informed, and students have certainly benefitted from the presentations given by their peers. Having contrasting views presented also helps to show that there are different ‘takes’ on information, and that there is not necessarily always a ‘right’ or a ‘wrong’ answer. The lecturer disagrees that the structure is unclear; there is a format which each class follows, of student presentations, class discussion, followed by case / scenario study in groups. The presentations are relevant to exam topics, and follow the prescribed reading, on which the exam will be based. If students prepared more thoroughly, they could get through the relatively short questions much more quickly, and then there would be sufficient time to go through the answers in more detail in class, rather than as directed reading after class. The lecturer would like to point out that students need to get away from the focus of learning as an exam-oriented process; honours classes should allow them to explore in more detail the kind of scenarios that they might experience in the real world, and to learn to draw upon their acquired knowledge (from a range of sources) by applying it to specific situations. It is the lecturer’s experience that, once in the ‘real world’, students look back upon such experiential learning with great enthusiasm and renewed appreciation.

40426 Planning & Control Systems
Students found the detailed group discussions in class useful as it helps them for writing up case study assignments. The students enjoy the interactive lectures and find the mind mapping extremely helpful. The lecturer is liked and encourages healthy debates. The students would prefer not to spend as much time discussing the case study after it has already been submitted.

40428 Accounting Information Systems
The students enjoy being able to work and submit online allowing them to work in group assignments without having to organise a time to meet. Students would prefer to have a defined lecture plan and have details on how much weighting the assignments have. Some students felt that the assignments were not based on class knowledge.

40444 Public Sector Accounting
Students enjoy having the review of the group presentation by the lecturer. They find the workshops/research classes useful to get guidance from the lecturer. Some students find that spending a full class listening to other student presentations not helpful as they are studying
different topics. They would prefer to have more focus on giving feedback on presentations to identify strong points.

**40445 Accounting & Risk**
Students felt that the class had a good structure and enjoyed the interaction and having clear lecture slides.
*Response from Andrea Coulson: I am pleased the students are enjoying the class. I appreciate their positive feedback.*

**AG411 Auditing Theory & Practice**
The students like that they have the questions before the class as it helps to focus on their reading. They also enjoy the group discussion of papers. Students would prefer if the lecturer forces more of the class to answer questions. Students would prefer to have clearer deadline dates for the assignment.
*Response from John Dunn: John explained in the meeting that the assignment deadlines have now been given to all students.*

**FINANCE**
Some students are concerned that the marking process for the general essay does not take into account that Single Honours students have to write double what Joint Honours student have to in the same amount of time.
Some students would prefer to have handouts made available for their classes as they were in years 1 to 3.
*Response from Patrick McColgan and Helena Pinto:*
The credits allocated for the general essay, whether single or joint, are not based solely on the actual writing of the essay. 10 credits correspond with 100 notional hours of student work and the 5 credit essay corresponds with 50 notional hours of student work. As such, it would not be feasible to complete either the single or joint honours essay in the space of a single working week.

We give out the general topic of the essay several months in advance in order for students to carry out the bulk of their work on the topic prior to January. This is expected to involve literature search, reading appropriate newspaper articles, the report relating to the question, academic theory in the area, and so forth. We don't expect that a joint honours student would take the full week to complete the work for the essay because they have done the bulk of this work in advance, and therefore do not feel that single honours students are disadvantaged relative to joint honours students. Extending the time spent between giving out the general essay and submission is also not desirable as this would eat into the time spent on the dissertation and second semester courses.

*The following comment would also apply to lecture slides:*

The handouts for the general essay course were emailed to all students and a printed copy of the handouts was distributed at the general essay session. Concerning the slides being distributed in other classes, it is at the discretion of individual staff members how they deliver their course, but we would be happy to receive any further specific comments in this area as to how we can improve the delivery of our fourth year courses.
40415 Management of Investments
The students find the lecturer to be friendly and that she explains the material very well. Students enjoy the direct links to Financial Times articles and journals and having gaps in the lecture slides. Some students feel that the reading list for this class is often too much and lecture notes could be more detailed.

Response from Juliane Thamm: I have indicated in the reading list which material is required reading and which is optional. During the lectures I usually indicate the relevance of sources mentioned and I have also stated in the lectures and on myplace what my expectations are for reading with regards to the exam. I personally do not feel that the reading is particularly excessive for a class at honours level and I am happy to assist students in further prioritising the reading material, however, in the absence of a text book that covers all our very up to date research material it is unavoidable that students will have to spend some time reading materials on their own. I hope that the dedicated reading time at the next lecture will help students who are finding it difficult to balance the demands of this class with other commitments. I am happy to extend this to future lectures if students request it. As for the lecture notes, I will try to give more details where appropriate and would like students to ask more questions if they feel they are lacking details on any issues we discuss in class.

40434 Corporate Investment Theory & Policy
Students liked having the extensive notes for this class. Although some students find the lecturers hand writing very hard to read.

