

18/19 Response to Feedback from Tutors

CH955 Decision Making and Leadership

Thank you for putting thought into the feedback which is appreciated

As this was the first time Ann, Nikola and I had all worked together, we recognise that there was some overlap in the ground that was covered. This will be addressed for the next session.

We liked the idea of looking at a famous leader (or some famous leaders) and taking some time to analyse the different styles/'ingredient x' that made them particularly effective in the given context in which they were operating and we will look at how this might be built in as possible exercise

CH957 Business, Innovation and Commercialisation for Researchers

It is encouraging to see that the students found value in understanding the fundamentals tools and processes which are used to identify potential commercial opportunities arising from academic research. Many of the concepts which we discussed (value propositions, intellectual property, identifying unmet needs and finding solutions) are immediately applicable to their current roles as researchers. Some of the other topics (e.g. sources and types of finance, business modelling) are of particular interest to researchers who are actively looking to commercialise their own research, but perhaps not to those in the earlier stages of their PhD. It is challenging to find a balance which meets the needs of these two groups fully, given the time constraints of the course. We are considering alternative ways of delivering this topic, including handouts with links to further reading for those who want to understand the subjects in more detail. We are also shifting the timing of the course to a morning session in response to feedback from this year's students.

CH953 Team Working in a Research Environment

As is usual, the feedback contained a broad range of responses and, on the basis that you can't please everyone all of the time, it is possible to consider that the course is both working well and not working as well as it might. We made changes from course to course, which is reflected in the feedback - for example, the removal of the Board of Directors exercise and the reintroduction of feedback in a dedicated session. There are some constant issues which we are not able to resolve in terms of the logistics, room set up and people's dietary preferences and there will always be an issue of time both in terms of the number of days and the hours used in a day. There are some issues that we believe should be considered, and I have listed them below.

1. MBTI. We are both certified practitioners and believe strongly in the value of keeping it in the course, but we do believe that the pre-course online test is not as effective as it might be. To use an interpretive report and allow only a very short plenary session (as opposed to one-to-one coaching sessions) can render the tool less effective than it might be. Given that the cost of reports is already steep and will only get steeper over time, our suggestion is to consider removing the reports but keeping the session. I am mindful of the point of view that the reports lend an air of authenticity to the work, but it does so at the risk of providing a document that time does not allow us to validate in a meaningful way.

2. Viewed through the lens of the Kolb Learning Cycle, the programme is as imperfect as it always is, but over the winter we will be looking at specific areas to make sure that the balance between activity, debrief, planning and plenary is optimised. We are exploring the possibility of incorporating reviews into the structure of the course.
3. The points about an end-of-day recap, making better use of the course handbook, breaks for water/toilet are all well made and will be addressed. In addition to this we are exploring how we might also facilitate an exploration of participants' understanding of their teamworking/networking skill level at the start of the course with a view to revisiting it at the end.
4. All in all, we feel that the feedback is favorable and represents the continued development of this course.

CH954 Science Communication

- Alter timings on Day 2 of the course (we did this for the latter two courses in 2019) to avoid excess waiting time for the BBC studios
- I have already spoken with IATL about modifying a piece of the recording equipment so it is easier to use for the students with only minimal technical training
- We will drop the communication ethics bit of the course (since we now have a full ethics course) and replace it with a bit of voice training

CH973 Research Ethics and Practice

- I am going to take another look at the Moodle programming for the release of the online completion certificate which is still not functioning as it should. If I can't get it to work properly next time, I'll get rid of it.
- I wasn't planning to make any other particular changes as I don't think it needs it. The change that would be most helpful is that all or the majority of the students actually complete the online work before coming to the face-to-face workshop but there probably isn't anything we can do about that.

Events

Creativity in Research

- There weren't any negative comments on this course, apart from that the projector wasn't working at the start of the session (it was one of the Chemistry rooms).
- However this is one of the courses that I am substantially reviewing this year. I have bought a teaching creativity research tool from a major training supplier that I'm going to incorporate to the second half of the session to increase the practical element of the course and make the session more 'creative'.

Essentials of Academic Leadership

- There weren't any negative comments on this course either.
- I don't think this one was renewed for 2019-20, although if you'd like to book it again feel free.
- It is a good course and featured an hour with the Registrar as well which both she and the students appeared to value.

Effective Decision Making

- The suggestions for comments were sometimes a little contradictory - e.g. make it shorter/make it longer and too much lecturing/not enough lecturing.
- What I think is that it needs a better case study exercise and some more practical application in the everyday experience of a PhD researcher (too many examples are from business which is where most of the academic literature is focused). So I'm commissioning my researcher Emma to write a better case study exercise over the next couple of months and will look myself at amending some of the more business focused examples to PhD-type examples.

Influencing and Negotiating

On the day in question in 2018-19 we had quite a lot of discussions which meant that we didn't get a chance to do all the practical exercises I had planned, particularly on negotiation, as we had run out of time. The group size was quite large and contained a number of talkative individuals. This year I'm going to reduce some of the morning discussion work so as to allow more time in the afternoon for practical exercises.