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Evaluation summary for KEMM23 Advanced Biochemistry 15 hp VT2020

Course leader: Urban Johanson

Other teachers: Susanna Horsefield, Helin Hamarashid, Carl Johan Hagströmer

Guest lecturers: Henrik Stålbrand, Ingemar André

Number of students: 18, whereof 6 participated in the practical part given in August 3-21. In addition, 1 student was re-registered.

Grades after 2nd exam: 6 passed (G), 9 passed with honours (VG), of them only 5 have completed the practical part. Hence 13 have not yet completed the course, but apart from that the outcome is in line with previous years.

Evaluation:

I. Summary of course evaluations

Mid-course evaluation: Reported in the PM “Notes from mid-course evaluation meeting KEMM23 2020-04-22” made available for the students via Canvas. In brief, it was concluded that overall the course is working fine. Some suggested changes: A need for an informal forum for discussions of project plans was identified, in response a “Zoom-fika” was directly implemented. If possible, any revision of the schedule of an ongoing course should avoid clashes between mandatory parts and exams on other courses. Clarify the starting point in Problem 2 and how to present a consensus model of the topology predictions connected to LAB1.

Survey&Report Theoretical part (closed 2020-06-26): 11 answers of 19 respondents (58%). This is markedly lower than normal (76% five-year-average), but taking into account that two of the potential respondents decided to drop the course early on, and also that one re-registered was invited to respond this year, the adjusted response frequency (69%) is not so different. The categories were rated from 1 (very bad) up to 5 (very good) and opportunity to add free text was provided on each question. Despite the extra ordinary conditions due to Covid-19 that forced us to adopt digital learning platforms with short notice and postponed practicals, the general impression of the course is relatively good (average 4.0). However, this is noticeably lower than the five-year-average (4.3). Teachers, Organisation and Exam are the most appreciated categories (average 4.5, 4.3 and 4.2, respectively), whereof the first is slightly lower rated than the corresponding five-year-average (4.6), the second has not been rated in the survey before, and the last category received 4.4 last year.



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The Practicals (i.e. planning and preparations) also received a good rating although notably lower than previous years (4.0; five-year-average 4.4). The three categories Lectures, Exercises and Communication & feedback received slightly lower ratings (3.9, 3.8 and 3.9, respectively; five-year-averages 3.7, 3.8, not surveyed before, respectively). For Lectures this comply with the up going trend seen over the last three years. Exercises is back on track after the low rating last year (3.3). The self-estimated workload is 2.3, which slightly lower than the five-year-average (2.4), but still corresponds to an average of >30 h/week. The free text answers specified that the students particularly liked the planning for LAB2, recorded lectures and the study questions, whereas the constraints and uncertainty about the practicals enforced by Covid-19 and live Zoom sessions were disliked.

Survey&Report Practical part (done in August): 2 answers of 6 respondents (33%). The categories were rated from 1 (very bad) up to 5 (very good) and opportunity to add free text was provided on each question. The two answers appear to be polarized in the General impression of the practicals (2 and 5), Organisation (1 and 4), and Teachers (2 and 4). There was less divergence in the ratings of Own preparations, Communication and feedback (both 3 and 4) and the Mornings meetings, as well as the Support to develop independence were unanimously rated high (both 4). The Examination (report and poster session) achieved the highest rating (4 and 5). The Workload during the three weeks of the lab course was estimated to be very high (41-50 and >50 h/week). Free text answers specifically appreciated the opportunity to carry out planned experiments whereas a more efficient organisation, more assistance and clearer instructions were wished for.

II. Comments by teaching team

Overall the course is working fine but obviously all the uncertainty, the rushed transition to new digital platforms, as well as last-minute changes, not being able to do the practical part in the spring, all caused by Covid-19, is likely to be reflected in the evaluations and the lower rating of the General impression and the Lab projects course this year. The improved rating of Lectures and Exercises is interpreted as a result of our ongoing efforts to develop these parts, although the latter needs further changes as suggested by the Mid-course evaluation. The low response frequency and the somewhat divergent feedback on the survey of the practicals conducted in August makes it less clear how it can be improved. Possibly it should be made more clear that the assistants do not have all the answers but most likely can help the students on how to find the sought information. Due to the few students taking the practical part in August, there was more time to give individual feedback at the poster presentation this year. If there are more students a dedicated committee is likely to be required.



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III. Evaluation of implemented changes of the course

The following changes have been implemented this year:

- 1) After initial uncertainty it was decided that practicals would not be given in the spring but instead in August – two students dropped the course, and very few could do the practicals and complete the course. Most exchange students will most likely not ever complete the course. On the good side, there was more time to plan for LAB2, do the exercises and study the theory and prepare for the exam.
- 2) Canvas – steep learning curve but worked fine.
- 3) Recorded lectures in Studio – worked fine although tend to take much more time to prepare than live recordings.
- 4) Zoom was used for recording live lectures, as well as for exercises and lab planning – worked well, preferred over Conferences in Canvas since it is easier to use Zoom for everything.
- 5) Study questions followed by question/discussion sessions in zoom were implemented – worked well, clarifies expected learning outcome.
- 6) Exam via Canvas and Zoom and divided in two parts – two parts ok, but some problems with sending in the answers, both the paper version and the pdf. Using the quiz in Canvas instead appears easier for the students.
- 7) Individual practicals – students are likely to learn more technical skills, there are less conflicts, but costly in form of teaching hours.
- 8) Urkund was used to analyse lab reports, students affirmed by a quiz that they had read Safety rules and Code of conduct – no plagiarism detected.
- 9) Evaluation included questions on Schedule & organisation, Communication & feedback, Advice to new students – indicated most potential for improvement of the Communication part.
- 10) Lectures were revised and more time added – received improved rating.
- 11) Details of how plasmids pNHW and pPHOA were constructed provided in Canvas – appeared to have been clarifying.
- 12) Set aside time in the schedule for planning of LAB2 – worked fine.
- 13) Provide a poster from a previous year that includes a more detailed planning of the project to facilitate the planning in LAB2 – worked fine
- 14) Add the exact time for the deadline for the LAB1 report – worked fine
- 15) LAB1 instructions revised – worked better, but some negative values in the AP assay.

IV. Suggested changes

- Include a positive control for each lab group for the AP assay in LAB1 and further revise the instructions.



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- Clarify the starting point in Problem 2 and how to present a consensus model of the topology predictions connected to LAB2.
- Clarify that the assistants do not necessary have all the answers but most likely can provide advice for how to find them.
- Appoint a committee that gives specific feedback on each poster.
- Avoid clashes between mandatory parts in schedule and exams on other courses.
- Add the time for the midcourse evaluation in the schedule.
- Divide the evaluation question on Exercises into several questions to narrow down where the largest potential for improvements are.

2020-12-01, summary compiled by Urban Johanson

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