Umeå University
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Geography

2017-05-16

GIS and Spatial Analysis, spring 2017

Summary and concluding remarks on the Evaluation Survey

Survey on cambro was published 2017, 20-24 March. Reply rate: 65% (22 / 34).

(The two versions of the survey report available on Cambro have been merged in this summary)

1. How would you rate the overall quality of the course?
18 answers, mean = 2,6
Unsatisfactory 10 % (2)
Inadequate 29 % (6)
Adequate 52 % (11)
Good 10 % (2)
Excellent 0 % (0)

2. How do you assess the overall treatment given to you as a student during the course?
17 answers, mean = 3,2
Unsatisfactory 10 % (2)
Inadequate 15 % (3)
Adequate 30 % (6)
Good 30 % (6)
Excellent 15 % (3)

3. How many hours per week on average have you spent on your studies?

22 answers, mean = 5,5, i.e 30-35 hours

4. What concrete proposals for change of the course would you suggest?

Most comments refers to the assignments, and then mainly claims on reducing the volume of required text. Comments also address clearer assignment instructions and lack of feedback on the writing parts of memos. Other comments refers to the need to emphasize specific contents in GIS, like geodatabase, map design, how to access geodata files on the internet, etc. Some comments also address the absence of cooperation among teachers, and the teaching and examination division among teachers.

5. What do you think is the most important thing you learned during the course?

Comments mainly refers to ArcGIS and working with GIS.

6. How has the course organization and communication of information worked?

Major issues relates to schedules that was changed with short notice, unclear hand-in instructions, dead-lines, information and seminars in Swedish, despite the fact that English is the language of instruction.

7. Other: Do you have anything that you would like to add to what emerged in this evaluation?

Additional comments mainly relating to issues already mentioned, requiring better planning and structure, better communication among teachers, less focus on writing memos, etc.

Remarks and comments from the course management

The low mean score on the first question together with the critical comments is clear signal to us teachers about the need to make measures to improve the quality and layout of the course.

A major issue in the evaluation address the writing part of the exercises, presumably related with what have been perceived as a lack of feedback on the written part. One viewpoint seems to be that a GIS course should focus on maps, not on how to write about them. This impression might have been strengthen due to the lack of feedback on the written parts of the assignments. Some feedback on texts where provided as general comments on Cambro. Individual feedback on text can definitely be improved. However, the course GIS and Spatial Analysis, is not restricted to the technical know-how of the GIS software. The learning outcomes of the course includes also analysis and interpretations of spatial issues. Therefore, writing texts in the assignment memos is an essential part of the course.

A major concern for the next time the course is given is to safeguard the progression through the course. Hence, we must be more thorough in how lectures, assignments, instructions, supervision link to each other and contributes to expected progression and learning outcomes. This document, the survey report and other comments brought to us from students, will inform the planning of the next course.