

Birkbeck
University of London

Foundation Degree
Information Technology
(Full-time)

Student Handbook
2015 – 16

Welcome from the Programme Director

Welcome to Birkbeck College, and more specifically to the Foundation Degree in Information Technology (FdIT). The FdIT is a programme organised by the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (DCSIS) which is part of Birkbeck's School of Business, Economics and Informatics (BEI).

We hope your educational experience at Birkbeck is a fruitful, enjoyable and stimulating one. You are joining a College that prides itself on academic excellence in a wide variety of fields. By joining Birkbeck, we hope you will add to and become a part of this reputation.

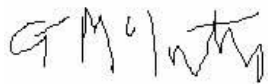
Classes for the FdIT, for students studying in Bloomsbury will take place predominantly on the main campus on Malet Street. As well as the lecture theatres and administrative offices, these buildings also contain a number of computer suites and an award-winning library.

As a member of the Birkbeck Students Union, you will have access to a variety of facilities including a wide range of clubs and societies, a snack bar and a bar with satellite television and pool table.

This handbook contains essential information about your Foundation Degree programme. If you have any questions that are not covered by the contents of this handbook, please don't hesitate to ask your lecturers, the programme team or myself, the Programme Director.

Enjoy your time at Birkbeck on the Foundation Degree in Information Technology.

Gordon McIntyre

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G McIntyre', with a stylized, cursive script.

Programme Director, Foundation Degree in Information Technology

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1 Programme Information

1.1 The Programme team

Gordon McIntyre is Programme Director for the FdIT. You may wish to contact him if you have any general queries about the programme that the Programme Administrator is unable to assist you with. Gordon also has special responsibility for work-related learning. He manages the work-related project module in the second year. Please contact him if you have any queries about this.

Tel: 020 7631 6851, Email: gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk

The Programme Administrators should be your first point of contact if you have any general questions regarding the programme or are unsure to whom a specific enquiry should be directed. For the FdIT they are

The Programme Administrators for the FdIT are
Andrew Moles and Zadkiel Santospirito (Year 1) Tel: 020 7631 6729
Karolina Kokula (Years 2 & 3) Tel: 020 7631 6724

Email (for all Fd administrators above): fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk

1.2 Enrolment

New Students

Once the Department has made you an offer of a place on the programme you will be sent a formal offer from the College which you can either accept or decline. More information about this can be found on the Birkbeck website here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/enrolment/admission-offer>

Once you have accepted the offer, the College will send you an email inviting you to enrol online. Further details of this process can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/enrolment/degree-enrolment>

After completing enrolment you will then need to formally register with the College. Details of the documents you are required to provide can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/enrolment/registration>

Continuing Students

If you are continuing to the next academic year of your programme, Registry will send you an email during the summer asking you to enrol online and arrange payment of your fees as soon as possible.

If you have any problems regarding your enrolment, you should contact the Registry on 020 7380 3020.

After completing enrolment, you will receive a College Membership card that will enable you to make use of the College facilities (e.g. Students' Union, College Computers, Library). Stratford students will be given a Birkbeck/UEL Id card required for access to facilities at Stratford.

1.3 Fees/Finance

The fees for new students are shown on the College prospectus web page for the programme: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2014/undergraduate/programmes/UUFSITEC_C/

Continuing students are notified about their fees for the following year via their 'My Birkbeck Profile' during the summer. Note that all tuition fees are subject to annual increases and are not fixed for the duration of the programme of study.

Details of fees and financial support for both new and continuing students can be found on the Birkbeck website: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/prospective/undergraduate/fees>

It is important to note that additional expenses will be incurred for the purchase of textbooks.

1.4 Term Dates and College closures

Term dates for the current and following academic years can be found on the Birkbeck website at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about/birkbeck/termdates>

You can generally expect to have classes each week during term time. Your personal timetable is available from your My Birkbeck Profile (see below).

1.5 Your My Birkbeck Profile

Your My Birkbeck Profile enables you to check information about your studies (such as the modules you are enrolled on and your exam timetable) and also to enrol and pay your fees online. It also shows the current contact information (email, address etc.) that the College holds about you. To log in to your profile, go <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/> and login using your ITS username and password.

1.6 Maintaining your contact information

It is important that the College holds up to date contact information for you – address, telephone number and email. You should login to your My Birkbeck Profile as described above and check that these are correct. If any details change during the course of the year, you should update them via your profile. Failure to do this could result in you missing important information about the programme, coursework submission deadlines and examinations.

All email correspondence from the College will be sent to your nominated contact email address as shown in your profile. The Department will send most communication to you via email, so it is particularly important that you ensure that this email address is kept up to date and that you check it regularly.

1.7 Timetables

A timetable showing the terms and days for each year of the degree is available from the FdIT webpages <http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/fditft/>. The dates, times and locations of your classes are shown in your personal timetable accessed through your My Birkbeck Profile. It is your responsibility to check this timetable to see whether there are any changes in the timing or location of classes (or examinations).

1.8 Taking a Break in Studies or Withdrawing from the Programme

If you are considering taking a break in studies or withdrawing from the Foundation Degree, please contact the Programme Director. They can often make helpful suggestions and offer practical advice that may help you come to an appropriate decision.

Should you decide to take a break in studies or withdraw from the Foundation Degree, you must inform the Programme Director and the Programme Administrator. It is important that we know the date of the last class you attended, as this will affect any possible refund of fees to which you may be entitled.

More information about taking a break in studies can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/break-in-studies>

Details of the procedure for withdrawing from the programme can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/withdrawing>

1.9 Information Sources

Details of the programme can be found on the FdIT page of the DCSIS website. This also contains a link to the up-to-date on-line version of this handbook and the current timetable.

