Algebraic Structures 1 - Exam Feedback

I was very pleased that a large number of students (26.3 percent) achieved a first class mark in this exam. The downside, however, was that 23.2 percent of the students failed the exam. This is disappointing, but not surprising, given the poor attendance at lectures and, in particular, at the weekly examples classes. In the examples classes I went through exercises that were closely related to exam questions. For example, I discussed parts (b) and (c) of Question 3 in one of these classes. Students who were there did well, and students who didn’t had hardly a chance of getting marks on these questions. Attending classes is beneficial! Some learn it the hard way.

Question 1 was largely of practical nature, and that’s were most students got decent marks. Question 2 was the most theoretical, it contained some proofs. Only a few students attempted that question. Evidently, far too many students are still uncomfortable with proofs. Questions 3 and 4 were of exercise type, but also included some statements and definitions. I found it astonishing that a lot of students were not able to write down the definition of the image of a homomorphisms. This is after all year 1 semester 1 material.

On the whole I think that Algebraic Structures 1 is not a particularly hard course. But, of course, if you do not engage with the course and rely on revising in the run-up to the exam (using the notes that are provided online), you may be in for an unpleasant surprise. And I may be in for some more marking when it comes to the resits in August.

Finally, thanks to all students who did engage with the course. It has been fun to teach those of you who came to classes. Good luck for Semester 2!

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