Malcolm Ryan introduced himself and stated the purpose of the meeting, and then opened the meeting at 1:03pm. The meeting was more aimed for general concerns that have been raised previously rather than individual units. Individual units will be discussed at the end of the meeting and if there’s any particular feedback about units then to contact the unit convenors.

Agenda 1: Computing Representation

MR asked the following questions to the student representatives: How can we make representation better? Who should we make representatives for the department? How can we make this happen? How can we communicate this to the relevant people? A student mentioned to introduce a Learning Centre, like the numeracy centre whilst keeping the HELP101 sessions. Students mentioned that those who attend Help101, are those who are actively wanting to do something about their learning,
and collaborate with each other to learn concepts. Students who attend and assist their peers during these HELP101 sessions would make good representatives for the department.

MR asked if students would be interested in nominating and electing representatives, or would another way be better. A student raised the point that if election processes are to be held then it needs to be addressed beforehand if it would be per unit or per tutorial groups within a unit. Holding it per tutorial groups does mean students get to know the representative during smaller scaled classes, however it could lead to many representatives being chosen for a meeting such as the liaison meeting. The student also mentioned that doing it by tutorial group, also shows reflection upon the tutor, and thus make both tutors and students accountable. Another student also agreed with this as well. They mentioned that the previous student representatives were never seen communicating with other students in regards to issues within a unit or department. MR mentioned the Faculty of Business is doing something similar to do that, and raised the issue that there are challenges in regards to logistics in regards to running the initiative, and the department will try and look into it.

A student mentioned that some students may not be comfortable even stepping up to student representatives in regards to feedback, and a suggestion was made to have an anonymous way to provide feedback to staff. Another student mentioned to do something similar to an iLearn space, but without the person but anonymously, whereas another student mentioned that students are more self-conscious in regards to writing on forums. MR mentioned that a forum would be a nightmare but a survey could be a possible idea. A student suggested to provide the tutorial feedback forms earlier along the semester so that tutors know where to improve. A student said that they do not receive the feedback form at the end of semester. TS mentioned that there’s two different forms: One is based on tutor which is up to the tutor to decide if they want to do it or not, and there’s no way to force it on the students. The other survey form is in regards to the unit, which is conducted every couple of offerings. TS agrees an anonymous feedback form is extremely important. A student mentions to add a survey option on iLearn, in which TS replied that was the idea, but it is unclear at the moment if iLearn will allow us this anonymous feature. TS asked how do students feel about approaching the tutor and speaking to them directly or do most students prefer going anonymous and have the survey results go straight to the HoD or HoT? Student says it depends on how the tutor teaches. If they are engaging, then easier but if tutors are passive then harder to approach them. Another student mentioned that word of mouth is powerful and students may attend tutors’ classes who they know are good at teaching the concepts. There is a communication gap between students and tutors/convenors. A suggestion was made for a form to be created but the responses to go anonymously directly to the convenor and not the tutor.

**Actioned:** Malcolm Ryan has established an email address O365-Group-computing-teaching-feedback@mq.edu.au which is forwarded to the Head of Department and the Teaching Directors. This email can be used by students to subject feedback on teaching related issues. Anonymous submissions can be made through an anonymous email service.

In regards to Student Representation, Malcolm is working on formulating an appropriate model for the selection of student representatives. He will be placing a call for interested students soon.
Agenda 2: FSE101

MR asked who was familiar with FSE101. Some people were familiar with it, but majority do not use it. MR explained it is an iLearn space that computing students should have access to, where the department wants to create a forum for specific for computing (including social events, changes etc.). It is, however, looking difficult to implement at the moment and was wondering if a computing specific announcement section should be made in regards to feedback for student representation, issues discussed at liaison meetings, and their progress. MR asked the students if this is worthwhile, or if there is a better way to do this? Students agreed it was the best option and form of communication for them, and ensures everything is in the one place. Another student mentioned that as long as there’s awareness around it, the space would be best used as current students may not be aware the FSE101 exists. This awareness can be created by putting a link on each iLearn space or have the lecturer make an announcement during class.

MR mentioned a moderated forum could potentially be created for computing announcements, feedbacks, general students in computing forum. A student requested a job posting forum, which would be open for any of the students or staff to post as career hub is difficult to navigate. Matthew R asked why career hub is not sufficient enough? The student mentioned that there’s no way to filter it, people aren’t aware of it, and the website is too clustered to find relevant jobs. MC mentioned that the department also receives requests which is sent my email. A lot of students unaware of student emails.

Follow Up: Computing is considering to create an iLearn space/forum and if there is a link with filtered jobs from Careers Hub, that would be helpful. Currently awaiting for an answer from Career Hub Admin.


