# Introduction

This project will be a continuation of earlier rateMyLab work by the School of

Computing: it would allow for further development of an app for Android tablets that would be

placed in student labs/lecture theatres to gather from students: (1) end-of-class ratings;

(2) text comments; (3) (possibly) attendance information.

The project will also provide a system which will allow for analysis of the feedback data (e.g. for particular lecturers, modules, etc.), which will be stored in a server-side database. The system will be accessible to all lecturers for their relevant classes and modules.

Throughout this project, the end user is to be the focal point. Various user-centred design techniques and strategies will be used, including rapid prototyping and user profiling. User testing will be thorough, with the app being tested in the end user environment (i.e. in a lab/lecture) in order to ensure that feedback is as relevant as possible.

# Background

Student feedback is an important tool that benefits all contributors to a lecture or lab

class: (i) giving students a mechanism to report their assessment of the class in question

and thereby influence related classes and (ii) helping lecturers to identify and tackle

issues experienced by their students and thereby subsequently develop the curriculum

accordingly.

There is an already existing app (rateMyLab), developed by the School of Computing, which aimed to provide a mechanism for obtaining such feedback, but it needed improvement – although it was simple and quick to use, the feedback it obtained was seriously lacking in detail (it allowed users to specify whether a lab was good, bad or average – without specifying *why*). This problem is what we aim to solve with this new phase of development. The aim is to provide a mechanism which allows for richer feedback, whilst maintaining the simplicity and accessibility of the original rateMyLab app.

### Previous Work

On a more global scale, there has been similar work done in the form of Classroom Communication Systems (CCS). These systems have evolved, from being based on multiple-choice remote controls and then PDAs, to the more modern medium of Tablet PCs with wireless connectivity, the idea being that every student in a lab/lecture has one of these devices, and they are all connected through the medium of the CCS. These systems are very useful for bringing classes together in a collaborative effort, giving the mechanism for feedback and allowing for live in-class polling, and demonstration of both good and bad examples and scenarios. Group work is also made much easier as student do not have to physically move around to work together.

Some examples of CCS’s are:

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The main difference between rateMyClass and the traditional CCS is that, while CCS’s are more geared towards live feedback and dynamic lecture content (with increased student engagement the priority), rateMyClass is a more static, narrowly-focused mechanism, with feedback being given only after the conclusion of classes; the main rationale being that lecturers can gain valuable insight which allows them to make improvements to these classes. The rateMyClass app is primarily for the benefit of lecturers, unlike the CCS.

As regards systems which more closely mirror the functionality and rationale of rateMyClass, there are no doubt many real-world examples, but, in terms of documented commercial solutions, it appears there are no systems which are really comparable.