

Summary of feedback on SMSTC opening symposium Perth, 2017

This is a digest of what students wrote on the feedback forms at the end of the symposium. I've included here only the points that were made by two or more people. There were 40 feedback forms returned.

Something about the symposium that could be improved

- The projector screen was hard to see from the back of the room (4 people wrote this)

Understood. Outside of universities and cinemas, it's hard to find a room where a large group of people can all comfortably look at a big screen. I think the best we can do in this venue is to raise the screen a bit further towards the ceiling, which will make the bottom of the screen easier to see. We'll try that next year, and I've already suggested it to our contact at Dewar's.

- More breaks between talks (3)

We do try to schedule the talks so that there's some variation, e.g. with no more than two stream presentations in a row. This is intended to make it more pleasant and to help concentration. But sometimes what's needed is an actual break. We can try to build a bit more slack into the schedule next year.

- Many of the presentations weren't that relevant to statisticians (3)

Statisticians are very much welcome at the symposium, and of course very welcome to take our courses. But it's true that there's not a lot of statistics in SMSTC, and the two statistics modules that we do run are relatively basic. APTS covers more advanced statistics better than we could, and there's no point us trying to reproduce that. On the other hand, we'd encourage statisticians to be adventurous and try some of our modules, especially given that we're currently offering many with a stochastic component—they might be more accessible than you'd guess.

- The lunch on the second day lacked variety (and vegetables) (3)

Agreed. I've already raised this with Dewar's.

- Put the event a bit earlier in the year (2)

The problem here is that although most of our member universities have their graduates start in September, at least one has a start date of 1 October. That's a strong reason not to do it earlier. It's also the reason why our classes don't start until October. I think the best we can do is to try to get course information onto the website earlier in the summer.

- More information on the supplementary modules (2)

I'm glad that there's interest in this. We'll have to think about what to do here. For now, see the symposium web page for the slides from the Supplementary Modules presentation, which gives lots of information on them.

- Have some small group exercises, and have more of the concrete examples during the tutorial session (2)

Thanks. We can try that!

Something you liked about the symposium

- The talks introducing the courses (15 people wrote this)

Great. The slides for all the talks are available on the website: www.smstc.ac.uk/symposia

- Curling (15)

Photos of you in action will be on the website soon!

- Meeting other students and staff (12)

Good! That's one of the main points of having the symposium. Don't forget that you can stay in touch via the Facebook group, called 'SMSTC 2017'. This is for students only, not staff.

- The sessions on tutorials, marking, and how to get a PhD (8)

Again, you can find the slides on the symposium web page.

- The talks generally: the enthusiasm and humour, and the interest they generated (8)

Thanks to all the staff who came and shared their enthusiasm!

- The organization and style of the event (5)

Thanks to Johanna for all her work organizing!

- The dinner (5)

- The food generally (3)

- The hotel (3)

- Tea and coffee (2)

- The friendly atmosphere (2)

Tom Leinster, SMSTC Director, 6 October 2017