



STAT278

Computer Simulation

S1 Day 2014

Statistics

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Thomas Fung

thomas.fung@mq.edu.au

Contact via thomas.fung@mq.edu.au

E4A 530

Monday 2 - 4 pm

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

[(STAT170(P) or STAT171(P)) and (STAT175(P) or GPA of 1.5) and (ACST151(P) or ACST152(P) or 3cp(P) from COMP or ISYS units at 100 level)] or admission to GCertSc

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit considers the use of computer simulation in problem solving. It emphasises the use of computer simulation as an investigative tool, especially where analytic methods are ineffective. Software packages used include the freeware application Scilab (similar to the popular numerical package MATLAB) and Microsoft Office products Excel and Access. The unit is very practical, with lectures, tutorials, test and exam held in a computer lab. This unit develops students' skills in analysis of systems, teamwork, communication, and formal reports of technical findings, and briefly introduces relational databases. This unit also develops practical skills which are useful in later statistics units.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes

Implement models in Excel, Matlab and Scilab

Use help menus and online resources to improve your knowledge of software packages

- Interpret the results of a single simulation run
- Use multiple simulations systematically to make inferences
- Organise and summarise simulation data graphically and numerically
- Analyse data, using confidence intervals and basic hypothesis testing where appropriate
- Draw conclusions from the results of data analysis
- Optimise stochastic system parameters by simulation
- Understand and simulate discrete event processes such as queues
- Understand and apply the concepts of correlation, time series and random walks
- Use basic SQL commands to interrogate databases
- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Tutorial</u>	8%	Weeks 2-12
<u>iLearn</u>	2%	17 March
<u>2 Individual Assignments</u>	20%	Weeks 4 & 10
<u>Group Project</u>	10%	Weeks 5, 9, 12
<u>Mid-semester practical test</u>	12%	Week 6
<u>Final Practical Exam</u>	48%	TBA

Tutorial

Due: **Weeks 2-12**

Weighting: **8%**

This mark is based on tutorial performance in the weekly tutorial exercises. There will be 11 tutorials (no tutorials in Weeks 1 or 7) and 10 tutorial exercises (no exercise to be handed in from the Week 13 tutorial).

For each exercise you submit on time, you'll receive a mark of 1 or 2. This makes for a maximum possible total of 20; your total will be multiplied by 8/20 to give your tutorial mark out of 8.

Each tutorial exercise should be submitted by 9am on the Monday following the tutorial class. You may find you can usually submit your exercise during the tutorial class. Submission should be via *iLearn*.

No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the solution to the

tutorial prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for special consideration is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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I Learn

Due: **17 March**

Weighting: **2%**

This mark is based on your contribution to the unit's online discussion forum. In particular, these marks are gained by completing the 'online task', assigned in the first lecture.

No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted their post prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for special consideration is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

2 Individual Assignments

Due: **Weeks 4 & 10**

Weighting: **20%**

You will be issued two assignments during the semester to be completed individually and submitted via *iLearn*.

No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for special consideration is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes
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Group Project

Due: **Weeks 5, 9, 12**

Weighting: **10%**

The group project will be completed in groups of about four. The focus is more on learning than assessment. It is marked on a pass/fail basis, and, with hard work, every group ought to be able to pass; group members who pull their weight will have a much easier time with the remainder of the unit. (Let's disprove the words of William Lowe Bryan: "Education is one of the few things a person is willing to pay for and not get.") Submission will be via *iLearn*, in stages, but details will be given at the end of Week 3.

No extensions will be granted. Late tasks will be accepted up to 72 hours after the submission deadline. There will be a deduction of 20% of the total available marks made from the total awarded mark for each 24 hour period or part thereof that the submission is late (for example, 25 hours late in submission – 40% penalty). This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for special consideration is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Analyse data, using confidence intervals and basic hypothesis testing where appropriate

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Mid-semester practical test

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **12%**

In the Week 6 lecture you will sit a 50-minute practical test. The test will be conducted under exam conditions, that is, silently and with no communication between students. It is, however, an open-book test; you may bring in your lecture notes, crib sheets, calculator and so forth, as you see fit. You should not bring a cellphone to the test.

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Final Practical Exam

Due: **TBA**

Weighting: **48%**

At the end of semester you will sit a three-hour practical exam in the computer labs. The second half of the semester will be more emphasised (because the first half will have been tested in the mid-semester test), but the entire unit will be considered examinable in this exam. The conditions will be the same as for the mid-semester test, that is, open-book and exam conditions.

Students are expected to present themselves for examination at the time and place designated in the University Examination Timetable. The timetable will be available in Draft form approximately eight weeks before the commencement of the examinations and in Final form approximately four weeks before the commencement of the examinations.

The only exception to sitting an examination at the designated time is because of documented illness or unavoidable disruption. In these circumstances you may wish to consider applying for

Special Consideration. For more information, follow the links on the Policies and Procedures page.

Special Consideration will only be granted to students whose performance in all parts of the coursework is satisfactory. If a Supplementary Examination is granted as a result of the Special Consideration process, the examination will be scheduled after the conclusion of the official examination period.

You are advised that it is Macquarie University policy not to set early examinations for individuals or groups of students. All students are expected to ensure that they are available until the end of the teaching semester, that is, the final day of the official examination period.

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Delivery and Resources

Recommended texts and materials

STAT278 has no text. Lecture notes will be handed out at the beginning of each module, and are available on the unit website.

A little further reading will be necessary: in particular, you will need to do a little research on the internet, and you will also at times need to refer to the on-line help provided with Excel, Scilab and Access.