<http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/fditft/>

Information for enrolled students can be found on the FdIT Intranet.

http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/dcswiki/index.php/FDIT_Intranet. You will need to use your DCSIS username and password to log in to this.

1.10 If you have any questions...

If you have any questions that are not addressed by this handbook, please don't hesitate to contact us. If you have a question about a particular module, please contact the lecturer concerned. Contact details for all DCSIS staff can be found on the DCSIS website <http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk>. Other useful contact numbers can be found at the back of this handbook.

2 General Information

2.1 Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your studies it is important that you make the College aware of it so that appropriate support can be provided.

Information about the support available for students with disabilities can be found on the My Birkbeck website: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability>

Details of disability support in Stratford can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability/stratford>

2.2 Computer Facilities

During your time at Birkbeck, you will be using two different computer networks. The main College network is managed by IT Services (ITS), whilst the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems also has its own network managed by the Department Systems Group.

Full information about access to these networks will be given in the induction session at the start of Year 1. Further information is available online.

ITS (Bloomsbury) <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/>

DCSIS Departmental Wiki (requires DCSIS username and password) <http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/dcswiki>

2.3 Student Union

The College offers support to students in a number of ways other than academic.

All enrolled Birkbeck students are Ordinary Members of the Birkbeck Students Union (unless they have opted out). The Union offers welfare advice and counselling as well as social events.

Full details about the Students Union can be found on their website <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su>

2.4 Childcare

It may be possible for you to get financial help with your childcare costs. Details of eligibility for this and other childcare support offered by the College can be found on the My Birkbeck website:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/nursery>

2.5 Careers Information and Guidance

Most students are interested in developing their careers, either within their current field of work or in a completely new direction. **The Specialist Institutions' Careers Service (SICS)**, part of The Careers Group, University of London, offers great expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of **all** ages and at **all** stages of career development. And it's Birkbeck's next-door neighbour!

Enrolled students of Birkbeck who are following degree and postgraduate courses lasting one year or longer courses may use the services of SICS *free of charge* up to the end of July of the year they finish (September for postgrads).

For more information visit **The SICS** website at <http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/sics>

2.6 Library

The Birkbeck Library covers five floors of the main Birkbeck building in Torrington Square. As well as providing a range of books for you to borrow or consult, the library offers quiet study areas, computing and photocopying facilities. The full range of facilities as well as tutorials can be found on the library webpage: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/>

3 Teaching and Learning

3.1 Study Time

You will need to do several hours of work outside of class each week. You will need to allow more time to complete an essay because of the additional reading and reviewing of material required.

3.2 Teaching Methods

Many classes in the first year of the Foundation Degree are lab-based. You will work with the tutor and the assistants in the lab sessions to cover the relevant material. This opportunity to interact with academic staff enables your knowledge to be reinforced and extended dynamically.

For some first and second year modules, the main mode of instruction is lectures. You will attend classes with significantly more people, from a wide variety of programmes across Birkbeck. The structure of these classes differs from that of the lab-based work. Typically a three-hour lecture will be divided into two parts, with group work, tutorials, lab work or in-class tests being completed in one half of the session.

You are expected to reinforce your knowledge through background reading and the completion of coursework and exercises both assessed and unassessed.

3.3 Moodle

Moodle is Birkbeck's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). You will access learning materials for your modules and also submit some of your coursework assignments via the VLE.

To login to Moodle go to <http://moodle.bbk.ac.uk> (note no www) and login using your ITS username and password. Click on the My Home tab to see a listing of the modules you are currently taking. If any module you are expecting to take is not listed, please contact the programme administrator.

3.4 Study Skills

Study skills and personal development planning are incorporated into the FdIT introductory module, Fundamentals of Information Technology.

The College also provides a range of learning and study skills support to help you succeed in your studies. This includes interactive online tutorials, study skills workshops and one-to-one tutorials.

Full details of what is on offer can be found here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support>

- Information about support offered to students in the School of BEI is available through the School of BEI Study Skills Area accessed via Moodle. This contains a range of tutorials and links to resources relevant to students in the School. The School also has its own Learning Co-ordinators, Richard Carabine and Eva Szatmari, who run study skills workshops throughout the year and are also available for one-to-one support.

ITS organises a number of workshops to help you improve your IT skills. Details here:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/training/workshops>

3.5 Study Guides

There are many published Study Guides that can be of assistance during your course. Here are some suggestions:

- Cottrel, The Study Skills Handbook (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- Northedge, The Good Study Guide (Open University Worldwide, 2005)

- Maddox, How to Study (Fawcett, 1983)
- Marshall and Rowland, A Guide to Learning Independently (3rd Edition, Open University Press, 1998)

4 Programme Details

4.1 Common Award Structure (CAS)

In 2008, the College introduced new regulations known as the Common Award Structure (CAS). These apply to all taught programmes in the College, which includes the FdIT.

Section (ix) of the introduction to the regulations states: "It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have read and understood the regulations. A student's misinterpretation or lack of awareness of these regulations will not be considered a valid reason for non-compliance."

You can read the CAS regulations in full at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs/cas>. However, the sections relevant to the FdIT are summarised in the following sections.

4.2 Programme Structure

The FdIT is made up of a combination of 15-credit half-modules (generally taken over one term) and 30-credit full modules (generally taken over two terms). You need to a total of 240 credits to graduate from the Foundation Degree.

Students studying the FdIT full-time take 120 credits in each year of the degree.

The modules taken in each year of study are shown below.

