

University of Warwick  
Department of Computer Science

**MSc in Parallel Computers and Computation**

**MODULE REVIEW SUMMARY**

**Module S4 - Definitive Methods for Concurrent Systems Modelling  
1-5 November 1993**

**Module Tutor: Dr W M Beynon**

This document attempts to summarize the views of module participants as indicated on the individual Module Review forms. Student comments have been copied exactly. 17 Review Sheets were received.

**1. Objectives:** All 17 students considered that the module objectives had been met. Comments: "Very interesting - a different point of view about software"

**2. Breadth:** 13 students said that the breadth of content was appropriate; 2 said that it was too broad. Comments: "not much parallel content"

**3. Depth:** 13 students said the depth of content was appropriate; 1 stated that it was too shallow; 2 said that it was too deep.

**4. Expectations:** 15 students stated that their expectations had been met (or exceeded); 1 thought that they had not "but I was naive about the actual contents of the module".

**5. Handouts:** 13 students said that the handouts were adequate ( or over-adequate); 3 had some reservations. Comments: "some more handouts needed for the seminars (2 students)", "sometimes it was useful to have copies of the slides, the handouts should be better to be given at the beginning of the module", "maybe too many technical reports handed out", "Handouts were adequate, except notes were a little scatty and the explanations of basic ideas weren't very basic, ie. Agents were mentioned before we knew what they were - should have seen programs beforehand. Notes were too wordy and hard to understand during lecture time", "I suggest (a) enlarge transparencies, (b) give out the transparencies as well"

**6. Organisation:** 11 students said that the organisation was satisfactory; 2 said that it was not; 3 were unsure. Comments: "too much time taken covering material that could have been more condensed", "more time required for lab", "seemed to repeat a lot", more labs and practical sessions required (2 students)"

**7. Pace:** 12 students said the pace was appropriate; 3 said that it was too slow; 2 stated that it was too fast.

**8. Presentation:** 16 students said that the presentation was satisfactory; 1 said that it could be improved. Comments: "demonstrations especially good", "board drawing is horrible", "if teacher could slow down his speech then presentation would be perfect"

### 9. Most Valuable Sessions:

- ADM concept - "it provides a different viewpoint of computer language"
- Demonstrations - "showed the applicability of the various translators"
- Suitability of definitive modelling for determining the requirements of a system - "getting the requirements is one of the most difficult tasks for a systems analyst, as my previous experience shows"
- the Eden, Donald and Scout part
- a new perception on software modelling
- The railway problems - "gave as a chance to have more practice"
- All informative
- Practical lab sessions - "lab sessions can help build on the concepts presented in lectures"
- the first day's sessions (2 students) - "interest in software", "good introduction"

### 10. Least Valuable Sessions:

- the 5pm seminars (2 students) - "seemed irrelevant, omit them or just give as a handout", "too tiring and seemed to be repeating information, suggest just give out sheets to read"
- Demonstrations - "all the same after the first one, suggest leave people to look at them alone"

### 11. Miscellaneous Comments:

- "Not enough practical sessions - if we are expected to write a program using a completely new paradigm, some familiarity with using the language would be helpful"
- "For the practical work I suggest some unfinished exercises to be completed by students during the laboratory sessions"
- "Very little about parallel programming - seemed to be tagged on as an after-thought. But subject was new and interesting"
- "Split day with lab in afternoon would increase concentration span and give us a chance to put theory into practice"
- "Would have been better to finish earlier to try out system, and have a chance to read handouts"
- "It was a really good module, but I need more time to assimilate the contents of the module. More programming interaction is necessary, since I don't know how to run the software since everything is piped through everything else"
- "Railway disasters item useful but too much time devoted to it (an admittedly important point). More background required, ie. deeper coverage of Backus's paper, etc. more exposure to prominent proponents of non OOP approaches. More programming exercises. Dr W M Beynon is enthusiastic!"
- "It would be better to do more practical exercises in the lab"
- "The lab work should be based a little more on specific exercises than on demos and personal experimenting; so as to have gradually a better and deeper insight to the tools and the theoretical concepts behind them"
- "More practical sessions required"

### □ Possible improvements to consider for 1994/95:

- Include a few more practical sessions, towards the end of each day.