# COMP3131/9102 FAQs

Term1 , 2020

## Can I use C or C++ instead of Java in programming assignments?

No. This is not allowed, partly because all supporting code is available only in Java.

## Can I submit my assignment multiple times before its deadline?

Yes. As many as you like. But remember: it is always the most recently submitted one that gets marked.

## Can you teach during the day?

The lecture hours have been 6pm -- 9pm as this is a combined course for both undergraduates and postgraduates.

## Will you teach code optimisation techniques such as software pipelining?

Code generation and optimisation techniques, together with some state-of-the-art research results, were covered in COMP4133 Advanced Compiler Construction. But this course is no longer active but may be restored later.

## Why do you use the harmonic mean to calculate our final marks?

First of all, details on harmonic means in general are at [Understanding the Harmonic Mean](#).

This course strikes a balance between theory and practice. I will introduce the fundamental theoretical results that are essential for you to develop efficiently a compiler for a variant of C. Therefore, both the theoretical and practical aspects are equally important. Hence, the harmonic mean used in the course.

## The lecturer for COMP0000 says that the following assessment formula is better than the harmonic mean?

$prog^3 + \frac{1}{2}exam + blah + blah$

Does the lecturer mean that this assessment formula is better for

- all courses in the school, or
- COMP3131/9102?

I am afraid that neither can possibly be the case.

As a lecturer who teaches and researches in the programming languages and compilers, I believe that the harmonic mean formula represents a reasonable way to calculate your final marks for this course.

## Could you provide a binary reference implementation for each assignment beforehand?

We do provide binary reference solutions for some but not all assignments.

# Could you provide more test cases, please?

First of all, each of our assignments does come with test cases and their associated solutions. In comparson with many other similar compiler courses offered worldwide, I probably should consider to reduce the number of test cases supplied. In fact, the number of test cases provided for an assignment is usuall less than that provided for an earlier assignment.

As a software developer or programmer, we are often responsible for designing our own test cases to ensure that our solution respects a given spec. As far as a compiler course goes, coming up with your own *good* test cases usually shows that you have a good understanding about the assignment task you are working on. In other words, designing your good test cases is really an intergral part of each assignment.

Happy coding and testing.

---

*Jingling Xue*
*Last updated 02/23/2020 13:26:42Last updated 02/19/2020 14:47:11*