Level	Credits	Module	Year
4	15	Fundamentals of Information Technology (FI)	1
4	15	Problem Solving for Programming (PfP)	1
4	15	Introduction to Web Authoring (IN)	1
4	15	Introduction to Database Technology (DT)	1
4	15	Information Systems Concepts (ISC)	1
4	15	Introduction to Programming (I2P)	1
4	30	Understanding the Business World (BW)	1
4	15	Maths for Computing (MfC)	2
5	15	Working in Teams (WiT)	2
5	15	Information Systems Management (ISM)	2
5	15	E-Business (EB)	2
5	15	Software & Programming 1 (S&P1)	2
5	15	Option	2
5	30	Work-related Project	2

Module descriptions can be found in Section 6.

4.3 Progression

The *Progression Board* makes decisions about student progression at the end of each academic year. Following the meeting of the board, you will receive a letter outlining your programme for the following year; if you pass all modules taken each year that will be the standard programme listed above. If you have not obtained sufficient credit for one or more of the modules, you will be advised whether you are eligible for reassessment or whether you need to retake the module(s) (see Assessment section below).

Students will not generally be able to progress to year two of their studies unless they have passed at least half of modules taken during the first year (this means obtaining at least 60 credits). As a full-time student you are allowed to study for a maximum of 120 credits in any academic year. This means that if you are required to retake module(s) from the first year, module(s) from your second year will be pushed forward to accommodate the retakes. In this case it will take you longer to complete your Foundation Degree.

If you do not pass all modules in a given year, you may be asked to make an appointment with the Programme Director to discuss your progression. Please ensure that you keep this appointment as it

is important that your programme for the next year is agreed well in advance of the start of the academic year.

Where a module has pre-requisites, students *must pass* these pre-requisites before they are permitted to take the module concerned. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have passed the pre-requisites for a module - these are all clearly specified in this handbook. If you attempt to take a module for which you have not met the pre-requisites, you will not be allowed to enrol on that module (and therefore not permitted to take the examinable component of that module).

4.4 Scheme for Award of the Foundation Degree

To qualify for the award of Foundation Degree in Information Technology (FdSc), you must have 240 credits, of which at most 30 credits can be compensated fails. You will be awarded a classification for your degree based on the weighted average of the level 5 modules that you take, as follows:

39% or under	Fail
40-59%	Pass
60-69%	Merit
70% or over	Distinction

5 Assessment

5.1 Assessment Confirmation

Toward the start of the Spring term, the Examination Officer will email you requesting that you confirm the modules you are taking in the current academic year. You will need to log in to your my Birkbeck Profile to do this. Check that the module list includes **all** the modules that you are taking in the current academic year, even if they are 100% coursework assessed. In addition, it should include any modules that you are not currently taking (but have taken previously) on which you are being re-assessed. Failure to check and confirm your modules could affect your progression to the next stage of the degree or mean you are not entered for an examination you are expecting to take.

5.2 Assessment

The mode of assessment varies from module to module and is outlined in the module descriptions section in this handbook. If you are unsure what is required for the assessment of your module, ask your lecturer for clarification. **It is your responsibility to find out what the mode of assessment is for each module you take.** To pass a module, you must achieve a pass on the aggregate mark for the module and you are generally expected to have made a serious attempt at the individual components of assessment. For some modules, failure in some component may result in an overall fail for the module. The components of assessment could be (but are not limited to):

- Written and/or oral examination
- Written coursework
- Presentation-based coursework
- Group-based coursework

- In-class quiz/test

Whatever format your assessment takes, you should always be aware of academic practice, in particular plagiarism.

5.3 Coursework

Some modules are 100% coursework assessed. Other modules are assessed by a combination of coursework, in-class tests and examination. The Work-related Project is assessed by a portfolio of coursework.

For each piece of coursework, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the requirements of the work, the method of submission and the submission deadline. You must make every effort to submit your work by this deadline as late work will be subject to penalty as described below.

5.3.1 Deadlines

Deadlines for coursework are spaced during your modules to provide a balanced and manageable workload, whilst providing the lecturer with the opportunity to give you feedback. The comments are designed to help you improve your relevant skills as well as academic writing technique, in order to maximise your marks through the programme. Your lecturer will inform you of the deadline dates during the course. **Meeting these deadlines is crucial.**

5.3.2 Late submission of coursework

If, for any reason, you are unable to submit your coursework by the submission deadline, you can submit work up to the cut-off deadline. This is normally seven days after the original submission deadline and will be shown on the drop box for work that is submitted via Moodle.

Work will not normally be accepted for assessment after the cut-off deadline.

Work that is submitted late, assuming it is of a passable standard, will be awarded two marks: a 'penalty' mark of 40% and a 'real' mark (the mark you would have obtained for the work had it been submitted at the correct time). Unless you make a successful claim for mitigating circumstances (see below), the 'penalty' mark will be the mark awarded to you for this piece of work.

If the work is not of a passable standard it will simply be awarded a single mark, which will be the same as the mark that would have been awarded had the work been submitted at the correct time.

5.3.3 Mitigating Circumstances

If your late submission was caused by circumstances *beyond your reasonable control*, you can make a claim for mitigating circumstances.

If you feel that you have adequate grounds for making such a claim, you need to complete the mitigating circumstances claim form and submit it, accompanied by documentary evidence, to the FdIT Programme Administrator as soon as possible. You should also email the Programme Director and Module Tutor to inform them of the reason for your late submission.

To help you with making your claim, examples of circumstances that may be considered as reasonable grounds for making a claim and guidelines as to acceptable documentary evidence are given in Appendix A.

Your claim for mitigating circumstances should be submitted in advance of the missed deadline if possible or at the earliest possible opportunity, and at the latest within seven days of your final examination or assessment deadline for the academic year. Claims submitted later than this may not be considered.

If you have made a claim for mitigating circumstances, this will be considered by the examination board. If your claim is accepted, you will be awarded the 'real' mark; if it is rejected you will be awarded the 'penalty' mark. You will be informed of this decision after your case has been considered by the board.