If you wish to do extra reading on simulation and modelling, the library has many relevant books. There are dozens of books with call numbers beginning QA76.9.C65 describing simulation and modelling from a mathematical or computer-scientific viewpoint—many of these are quite introductory and easy to read. Books with call numbers beginning T57.62 describe the same topic, but from a more managerial or business viewpoint. Gilbert & Doran's *Simulating Societies* addresses the topic from the sociologists' perspective, but is probably a bit erudite; this book will mainly be of interest in the applications it describes. Also possibly of interest are Emshoff & Sisson's *Design and Use of Computer Simulation Models*, Naylor & al.'s *Computer Simulation*

Techniques and Gordon's System Simulation. Many of these books are surprisingly old—just ignore all the talk of FORTRAN and so forth; the basic concepts of computer simulation haven't really changed.

Four software applications are used in STAT278: Excel, Access and Scilab. You will have access to all three of these applications in the computer labs in E4B. Additionally, the first two (Excel and Access) are Microsoft Office products, and therefore available on most computers throughout the University; moreover, although they are not freeware, you very possibly have these applications installed on your computer already.

Scilab is freeware, which means that you can download it and install it on your own computer for free. It has functionality very similar to the popular proprietary application Matlab (there are some slight differences in syntax). The unit material assumes you will use *Scilab*, but if you prefer to complete some or all of these assessments in *Matlab*, that can be accommodated.

ASSESSMENT

Because STAT278 is a practically-oriented unit, you will sit a practical exam in the computer lab at the end of the semester, rather than a traditional paper-based exam. Your total assessment will be on the basis of your performance of a variety of practical exercises and projects. Your final raw mark (see Grading, below) for STAT278 will be a weighted average of marks for tutorial participation, iLearn contribution, your Group Project, two individual assignments, and the practical test and exam in the computer labs. Requests for extensions to the due dates of any assessment in STAT278 should be made to either of the lecturers, in person or via email.

GRADING

Your final Standardised Numerical Grade (SNG) and grade in Stat278 will be based on your work during semester and in the final examination as specified in the Assessment section above. Note, from its definition in the Undergraduate Handbook, SNG "is called a grade as it does not represent the raw marks, it reflects where within the grading structure the student sits." The grades allocated (HD, D, Cr, et cetera) are as set out in the Grading Policy (see the Policies and Procedures page).

UNIT WEBSITE

Enrolment in STAT278 should automatically make the STAT278 *iLearn* site available to you from the start of semester. To access it, log in at <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/> and select STAT278 from your list of *iLearn* units. Not every unit at Macquarie uses *iLearn*, so don't be alarmed if this list doesn't contain all of your units. If STAT278 doesn't appear, though, and you enrolled in the unit more than 24 hours ago, please contact David immediately.

The *iLearn* site is an important part of this unit, giving you access to the online discussion facility, lecture notes, assignments, tutorial exercises and solutions. Unit information appears there too, including this unit outline. During the semester, you should visit the *iLearn* site at least twice per week.

CHANGES SINCE LAST DELIVERY

No changes.

Unit Schedule

Please visit the unit's *iLearn* site for a weekly schedule of lecture topics, assessments et cetera.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide

appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- ILearn
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes
- Implement models in Excel, Matlab and Scilab
- Interpret the results of a single simulation run
- Use multiple simulations systematically to make inferences
- Organise and summarise simulation data graphically and numerically
- Analyse data, using confidence intervals and basic hypothesis testing where appropriate
- Draw conclusions from the results of data analysis
- Optimise stochastic system parameters by simulation
- Understand and simulate discrete event processes such as queues
- Understand and apply the concepts of correlation, time series and random walks
- Use basic SQL commands to interrogate databases

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- ILearn
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test

- Final Practical Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes
- Interpret the results of a single simulation run
- Use multiple simulations systematically to make inferences
- Analyse data, using confidence intervals and basic hypothesis testing where appropriate
- Draw conclusions from the results of data analysis
- Optimise stochastic system parameters by simulation
- Understand and simulate discrete event processes such as queues
- Understand and apply the concepts of correlation, time series and random walks
- Use basic SQL commands to interrogate databases

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- ILearn
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes

- Use help menus and online resources to improve your knowledge of software packages
- Use multiple simulations systematically to make inferences
- Optimise stochastic system parameters by simulation
- Understand and simulate discrete event processes such as queues
- Understand and apply the concepts of correlation, time series and random walks
- Use basic SQL commands to interrogate databases
- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- ILearn
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Interpret the results of a single simulation run
- Organise and summarise simulation data graphically and numerically
- Draw conclusions from the results of data analysis
- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to

read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial
- ILearn
- 2 Individual Assignments
- Group Project
- Mid-semester practical test
- Final Practical Exam

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Work collaboratively on a research project and report

Assessment tasks

- ILearn
- Group Project

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Use help menus and online resources to improve your knowledge of software packages

Assessment tasks

- ILearn
- Group Project

Learning and Teaching Strategy

STAT278's lectures will be complemented by several other learning opportunities.

In the tutorials you will use specialised software to solve exercises in simulation and related topics. You will be given an exercise to complete at each tutorial. During the tutorial you will work on this exercise. You should submit your solution to the exercise via *iLearn*, during the tutorial or any time before the end of the weekend.

In both the tutorials and the *iLearn* online discussion facility, you will be able to discuss the unit content with your classmates and tutor.

Furthermore, the unit includes a group project, in which you and a few of your classmates will pretend to be a consulting team. You will apply the unit's simulation and analysis techniques to an invented problem, and compose a report to submit to your fictional client.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
16/01/2014	The Prerequisites was updated.