PGT Exam Performance Feedback
2013/2014 Semester 1

COMP60411  Semi-structured Data and the Web  Uli Sattler
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Comments  See the attached.
Performance Feedback Report for COMP60411 exam from January 2015

In general, students did well (average exam mark is 31.32/55, i.e., 56.9%, down from last year where it was 34.09/55, i.e., 61.8%), although 20 scored less than 50% and 8 students less than 40%.

Item analysis shows that the exam had a good spread of hard, medium, and easy questions, both across the MCQs and the short answer questions.

Like last year, the hardest question relates to grammars versus languages being single-type, and was indeed a tricky question since the student had to understand these concepts very well, and then they had to spot that the given grammar can be rewritten into an equivalent, single-type one.

Unsurprisingly, more students were perfectly able to write a suitable, easy DTD (Question 23 had an average of 5.7/6), and the few students unable to do this did also very poorly in the rest of the exam.

On average, students did slightly better on short answers questions than on MCQs (55.76% on MCQs versus 57.29% on short answer questions). If take, however, the 'almost perfect' Question 23 out, then students' performance on short answer questions drops to 48.71%, and thus they performed much better on MCQs!

With the exception of Question 23, students did significantly less well on essay question 21-24 than they did on MCQs (in order of increasing student performance):

- Question 23: only few students were able to relate the differences in format to the formats properties such as being queriable, error-prone, extensible, etc. Most importantly, many students did not realise that different items have different properties (a CD has an artist, a book has an author, a bicycle will have a size!) and thus should be distinguished.
- Questions 21: many students were unwilling to consider the possibility of a schema language that combines advantages of all existing query language – e.g., as we have seen with RelaxNG, higher expressivity doesn’t require the syntax to be more complicated!
- Questions 16-19: these were questions that only required a good understanding of the taught material, and the ability to describe some of the terms central to the course unit. So mean performance of 45%, 50%, 60%, and 35% are rather poor.

See the next plot, where the X axis list students in order of their overall exam performance, and