Agenda 3: Skills Workshop

MR mentioned that there are general computing skills that are not taught in subjects, but are useful skills for students to know would like students to have, and the department is trying to do some form of workshops that are optional for students who do want to learn the IT skills. MR pointed out that currently there is a software carpentry workshop being held with other sciences which involves learning programming skills through modules and if something like that is useful. Students were unaware of this workshop. MR asked when would be the best time to do workshops like these, and a student mentioned holidays, whereas another student mentioned O-week which majority of the students agreed with. A student mentioned to include topics such as basic level of explanation, basic people and communication skills. The aim of these workshops is to have third year students teaching first year students generic and specific skills, rather than have lecturers and tutors to teach. A student mentioned that this would be similar to PAL sessions but that would be more focussed on units, rather than generic skills which the workshops would be focussed on. Some students were not aware of what PAL, so the student explained that PAL is a one-hour session which is taught by a student who did the session before, and is similar to a high school science class in depth. The classes are offered weekly and is in between lecturers and tutorials to further prepare for the classess. The PAL sessions highlight all the important concepts from lectures and also provide notes. MR clarifies
that the PAL classes are different to the numeracy centre type room that has been previously bought up in previous liaison meetings.

Follow Up: Workshops that are optional for students who do want to learn the IT skills, preferred to have it arranged in O-week.

Agenda 4: Computing Literacy Centre
The Numeracy centre concept is more like HELP101 but more designated space, and the department is still looking at its possibility for the department. One student mentioned that PAL was more valuable than the centre based on his experience, another student mentioned that having a numeracy centre concept is still important when you understand the concept but are stuck on at a specific point. TS asked if PAL would be more programming or theory based. Student replied that PAL would be more theory based and the numeracy centre would be more practical based. A student said that with units such as ISYS224, it helped to have a tutorial and a workshop to fill in the gap between lectures and practicals. Another student pointed out it was essential that all the topics complement each other (in lectures, workshop and practicals)

Follow Up: The Numeracy centre concept is more like HELP101 but more designated space and it would be more practical based.

Agenda 5: Unit Discussion
MR opened the discussion for students to provide feedback on subjects that they are studying

COMP343
The students’ main worry is that currently the lecture topics are going through so much content, that technical knowledge is being brushed over. The first few weeks’ explanation was much better but currently, the unit seems like a memory test rather than understanding the concepts. Another student mentioned that sometimes the examples are not relevant to the slide and there is a vague understanding of what is needed to get a distinction and high distinction in the unit amongst the peers. CD mentioned that Les’ knowledge of the domain is outstanding and that some of examples provided are for students’ culture, not necessarily to be assessed. The stories are to prepare for real life understanding. He also mentioned that they are aware of the issue and are trying to condense the material. Last year’s material was twice the content as much as this semester, but they are trying to filter information out even more. A previous student mentioned that the questions asked were too specific and it would be better if the questions to be broader so as to better understand the students’ understanding rather than testing students’ memorisation skills.

Follow Up: Unit Convenor, Christophe Doche, confirmed that he would systematically and collectively review the lecture and workshop material before the start of each week and decide what we keep and what we can cut.

ISYS302
Student mentioned that the core issue is between tutorials and assignment, as what is being taught and what is expected from the assignment do not match. Another student mentioned that the description of assignments is not as clear and not sure how much detail is required. JY agrees that assignment 2 is a bit vague. The students want a template of what is required, even though it was assumed that it’s a third year unit so it’s meant to be expected. Another student mentioned that
there is a miscommunication between previous units as report structure was not something that was taught properly in previous units.

Follow Up: The tutorials are the revision of lecture contents, they are served for the exam preparation, rather than for the assignments.

Currently there are 6 weeks of mix classes. We don’t have enough time for case study discussions, which could be helpful for assignments. This is something we need to change in the future offering.

The unit convenor admitted that assignment specification is a bit ‘vague’ because it specifies what we expected from the students without revealing too much ‘how’. I think it is a general impression of IS assignments from the students as one of the representative pointed out. In assignment 3, we have made the marking scheme more clear and explicit to improve the situation.

As to the template, it is given as some example reports (academic articles) are available on iLearn which students can follow.

COMP260
A student mentioned that one hour for practical is too short to get through all the concepts. MR well aware of issue – wants to split the unit into two, and that he will have to look into it, but is unsure if something can be done about it for this semester. Student suggested to hold a supplementary class, specifically as Unity is heavy on laptops, and thus students don’t get enough time to practice outside of class hours.

Actioned: Malcolm Ryan is talking with the prac demonstrators about scheduling some catchup sessions for students who are falling behind in the pracs

COMP350
A student mentioned that this unit is very practical and hands on unit and is glad this unit exists to provide real life experience. MR explained that this is a special project unit for third year, that is only offered to certain students

ISYS254
A student mentioned that it is expected for students to use power designer, and since they are taught this in class they are not familiar with other softwares, especially on Mac. Student suggested to use a software that can also be for operating system user.

Follow Up: Unit Convenor, Charanya Ramakrishnan, confirmed that she would be writing materials on two different software.

COMP225
Student mentioned that there is a huge jump between lectures and workshops. The lecturers are easy to understand; however, the workshops are way too advanced.

Follow Up: the Unit convenor will take note of this.
Computing Lab Hours?
A student raised an issue that the opening hours need to be extended (24-hour lab)

MR thanks everyone for attending and reminds everyone to sign their attendance if they haven’t done so yet.

Follow up: Computing Department would raise the issue to the University Central.

Meeting closed at 2:05 by Dr Malcolm Ryan