The information above summarises the key points of the College policy for mitigating circumstances. You can read the complete policy and download a copy of the form from the My Birkbeck portal:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/central-pages/mitigating>.

Note that all late submission of coursework must follow the procedure outlined above; individual tutors are not permitted to grant extensions for coursework.

If you are having difficulties with meeting deadlines due to pressures of work, illness, family or other personal problems, please remember that you can always make an appointment to discuss this with your personal tutor or Programme Director, who will be able to advise you on the best course of action.

5.3.4 Plagiarism

All work submitted by a student as part of the requirements for any degree must be expressed in the student's own words and must incorporate his or her own ideas and judgements. This applies equally to coursework, dissertations and examinations.

Plagiarism - the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as one's own - in essays, dissertations or other assessed work violates all principles of sound academic practice and is a serious disciplinary offence. Action will be taken wherever plagiarism is suspected. This could be severe as exclusion from the College.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it from the My Birkbeck Portal.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/get-ahead-stay-ahead/academic-support/plagiarism>

5.4 Examinations

5.4.1 Problems/Illness that may affect your examination performance

If you have a problem or illness that you believe will affect your performance during the examinations, or if you miss one of your exams due to illness or other personal problems, you should complete a mitigating circumstances form as soon as possible and return it to the Programme Administrator. Please include any medical certificates or other appropriate evidence with this form. (See Appendix A for examples of acceptable mitigating circumstances and documentary evidence.)

If you have a disability, you should contact the Disability Office (see Disabilities section above). They will be able to advise you about any support you may be eligible for, including additional time, completing the examination in seclusion, or the use of a computer. Note that special examination arrangements are only available for students by arrangement with the disabilities office.

5.4.2 Withdrawal from Examinations

Once you are registered to enter for assessment of a module, you are expected to complete all prescribed coursework and to sit the exam (where an exam is part of the prescribed assessment). If you wish to withdraw from an assessment, an application must be made in writing directly to the Programme Director of the FdIT, providing the necessary documentary evidence. You must apply for deferral using the form downloadable from the Registry webpage at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/exams/deferring>. You should do this at least 14 days *before* the exam or by the 1st May, whichever is earlier.

If an application for withdrawal from an exam is not granted and a student does not attend the examination, a student would be regarded as having failed (through absence from the examination). This would be counted as one of your three permitted attempts at passing the module.

5.4.3 Results

Exam results are available via your my Birkbeck profile generally by mid-July. At this time, you will also receive a letter from the Programme Director informing you of the decision of the Progression Board as to whether you are allowed to progress to the following year of study. Please note that if you have a debt with the College (see Fees/Finance), you will not be communicated with or allowed to proceed with the programme until the debt is paid.

5.4.4 Appeals

Despite the marking system, some students are not satisfied with the marks they receive. If this is the case then you should raise any problems you have with the Programme Director. If you have reason to believe that the examination process has not been carried out properly, or that there is information that was not available to the Board of Examiners, you have the right to appeal and you should make this appeal to the College Examinations Office (not to the Programme Director or the Chair of the School's Board of Examiners) in writing. You should provide details of the grounds on which you are making the appeal.

Full details regarding the appeals process can be found on the My Birkbeck portal: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/appeals>

5.5 Retaking assessment and examinations

You must have credit (a pass or a compensated fail – see below) for all modules for the FdIT to be awarded.

You are allowed a maximum of *three* attempts to pass a module. If you fail to achieve an overall pass at your first attempt you will be advised whether you are eligible for reassessment for that module or whether you need to retake it.

If you do not achieve an overall pass for a module on your third and final attempt and you are not eligible to be awarded a compensated fail for the module, you will be withdrawn from the degree.

5.5.1 Reassessment

Reassessment means that you resubmit coursework and/or resit the exam for any module for which you have not achieved an overall pass. You will only normally be reassessed for elements of a module for which you have not achieved a pass. The marks for elements passed at the previous attempt will be carried forward. Modules for which you are being reassessed do not count towards the maximum 120 credits you are allowed to study in any academic year.

You are normally only eligible for reassessment in a module if you have achieved a mark of 30 – 39% for your previous attempt.

Any element of assessment that is submitted as a reassessment and for which no application for consideration of mitigating circumstances has been accepted will be awarded a mark of no more than 40%.

Students must re-sit examinations on the next normal occasion (i.e., normally in May/June of the following year). It is not usually possible to re-sit an examination in September. Students re-sitting examinations, without participating in the taught course, should be aware that modules/lecturers may change from year to year and that the examination may not exactly reflect the previous year's taught course. It is your responsibility to find out whether there are any changes. You are also advised to attend the revision sessions in the Summer term for any modules for which you are resitting the exam.

If you are required to resubmit coursework for modules taken in a previous year, you should obtain the submission deadlines from the module tutor and submit your work at the prescribed time.

It is the responsibility of the re-sitting student to resubmit coursework (if required), to register for the examination at the prescribed time, and to find out about the details of the current course and any examination implications.

If you do not submit coursework or attend the examination at the prescribed time for reassessment, it will count as one of your three allowed attempts at passing the module and you will be required to retake the module the following year.

You can choose to retake the module rather than being reassessed. However, this will then count towards the maximum 120 credits you are allowed to study in any academic year and some other module will need to be postponed to a later year. It will then take you longer to complete the Foundation Degree.

5.5.2 Retaking a module

If you have not achieved a mark of 30-39% for your first attempt at a module, you will normally be required to retake the module. This means that you will be required to attend all taught sessions of the module and reattempt all elements of assessment (examination, coursework, etc.) No marks will be carried forward.

