



STAT278: Computer Simulation Unit Outline

First Semester 2005

Division of Economic and Financial Studies

Unit Convenor: David Bulger

Students should read this outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about STAT278. If anything in it is unclear, please consult David or Clive.

ABOUT THIS UNIT

STAT278 is a three-credit-point unit offered by the Statistics Department in the Division of Economic and Financial Studies.

Simulation is a powerful investigative tool for understanding and predicting systems and processes of interest in a wide variety of applications, especially where analytical methods are ineffective. In this unit, using the software applications *Excel*, *Extend* and *Matlab*, you will gain an overview of the concepts and practicalities of simulation.

Prior to undertaking **STAT278** you must have three prerequisites:

- a "PASS" grade or better in **STAT170** or **STAT171**,
- a "PASS" grade or better in any 100-level **COMP** or **ISYS** unit, and
- a GPA of at least 1.5 OR a "PASS" grade or better in **STAT175**.

TEACHING STAFF

Role	Staff member	Room	Consultation time
Lecturer and tutor	David Bulger	C5C 464	Friday 3-4
Tutor	Clive Cheong		

If you wish to send email to the lecturer at dbulger@efs.mq.edu.au, you must use your official Macquarie email address. All Macquarie students are issued with an official University email account. It is now University policy that the University issued email account will be used for official University communication in conjunction with existing communication methods. All students are required to access their University account frequently. Alternatively, email can be forwarded to another account but each student is responsible for the information sent to a non-Macquarie account and for managing mailbox size to ensure that account remains active.

CLASSES

Lectures: Tuesdays 6pm-8pm in E6A 102, beginning Week 1 (1 March)

Tutorials: Tuesdays, for one hour, starting at 4pm, 5pm or 8pm, in C5C 217, beginning Week 2 (8 March)

Attendance at the Tutorials is mandatory. Eight percent of your grade will be determined by **your attendance** at tutorials and completion of tutorial exercises.

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.



STAT278: Computer Simulation

Unit Outline

First Semester 2005

Division of Economic and Financial Studies

Unit Convenor: David Bulger

Students should read this outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about STAT278. If anything in it is unclear, please consult David or Clive.

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*, *Matlab*, *Extend* 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.

UNIT WEB PAGE

The web page for this unit can be found at

<http://www.stat.mq.edu.au/units/stat278/>

and is an important part of this unit. It contains the hyperlink to the *WebCT* online discussion facility. Lecture notes, assignments, tutorial exercises and solutions can be downloaded from the web page. Unit information appears there too, including this unit outline. During the semester, you should visit the web page and the discussion facility at least weekly.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After STAT278, you should be able to

- decompose a system into simple elements for modelling and simulation purposes,
- implement models in *Excel*, *Matlab* and *Extend*,
- 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 and modify databases.

Moreover, like any unit at Macquarie, STAT278 will extend your “generic” skills, for instance in problem-solving, communication, teamwork, use of the information technology, time management, taking responsibility for your own learning and so forth.

TEACHING AND LEARNING 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 sheet at the tutorial. During the tutorial you will work on this exercise. You may submit your solution to the exercise at the tutorial, or if you need longer than an hour, you have until the following tutorial to submit it to your tutor.

In both the tutorials and the *WebCT* 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.

An approximate schedule of the topics covered each week is as follows:

Week	Lecture date	Topic
1	1 March	Introduction and overview
2	8 March	Hypothesis testing
3	15 March	Hypothesis testing
4	22 March	Random variables and stochastic processes
5	29 March	Random variables and stochastic processes
6	5 April	Random variables and stochastic processes
7	12 April	test in C5C 213 and then Queue systems
8	3 May	Queue systems
9	10 May	Simulation
10	17 May	Simulation
11	24 May	Simulation
12	31 May	Databases and <i>SQL</i>
13	7 June	Revision

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Because STAT278 is a practically-oriented unit, there will be no paper-based exam at the end of the semester. Instead, you will be assessed on the basis of your performance of a variety of practical exercises and projects. Your final raw mark (see UNIVERSITY POLICY ON GRADING, below) for STAT278 will be a weighted average of marks for tutorial participation, *WebCT* contribution, your Group Project, two individual assignments, and two practical tests in the computer labs.