Response from John Capstaff: Just to say I’ll be more careful with my handwriting.

40437 Empirical Projects in Security Analysis
Students like the drop in Question and Answer sessions for the assignment. They also like the empirical content as opposed to journal based. Students find the workshops very helpful. The minority of students were having trouble with the subject matter.

Response from Jonathan Fletcher: Thank you for the comments. Glad that the class seems to be going well. Students who are struggling with the material are welcome to come and see me or to see Martin if there are any issues about Excel commands. However I should point out that the attendance has been poor in this class in recent weeks.

40438 Case Studies (Corporate Finance)
The majority of students would appreciate having lectures for this class. Some students would also like to receive more guidance on the assignments and more details about the course as some students feel that the class lacks structure. Some students would like to have greater emphasis on methodology.

Comment from Barry Koch: At the first meeting, it was explained that the first case involved the evaluation of two mutually exclusive projects as other areas of finance that had been dealt with in the first Finance class that they had attended. The arrangements were that I would be available each week at the scheduled lecture time to discuss any problems that they were experiencing. In addition, I suggested that they contact me by email if they needed to meet me between the weekly lecture times.

The structure is the same as in previous years for this particular class and as the cases do not really cover new areas, there does not seem any point in lecturing on topics such as ratio analysis, project evaluation and rights issues.
THIRD YEAR - ACCOUNTING

40311 Taxation
Students enjoy working through examples and find the lecture slides detailed and easy to follow and the layout leaves plenty of room for notes. The students like the lecturer and find his humour helps to lighten the lecture. Students find having a coursepack and printed solutions provided to them very useful.
Some students find that although the tutorial work is good practice there is a lot of it for the class which is time consuming. Students complained about the lecture room being too hot and hard to hear the lecturer if you are situated near the back. Students would prefer to have less reference to issues that no longer apply.
Response from Tommy Docherty: I am pleased that the students appear to enjoy the lecture and approve of the note/solutions. Regarding the tutorial work – I do not expect students to try all of the questions but a few turn up having made little or no attempt at any questions. The important value of this approach is that they get a printed copy of every solution. They haven't complained to me about the heat and at least 3 times in every lecture I ask if the students in the back row can hear me and they always reply – yes! References to the past are very important as it lets students know how we got to the present position in tax law.
Like the students, I enjoy this class – they have a sense of humour and are hardworking and well-behaved and have produced the highest average mark in the tax class for about – 15 years?!

AG301 Advanced Financial Accounting
Students like having the required reading provided and enjoy having seminar type lectures where examples are worked through. The students like the lecturer and find it helpful that she discusses the tutorials in the lecture beforehand. Students find the presentations in tutorials help them to understand the readings in more depth and many found them to be a good way of learning. They felt the emphasis on journals is good preparation for Honours year.
A few students have complained about a group of girls that talk throughout the lecture and are distracting students around them. This was a common complaint throughout 3rd year lectures.
Response from Margaret Stewart I am pleased that students are enjoying the class and the presentations.
I will keep an eye on the girls at the back and ensure they are told to keep quiet although I have not been aware of them myself.

40318 Accounting Systems
No class representative available for this class.

THIRD YEAR – FINANCE

40335 Topics in Corporate Finance
Students felt that having worked examples in class, the provision of lecture notes and handouts helped enable the learning process. The students felt that the lecturer goes at a good pace and her additional points were relevant to the points made in the notes. In the tutorials the students felt that the tutor answers all questions with a good description of solutions and they liked being able to have group discussions with the tutor and that they are approachable.
Some students would prefer if the tutor would use the full tutorial slot rather than just tutor for 20 minutes.
Students would like to have a break in the lecture and also would prefer to have a summary of journal articles. As before there were a lot of complaints about a group of girls that talk throughout the lecture and the class representative has asked if the class lecturer can look out for this.

Response from Yvonne Joyce: The class does not usually have a break in the middle for two reasons: firstly there are opportunities to discuss questions with fellow students during lectures when worked examples or activities are required to be completed. This breaks up the lectures and therefore the need for a break is diminished. Secondly, the class finishes earlier, as this is what students indicated a preference for in week 1.

With regard to a summary of the journal articles, the articles are summarised on the lecture slides. Lecture slides guide students to the key parts of the journal papers that should be studied and the papers are both discussed in lectures and in tutorials, giving ample opportunity for students to ask questions. Writing a summary is part of the learning process, which is a skill students must learn to develop.

I will monitor the situation regarding disruptive students, but thank you for bringing it to my attention.

40361 Treasury Management
Students like the lecturer for this class and enjoy having the class exercises and lots of examples. Students feel that the interaction between the lecturer and students and the use of real data to deal with more realistic problems best enables the learning process for the class. In the workshops the students like being able to work with exam questions and like the fact that the workshop takes place directly before the lecture and it is not compulsory attendance. Students would like to have workshop answers available on MyPlace and having answers available for past papers. Some students complained that there are mistakes in the lecture notes and that the lecturer is late for workshops.