A module which is retaken counts towards the maximum 120 credits that you can study in any academic year. This means that module(s) for the equivalent credit to the retaken module(s) will be postponed to the following academic year. In this case, it will take you longer to complete your Foundation Degree.

5.5.3 Compensated Fail

If you have not passed a module but have achieved a mark of 30-39%, the examiners may permit you to be credited for the module as a 'compensated fail'. The maximum number of credits for compensated fails that can count towards the Foundation Degree is 30.

5.6 Attendance Policy for Foundation Degree Year 1 modules

You are expected to attend every class. If you are unable to attend for any reason you should email the module tutor or the Programme Administrator to advise them of the circumstances. You should

also consult the module class plan in Moodle and do your best to complete the work that you have missed before the next class.

If you miss more than 25% of classes for a module and do not achieve a pass, you will generally not be offered the opportunity to be reassessed for that module but will be required to retake the module the following academic year. This means that it will take you longer to complete your degree.

6 Module Descriptions

Important note

Every module is subject to periodic review and update. The following, including the readings, are therefore subject to change. Module tutors will provide detailed outlines at the start of each module, when the recommended books to purchase will be confirmed.

Modules studied in Year 1

Fundamentals of Information Technology

(COIY067H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Gordon McIntyre

Duration: 3 hours per week for 10 weeks (including induction and self-study weeks)

Prerequisites:

- Basic PC and internet skills
- File compression tools (compress files, extract compressed files using WinZip or other compression tool)
- Folder and file management (create, rename and organise folders, recognise file types from their file extension, change folder options)
- Searching web using a browser
- Basic word processing skills

Description

This module provides a clear overview of the role of information technology (IT) in the broader context of information systems (IS). It helps learners distinguish between different kinds of IT solution, to understand how they are designed developed and utilized, and to describe their main components and interactions. The course also provides an overview of some of the problematic issues raised by the growing role of IT in society, including data security, software piracy and surveillance. Finally, the course also incorporates year one Personal Development Planning (PDP) and helps to equip you with the study skills required for future study in IT.

Aims and Objectives

The module helps learners to:

- to describe the role of information technology in the broader context of information systems.

- to distinguish between different roles and responsibilities in IT in the workplace
- to determine the role of IT in small and large organizations
- to break down IT systems into their constituent elements
- to describe the processes through which IT solutions are designed and developed
- to distinguish between different network and internet technologies
- to identify security related issues in IT
- to recognize the social and ethical issues raised by society's growing dependence on IT
- to demonstrate a range of academic skills at foundation level
- to demonstrate competence in personal development planning

Assessment

The module is 100% coursework. The coursework consists of a portfolio of short tasks based on the weekly topics covered in class. The portfolio is submitted in three parts. The first part (20%) will consist of two completed tasks. The second part (70%) will consist of a further three completed tasks and a final portfolio document. The third part (10%) will consist of four PDP tasks.

Recommended Reading

For a list of recommended texts for this module, please see the suggested reading list in Moodle.

Introduction to Web Authoring

(SSCS004H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Gordon McIntyre

Duration: 3 hours per week for 9 weeks (including self-study week)

Prerequisites: None

Description

This module introduces you to the use of HTML 5 and CSS 3 for web design. It also introduces colour theory and typography. You will learn how to build websites to the latest usability, accessibility and technical standards. As part of the practical element of the module, you will create your own fully web standards compliant website based on a case study or an organization of your choice.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the course are to:

- Create simple web page structures using HTML 5
- Format web pages using cascading style sheets (CSS)
- Build websites that conform to design and accessibility standards, and usability principles
- Validate and publish websites
- Design and implement website navigation schema
- Create a range of web page layouts using CSS
- Create websites that conform to colour theory and design guidelines

Assessment

This module is 100% assignment assessed. This is divided into tutor marked assignments (25%) and submission of a final module assignment which includes the development of a website and accompanying learning log (75%).

We highly recommend you take the time to complete **all** parts of this module, as this could make the difference between you passing and failing the module.

Recommended Reading

For a list of recommended texts for this module, please see the suggested reading list in Moodle.

Introduction to Database Technology

(COIY068H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Peter Wood

Duration: 3 hours per week for 9 weeks (including self-study week)

Prerequisites: None

Description

This module teaches the basic principles of database design and applies them to a small business case study. You will gain experience in the use of the SQL query language for data definition and data manipulation. The module provides a practical grounding for further study of information systems in the later years of your degree.

Aims and Objectives

- To introduce the basic principles of database design.
- To apply these principles to a small business case study.
- To gain experience in the use of the SQL query language for data definition and data manipulation.
- To provide a practical grounding for further study of information systems in later years of the Foundation Degree.

Assessment

The module is 100% coursework assessed. There are two pieces of assessed work. The TMA is submitted in Week 5 of the module and contributes 25% of the overall marks for the module. The FMA is submitted after the end of the module and contributes the remaining 75% of the marks.

Recommended Reading: None

Problem Solving for Programming

(BUCI006H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Tingting Han

Duration: 3 hours per week for 9 weeks (including self-study week)

Pre-requisites: None

Description

Programming is a three part activity (1) problem-solving (2) algorithm development (3) coding. In order to excel at the coding part, learners must learn to master the problem-solving and algorithm development parts. This module separates out the activities of problem-solving and algorithm development from the activity of coding and seeks to teach learners to think like programmers before they begin to work with actual programming languages.