Tutorials (8%)

This mark is based on tutorial attendance and performance in the weekly tutorial exercises.

WebCT (4%)

This mark is based on your contribution to the unit's online discussion forum.

Group Project (16%)

The group project will be completed in groups of about four. The focus is more on learning than assessment. Every group ought to be able to get a high mark here; 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.")

Individual assignments (15% + 15%)

You will be issued two assignments during the semester to be completed individually.

Mid-semester practical test (10%)

On 12 April at 6 p.m. you will sit a forty-five-minute practical test in the computer lab C5C 213. 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.

Note that the test will occur **instead** of the first hour of the Week 7 lecture. On 12 April, instead of going to the lecture, go to C5C 213. This is **not** the room you usually have your tutorials in—it is **nextdoor** to that room. **Be on time!** The test will start at 6:10, by which time you should all be sitting down in front of a computer, ready to begin. Therefore, aim to arrive **comfortably earlier** than 6:10.

(After the test, we will meander over to E6A 102 for a one-hour lecture, from 7 to 8.)

Final practical test (32%)

At the end of semester you will sit a longer practical test 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 test.

The conditions will be the same as for the mid-semester test, that is, open-book and exam conditions. The date and location of this test will be announced.

Illness or Misadventure: If illness or misadventure prevents you from completing an assessment task during semester you should contact the lecturer as soon as possible, and submit your documentation with the Advice of Absence or Other Circumstances form to the Student Centre as soon as possible, and no later than the last teaching day of Semester. This form is available from

<http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Forms/USSAbsence.pdf>.

The University Examination period in First Half Year 2005 is from 15 June to 29 June.

You are expected to present yourself 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—refer to

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/exam>.

The only exception to not 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. Information about unavoidable disruption and the special consideration process is available at

<http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Forms/APSCon.pdf>.

Please note that this form and the appropriate documentation must be submitted before the end of the examination period.

Note that there is a Division policy regarding requests for special consideration for examinations and the granting of supplementary examinations on

<http://www.efs.mq.edu.au/supexams.htm>.

Please be aware that you will not be contacted to be advised that you have been granted a supplementary examination—you will need to consult the website for this information.

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.

PLAGIARISM

The University defines plagiarism in its rules: "Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one's own." Plagiarism is a serious breach of the University's rules and carries significant penalties. You must read the University's practices and procedures on plagiarism. These can be found in the Handbook of Undergraduate Studies or on the web at

<http://www.student.mq.edu.au/plagiarism>.

The policies and procedures explain what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, the procedures that will be taken in cases of suspected plagiarism, and the penalties if you are found guilty. Penalties may include a deduction of marks, failure in the unit, and referral to the University Discipline Committee.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON GRADING

Academic Senate has a set of guidelines on the distribution of grades across the range from fail to high distinction. Your final result will include one of these grades plus a standardised numerical grade (SNG).

On occasion your raw mark for a unit (i.e., the total of your marks for each assessment item) may not be the same as the SNG which you receive. Under the Senate guidelines, results may be scaled to ensure that there is a degree of comparability across the university, so that units with the same past performances of their students should achieve similar results.

It is important that you realise that the policy does not require that a minimum number of students are to be failed in any unit. In fact it does something like the opposite, in requiring examiners to explain their actions if more than 20% of students fail in a unit.

The process of scaling does not change the order of marks among students. A student who receives a higher raw mark than another will also receive a higher final scaled mark.

For an explanation of the policy see

<http://www.mq.edu.au/senate/MQUonly/Issues/Guidelines2003.doc> or
<http://www.mq.edu.au/senate/MQUonly/Issues/detailedguidelines.doc>.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at

<http://www.student.mq.edu.au>.

Other information for Macquarie students is available from the Student Portal

<https://my.mq.edu.au>.

This includes access to your official university email.

The Numeracy Centre (C5A 225) may also be able to offer assistance.