Response from Andrew Marshall: Thanks for the useful feedback. I am enjoying the class. Workshops are not tutorials and students are expected to answer the questions with my help during the session. Therefore as I outlined there would be no solutions posted on the Myplace page except those questions we do not cover. Students who voluntarily attend these sessions should be prepared to do the required work during the sessions.

Late for sessions - Given that the lecture follows the workshop in the same room I am not sure that students have been put at a disadvantage on the times I have arrived late as we have covered all the material with time at the end for any questions.

Errors - if there are any errors in the lecture notes please let me know - the only error I am aware of is the one I pointed out to students in the lecture.

AG303 Empirical Methods in Finance
The students like that the lecturer works through examples with the class and found the workbook to be helpful. They felt the calculations were clear and the use of real data best enabled the learning process. The students enjoy the exercise labs and like the staff as they find them very helpful. They like that the labs are not compulsory attendance and you can work through the workbook in your own time. Some students do feel that there is an overlap with this class and other second year excel classes. Some students find it difficult to understand the lecturer and suggested the use of a new microphone.

Response from Leilei Tang: Thank you for the comments. Glad to know that you like me working through numerical examples with the class. Hope this course can establish a good basis for your knowledge of conducting financial econometric analysis.
SECOND YEAR – ACCOUNTING

AG208 Intermediate Management Accounting
Students find the handouts provided are excellent and very helpful. The lecturer is clear and knowledgeable and he works through examples which the students find very useful for explaining techniques. Some students would prefer the lecturer to slow down when working through examples. In the tutorials the students like working in groups although they would prefer to pick their own groups. They feel that questions and answers are explained well and like the use of past exam questions. Some students would prefer the tutor to go over more questions in the tutorials.
Response from Richard Grey: These comments are helpful and will be taken on board where possible.

AG209 Taxation
The students like the handouts for this class and having worked examples. Some students would prefer to have a break in the middle of the lecture. In tutorials students feel there are too many questions and some of them are incredibly difficult. The students also find the room too warm and bright. Some students would prefer more group work in this class.
Response from Tommy Docherty: Tommy Docherty’s Comments – see 40311. Having a break in the lecture is not possible because my class and Margaret’s class are end on, my class needs to finish 15 minutes early and start hers 15 minutes late – to give them a lunch break. I need every minute to cover the amount of work in the tax class. See comments about the heat etc in 40311. Some of the questions might be more difficult for 2nd year students – but they get solutions for all of them. I am not sure that in a technical area such as tax, group work would be useful.

SECOND YEAR – FINANCE

AG211 Portfolio Analysis
The students would prefer if the lecturer used the computer/projector to show examples and notes as some of the class are unable to see the writing on the whiteboard. The students would also prefer to receive their notes in PowerPoint format as it will be easier when studying. Students find the tutorials very helpful especially with the calculation based questions. Some students would prefer to have weekly tutorials rather than fortnightly as it’s a good opportunity to raise questions.
Response from Jonathan Fletcher: Thank you for the comments. Glad that the tutorials are proving to be useful. One of the class reps has got directly in touch with me about the PowerPoint issue and I will discuss further with the class reps on this point.

AG212 Financial Analysis
No feedback given for this class.

FIRST YEAR – ACCOUNTING

AG111 Accounting Technologies
No 1st year Accounting representative present at the meeting.

AG105 Introduction to Finance and Financial Statistics
No 1st year Accounting representative present at the meeting.
FIRST YEAR – FINANCE

AG151 Introduction to Finance and Accounting
1st year Finance representatives sent their apologies for not attending the meeting. The following report was submitted:
Students felt that the features of the lecture that best enabled the learning process were the lecturer, detailed explanations, adding notes to slides, examples of real world and having tutorial questions printed.
Students felt that the features of the tutorial that best enabled the learning process was completing questions beforehand, having the opportunity to clear up any confusion, group discussions and having answers available online post tutorial.
Constructive comments – students would prefer more exam type questions in class and to have the lecture notes on MyPlace before the class. They would also like to have worked examples of lectures online.

Response from Helena Pinto: The lectures would like to thank the students for the positive feedback.
Regarding the comment about doing exam type question in the lectures, these types of questions are commonly solved in tutorials. Moreover, the students can access previous year’s exams through the library; they can then attempt the questions. By the end of the term the solutions to last year’s exams will be available at MyPlace.
The lecture notes are available online before the lectures or soon afterwards. Examples are done in the lecture not only to provide its solutions but to explain the rationale of those solutions enabling a better learning experience. The solutions for the examples will not be posted online, lectures are an essential component of learning and thus students should attend these lectures.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING
Provisionally: Wednesday 2nd November 2011.
(Date will be confirmed at start of semester 1 2011-12)