Aims and Objectives

During this module you will: -

- Demonstrate the ability to understand structure and solve complex problems using a range of problem-solving strategies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of problem solving as it relates to computers and computer programming
- Design and document a range of simple computer programmes using programming language independent pseudo code.
- Use a range of basic programming elements (e.g. variables, conditional structures and loops) with competence
- Devise a range of basic algorithms in programming language independent pseudo code
- Competently use mathematical operators and Boolean logic in the production of algorithms
- Produce diagrams of programming solutions which follow structured programming guidelines

Assessment

The module will be assessed by one home assignment (to be handed in week 5) and two short in-class assignments in week 7 and 9. An overall pass mark of 40% is needed to complete the module.

Essential Reading

Vickers, P. 2008. *How to Think Like a Programmer*. Cengage

Recommended Reading

Gaddis, T. 2007. *Starting out with Programming Logic and Design*. Addison Wesley.

Information Systems Concepts

(COIY016H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Roman Kontchakov

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks (1 term)

Prerequisites: None

Description

The goal of this module is to introduce the basic concepts of information systems and basic techniques for systems analysis & design.

Aims and Objectives

On completion of this course a sound student will

- have a preliminary understanding of object oriented technology
- know a process through which information systems are developed
- be able to build requirements models for information systems using UML 2

Assessment

Coursework (20%): two in-class tests and one group project.

Examination (80%): one two-hour written exam.

Recommended Reading

Bennet S, McRobb S & Farmer R (2010) Object-Oriented Systems Analysis and Design using UML, 4/e, McGraw-Hill.

Module Convenor: Steve Maybank

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks

Prerequisites: None

Description

This module builds on the skills you learned in Problem Solving for Programming. It will introduce the Java programming language and teaches you the skills you will need to be able to build, compile and run small effective computer applications.

Aims and Objectives

This module will cover:

- Programming languages and concepts
- Compiling and interpreting programs
- Basic elements in a high level programming language
- Primitive data types
- Variables and declarations
- The assignment statement
- Arithmetic and Boolean expressions
- Constructs to support control flow, conditional statements, iterative structures
- Strings
- Basic input and output
- Introduction to subroutines (i.e. methods/functions/procedures)

Assessment

Assessment is by a mixture of in-class test (30%) and exam (70%).

Essential Reading

Cay S. Horstmann Java for Everyone, Wiley, 2010

Recommended Reading

D.J. Barnes and M. Kolling. Objects First with Java: a practical introduction using BlueJ. Second edition. Prentice Hall, 2005

Introductions: Understanding the World of Business

(SSEA025S4)

30 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Chris Hatfield

Description

This module aims to develop students' confidence and enthusiasm to work independently and collaboratively to explore topics relevant to the interdisciplinary study of business in higher education. Considerable attention will be given to the development of study skills and learning processes that will contribute to students' successful undergraduate study. Students will be encouraged to draw on their life / work experience alongside academic research and commentary to investigate some key questions related to the study and practice of business in contemporary societies. Students will be introduced to technology enhanced learning and the contribution it can make to their academic and professional development. They will also be introduced to the personal/professional development portfolio as a resource through which to reflect on their learning and to plan for their ongoing learning development.

Objectives

- describe some key approaches and perspectives relevant to the study of business disciplines
- apply perspectives drawn from business disciplines to the exploration of a case study from the contemporary business world
- critically analyse, evaluate and compare a range of sources relevant to the study of the business world.
- critically analyse, evaluate and apply some 'theoretical' ideas about learning to reflection on their own learning processes.
- use and apply information technology in a critical and evaluative way for effective completion of specific tasks.
- recognise and employ the skills necessary to express themselves clearly in a range of written and oral forms relevant to the study of business disciplines.
- practice, apply and develop a range of transferable skills to contribute to their academic, personal and professional development.
- analyse the significance of social/ cultural diversity and inequalities for the study of Business and for an understanding of their own and others' experiences of learning development.
- use a personal development plan/e-portfolio as a medium for setting goals, reflecting on learning, recording achievement and evaluating their progress towards academic, work related and personal objectives.

Assessment: four pieces of coursework

Recommended reading

Please note that reading lists may be altered: you will be informed in the first class which books you should purchase. If you wish to buy books in advance, please only purchase those books marked 'main text'.

Main text

- Cottrell, S. (2008) The Study Skills Handbook (3rd Edition) Palgrave Macmillan

Supplementary Reading

- Cottrell, S. (2010) Skills for Success: The Personal Development Planning Handbook (2nd Edition) Palgrave Macmillan
- Cottrell, S. (2011) Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument, (2nd edition) Palgrave Macmillan

Further reading and resources will be available via the Virtual Learning Environment.

6.1 Modules studied in Year 2

Mathematics for Computing

(COIY040H4)

15 credits, level 4

Module Convenor: Igor Razgon

Lecturer: Andy Purkiss-Trew

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks (1 term)

Prerequisites: Problem Solving for Programming or equivalent

Description

This module covers the fundamentals of mathematics commonly applied to computing. It aims to introduce the basic elements of discrete mathematics that provide a foundation for the understanding of algorithms and data structures used in computer science.

Aims and Objectives

On successful completion of this course you will: -

- Be competent with the basic elements of discrete mathematics
- Be familiar with algorithms
- Have an understanding of the data structures used in computer science

Assessment

Coursework (30%)

One two hour written examination (70%).

Recommended Reading

Lipshutz, S, Schaum's Outline Essential Computer Mathematics

Working in Teams

15 Credits Level 5

(BUC1005H5)

Module Convenor: Gordon McIntyre

Duration: 3 hours per week for 10 weeks (including study break)

Prerequisites: None

Module Overview

Teams and team work are at the core of today's IT and IT-related enterprises and organisations. Understanding how to effectively work in teams is, thus, essential for new entrants to the IT industry. The module aims to familiarize students with a combination of the theoretical and practical aspects of both face-to-face and virtual team work. The first part of the module looks at team building, task management, team roles, as well as inter-team-conflict and conflict resolution. The second part of the module shifts the focus of the module to virtual teams, examining the different types of technology used in virtual working, as well as the affordances and constraints associated with each type of technology.

