

## **Module Reflection**

### **Description**

The Software Engineering Project Management module served as the antepenultimate module in the MSc Computer Science course from the University of Essex Online.

The main objectives of this module were to learn about the responsibilities of a project manager in a software engineering project and how they contribute to the success of a project. Over the course of the module, we covered several complex concepts such as BDD, the SDLC, Quality Models, and UX.

We had three assignments for this module. The first assignment was a group assignment where we created the initial design for the Synputer; in the second assignment we had to do a presentation to address the complaint made by EDC based off the initial designs and the final assignment was to create a portfolio to demonstrate your learning journey over the module.

### **Feelings**

I was disappointed that my reasonable adjustment plan was not followed as I only received the lecture slides in advance for one lecture when I should have received them for all lectures a week in advance. Additionally, I had to do a presentation for the second assignment when I'm supposed to have an alternative form of assessment due to my anxiety disorder.

The first assignment went much better than expected as I had negative preconceptions on group assignments due to my previous experience where only one or two people would do the work which was not the case this time which was a refreshing change of pace.

Whilst I got a distinction in the second assignment, I didn't have a positive experience as the presentation alone took me over two weeks to do as I had to redo the recordings several times whilst I was ill the entire time as such, I had to use the extra week that I am entitled to as part of my reasonable adjustment plan.

I'd recommend for Dr Buckley to spend some time updating the learning platform for the module as the learning platform was out of date and contained duplicated entries. This is not something I would have expected at this level of study and it caused a great deal of confusion to both me and the other students. For example in unit three of the module the formative activity was to respond to two of your peers which was already done in unit 2 and it said to comment on proposed diagram changes when the first collaborative discussion had nothing to do with proposed diagram changes, additionally in unit 4 one of the seminar preparation activities was also the formative activity, then one of the later seminar preparation activities was a duplicate of the e-portfolio activity in unit 3 and the seminar preparation activity in unit 8 referenced task 1 but there was no task 1.

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I was disappointed with the participation from the other students particularly in the second collaborative discussion as I didn't receive any peer responses prior to writing my summary post, in which you have to reference your peers' responses.

I believe I benefited from the poor attendance of the other students as given my introverted nature I felt more confident asking questions in lectures when two students attended. To prevent this from happening again I'd suggest for Dr Buckley to make more effective use of the module announcements.

I found the workload for this module to be significantly higher than other modules due to the amount of reading for this module.

Whilst I did appreciate that Dr Buckley made an effort to not overload his students with information, I believe the lectures did sometimes feel rushed and that I could have benefited from Dr Buckley going into more detail on some topics.

### **Evaluation**

The main positives from this module were; I got a distinction for all the assignments to date; I was ill for less of this module than previous modules, the group assignment went better than I expected and I received feedback from the assignments very quickly.

The main negatives from this module were; the learning platform was out of date, the participation of the other students was sub-par, I could have prioritised the portfolio assignment better when working on the other assignments, I missed one of the lectures due to illness and had lots of difficulties with the second assignment.

### **Analysis**

Whilst I don't see myself working in project management due to the interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence required to be an effective project manager. After completing this module, I gained a much greater appreciation for the role project managers play in software engineering.

I didn't expect this module to be the most interesting as I have previously done several modules and online courses on project management so thought a lot of this module would involve going over concepts that I was already familiar with.

I found the units on User Experience to be the most interesting as I was unaware of all the ways that a project manager contributes to UX. As someone who struggles with empathy and identifying emotions due to my disabilities learning how project managers use emotional intelligence and empathy to manage people could be a valuable life skill.

I believe the assignment deadlines should have been more spread out as the third assignment was due one week after the second one.

### **Conclusion**

Over the course of this module I learnt a lot about; the impact a project manager can have on the success of a project, the importance of project planning, how to gather

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requirements effectively, the different tools used by project managers for estimating, planning and risk assessments, the role a project manager plays in UX, the tools for ensuring software quality, the impact emotions have on UX, the role of the SDLC in project management and the different software quality, usability and UX metrics.

### **Action plan**

On any projects I work on in the future instead of jumping straight into the coding I will write up a detailed project plan and I will spend a significant amount of time to gathering requirements. Additionally, when developing any code, I will use tools and techniques such as linters for ensuring code quality and recommended best practices are met.

During the planning phase I will use the appropriate task estimation techniques such as the mythical man-month (Brooks, 1975) and will conduct regular risk assessment throughout the project. Additionally, to improve my decision making I will use a governance model.

Finally, after the discussion on the future trends in the computing industry I'll complete an online course on AI as part of my continued professional development.

### **References**

Gibbs, G. (1998) Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.

Brooks, F. (1975) The Mythical Man-Month. 1st ed. Addison-Wesley