Throughout the course of the module, students benefit from working together in teams, and hands-on use of the techniques, theory and technology they encounter in their classroom studies.

Module Learning Outcomes

- Understand the role and importance of teams in organisations
- Define the key characteristics of effective teams
- Explain the team development lifecycle
- Recognize the key skills needed to work in and manage teams
- Understand the range of technology used in virtual team work
- Understand the issues raised by using digital technology in virtual team work
- Use a range of groupware to complete team tasks
- Work successfully as part of a team
- Successfully manage a complex and demanding workload.

Assessment

The module is 100% coursework assessed. The components to be assessed are:

- Team essay (1500 word max): 25%

- Team report (3000 words max): 75%

Recommended Module Reading

Cook, S 2009. Building a High-Performance Team. IT Governance. Cambridge, UK.

Parker, G. 2008. Team Players and Teamwork: New Strategies for Developing Successful Collaboration. Jossey Bass.

Lepsinger, R & DeRosa, D. 2010. Virtual Team Success: A Practical Guide for Working and Leading from a Distance. Jossey Bass.

Settle Murphy, N (2012). Leading Effective Virtual Teams: Overcoming Time and Distance to Achieve Exceptional Results. CRC Press.

Information Systems Management

(COIY019H5)

15 credits, level 5

Module Convenor: Andrea Cali

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks (1 term)

Prerequisites: None

Description

This module aims at providing a wide range of tools for information system management and design, including object-oriented design principles, database design, architecture design, and project management techniques.

Aims and Objectives

On successful completion of this module a student will be expected to:

- have knowledge and understanding of object oriented design, database design architecture design and project management
- model and design classes for object-oriented computer based systems
- develop strategies for solving design problems
- carry out a requirements analysis
- evaluate projects in terms of costs and benefits
- manage a project in its various phases
- apply several software development processes, according to the requirements
- design and manage data in an information system
- understand and design architectures in information systems
- have acquired skills in reporting, analysis and problem solving
- have knowledge and understanding of commercial and economic issues

Assessment

Coursework (20%): in-class tests

One two-hour examination (80%).

Recommended Reading

Bennet S, McRobb S & Farmer R (2010) *Object-Oriented Systems Analysis and Design using UML*, 4/e, McGraw-Hill, ISBN 9780077125363.

E-business

(COIY042H5)

15 credits, level 5

Module Convenor: George Roussos

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks (1 term)

Prerequisites: None

Description

The module is an introduction to the basic concepts of e-business, e-commerce and mobile and social commerce, including presentation and discussion of the strategies and technologies involved. It discusses basic concepts of e-commerce, discusses and explains theoretical and practical issues of conducting business over the internet and the Web, and presents methods for evaluating user needs. Topics covered include: E-business Infrastructure, Selling and Marketing on the Web, Web Server Hardware and Software, Business-to-Business strategies, Virtual Communities, Web Portals, E-commerce Software, Payment systems, Security and User Experience.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this module is to present and discuss concepts and challenges of e-business, including a balanced coverage of both the technical and the management (operational, tactical and strategic) aspects of successful e-business. It covers business strategies, and technologies involved in the design and deployment of business on the internet and World Wide Web.

On completion of the module, students should be able to:

- discuss modern computing infrastructures from the perspective of the internet and organisations
- discuss and explain theoretical and practical issues of conducting business over the internet and the Web
- reflect on general principles revealed through practical exploration of specific tools, techniques and methods in e-business.

Assessment

4000-word essay (25%)

One two-hour written examination (75%)

Recommended Reading

Schneider G (2009), E-business, 8th edition.

Software and Programming 1

(COIY018H5)

15 credits, level 5

Module Convenor: Roman Kontchakov

Duration: 3 hours per week for 11 weeks (1 term)

Prerequisites: None, although a general familiarity with computers is assumed and successful completion of the second year module, Introduction to Programming, is advantageous.

Description

Software and Programming 1 is an introduction to principles and general techniques of programming. In this course, students will revise and learn basic procedural structures and object-oriented features of the Java programming language.

Aims and Objectives

The module has two main aims:

1. To provide students with a full understanding of the basic elements of a programming language;
2. To teach students to operate practically with Java classes, in particular, to
 - write small real-world programs in Java;
 - use methods and arrays;
 - implement Java programs on a PC.

By the end of the module students will be able to understand and explain

- how a computer operates while running a program;
- classes and objects;
- methods and the scope of a variable;
- data and number types in Java;
- arithmetic and Boolean expressions;
- for/while loops and if-else statements;
- processing of strings;
- elements of input/output in Java;
- arrays and their usage.

They will also have developed skills in practical programming of small but real-world problems, e.g. keeping transaction records, assigning seats to customers, managing a bus schedule, etc.

Assessment

Coursework (25%): two in-class tests.

Examination (75%): one two-hour written exam.

Recommended Reading

Cay S. Horstmann (2010), *Java for Everyone*, First Edition, John Wiley & Sons, ISBN 978-0471791911.

Supplementary Reading

Quentin Charatan and Aaron Kans (2006), *Java in Two Semesters, Second Edition*, McGraw-Hill, ISBN 0077108892.

K.A. Mughal, T. Hamre, and R.W. Rasmussen (2008), *Java Actually: A comprehensive primer in programming*, Course Technology, a division of CENGAGE Learning EMEA, ISBN 978-1-84480-933-2 (Chapters 1-6).

This book is a thorough introduction to Java that can be used for self-learning throughout.

Edward Currie (2006), *Fundamentals of Programming Using Java*, Thomson Learning, ISBN-10: 1-84480-451-8.

This book contains well explained examples but does not cover all the material: an excellent text for those preferring a step-by-step tutorial approach.

Joyce Farrell (2010), *Java Programming, Fifth Edition*, Course Technology, a division of CENGAGE Learning, ISBN-10: 1-4390-4021-4 (Chapters 1-8).

This is a good in-depth text, which is good for both novices and experts.

Work-related Project

(COIY069S5)

30 credits, level 5

Module Convenor: Gordon McIntyre

Duration: 2 terms

Prerequisites:

Year 1 database and web design modules.

Description

This module enables you to put the skills you have developed during your study on the Foundation Degree into practice in a business setting by undertaking a project for a real-world employer. In addition to increasing your knowledge and understanding of IT skills, the module also enables you to develop communication and project management skills, which are much in demand by prospective employers.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide the opportunity to demonstrate the practical application of academic learning in a work context.
- To develop technical and work specific skills relevant to the IT industry
- To develop a range of 'soft skills' essential for successful project management.
- To prepare you to work effectively in the IT industry, or a related area, on completion of your Foundation Degree.

Assessment

The module is 100% coursework assessed.

Recommended Reading

There is no course text but students will be expected to do background reading appropriate to their own project.

Option

15 credits, level 5

Students will be offered a choice of optional module from a range of modules that are part of the IT Applications Certificate programme. The options offered may vary each year and will depend on student numbers.

Options include:

Web Programming using PHP

Javascript

Advanced Web Authoring

Details of these modules can be found on the ITApps webpage:

<http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps/modules.html>

7 Contact Details

7.1 Programme Team

Gordon McIntyre, FdIT Programme Director

Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, Birkbeck, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

Tel: 020 7079 0720, Email: gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk

Programme Administrators:

The Programme Administrators for the FdIT are Andrew Moles and [Zadkiel Santospirito](#) (Year 1) Tel: 020 7631 6729 [Karolina Kokula](#) (Years 2 & 3) Tel: 020 7631 6724

Email (for all Fd administrators above): fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk

7.2 Student Support Staff

All Birkbeck, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX, unless otherwise stated.

Richard Carabine, BEI Learning Co-ordinator

Tel: 020 2631 6464 Email: r.carabine@bbk.ac.uk

Student Financial Support Office

Tel: 020 7631 6362

Mark Pimm, Disabilities Officer,

Disability Office,

Tel: 020 7631 6315, Email: m.pimm@bbk.ac.uk

IT Services Help Desk,

Ground floor, next to Library entrance, Malet Street Main Building

Tel: 020 7631 6543, Email its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk, Website: www.bbk.ac.uk/its

Systems Support Group (DCSIS)

Room MAL261, Department of Computer Science and Information Systems

Tel: 020 7631 6737, Email: sg@dcs.bbk.ac.uk, Website: www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/support

Students Union

Union President – Tel: 020 7631 6365, Email: president@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk

Student Advice Centre – Tel: 020 7631 6335, Email: advice@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk

Nursery

Deidre Lazarus, Nursery Manager

Tel: 020 7679 4634 after 5.30pm term time (answer phone operates at all other times)

or the HR Department on 020 7631 6519 (out of term time)

www.bbk.ac.uk/hr/policies_services/nursery

7.3 On-line Support

www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/fdit

This contains the latest information from the Foundation Degree's department, including room changes, handbooks and timetables.

www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps

This site provides information about all the IT Apps modules.

<https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/>

Learning resources via the VLE.

Appendix A: Guidance for Making a Mitigating Circumstances Claim

To help you with making a claim for mitigating circumstances, examples of circumstances that may be considered as reasonable grounds for making a claim and guidelines as to acceptable documentary evidence are given below.

Examples of circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student:

- bereavement (near relative only)
- serious accident or illness
- serious infectious disease
- burglary and theft
- childbirth

Examples of situations which may be considered beyond the reasonable control of the student:

- medical operation (*if approved prior to the point of assessment or an emergency*)
- hospital tests (*if approved prior to the point of assessment or an emergency*)
- being taken ill during an examination
- significant accident, injury, acute ailment or condition
- unanticipated and unavoidable professional obligations
- private or public transport failure leading to delays of more than 1 hour (*corroborative evidence is required to verify such a delay*)

Examples of circumstances that would NOT ordinarily be considered mitigating circumstances:

- accidents to friend or relatives (*unless within 3 days prior to deadline or examination or where student is sole carer*)
- family illness (*except in an emergency or where the student is the sole carer*)
- examination nerves
- feeling generally anxious, depressed or stressed (*unless medically certificated and notified in advance i.e. at least 2 weeks*)
- clash with paid employment
- minor accidents or injuries
- pregnancy

- cold, cough, upper respiratory tract infection, throat infection, unspecified viral infection
- childcare problems that could have been anticipated
- domestic problems (*unless supported by independent evidence*)
- mistaking the deadline, or time management problems (including alarm not going off)
- private or public transport failure leading to delays of less than 1 hour
- general financial problems
- legal problems (*unless required to attend Court on the day of an examination or assessment*)
- holidays or booked travel arrangements
- house moves
- notes burned or stolen (*unless supported by a fire or police report*)
- intermittent or last minute computing equipment problems (discs, machines, printers, viruses)
- handing-in problems
- inclement weather (*unless exceptional/severe conditions*)
- ignorance of the Regulations or examination/assessment arrangement

Examples of acceptable documentary evidence

- evidence (e.g death certificate or letter from GP) confirming bereavement
- letter from lawyer, hospital, GP or employer

Examples of non-acceptable documentary evidence

- self-certification of illness
- letter written by a friend or acquaintance