

Birkbeck  
University of London

**Foundation Degree  
Web Technologies (full-time)**

Student Handbook  
2015-16

## **Welcome from the Programme Director**

Welcome to Birkbeck College, and more specifically to the Foundation Degree in Web Technologies (FdWT). The FdWT is a programme organised by the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (DCSIS).

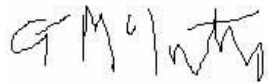
We hope your educational experience at Birkbeck is a fruitful, enjoyable and stimulating one. You are joining a College that prides itself on academic excellence in a wide variety of fields. By joining Birkbeck, we hope you will add to and become a part of this reputation.

Classes for the FdWT 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. It should be read in conjunction with the general student handbook issued by the Department. 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 Web Technologies.



Gordon McIntyre  
Programme Director, Foundation Degree in Web Technologies

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# 1 Programme Information

## 1.1 The Programme team

**Gordon McIntyre** is the Programme Director for the FdWT. 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 is also the tutor for all FdWT year students.

Tel: 020 7631 6851, Email: [gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

**Gordon** also has special responsibility for work-related learning. She is in charge of the work-related module in the second year. Please contact him if you have any queries about this.

**Andrew Moles** and **Zadkiel Santospitito** (year 1) and **Karolina Kokula** (years 2) are the Programme Administrators for the FdWT. They 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.

Tel: 020 7631 6719/6729, Email: [fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

## 1.2 Enrolment

Enrolment can be carried out online at [www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck). It is necessary to have a username and a password issued by IT Services. Enrolment should be carried out no later than one week before the start of the autumn term, or within two weeks of notification from the Registry that you are eligible to enrol.

## 1.3 Fees/Finance

Information on fees is available from Fees Office (020 7631 6295/6526/0885) or online at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/prospective/undergraduate/fees/undergraduate-fees-1>. Fees can be paid per term or by direct debit over a period of eight months. The Fees Office handles all issues regarding the payment of fees, and should be contacted directly if you have any problems.

The College has a Student Awards Scheme that may be able to provide limited assistance with fees for students with financial difficulties. Further information and application forms regarding Government and College Awards are available from the Student Financial Support Office – 020 7631 6362. Please consult the DCSIS handbook for further advice on grants and awards.

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

## **1.4 Term Dates (2014 – 2015)**

Full details of term dates and closures can be found at the Birkbeck website at:  
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates>

## **1.5 The *My Birkbeck* portal**

The *My Birkbeck* portal 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 the portal, go to [www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeckprofile](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeckprofile).

## **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 the *My Birkbeck* portal as described above and check that these are correct. If any details change during the course of the year, you should update them via the portal. 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 on the portal. 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 Student ID Card**

The Department of Computer Science and Information Systems has a number of secure areas that are only accessible using a swipe card. As a member of the FdWT, you will be eligible to access some of these areas.

## **1.8 Timetables**

A copy of your timetable will be sent to you before the course begins. We will try to notify you of any unforeseen changes that may occur. A draft copy of the FdWT timetable is maintained at the programme website:

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

## **1.9 Staff-Student Exchange Committee**

Students elect representatives from each year of the Foundation Degree to sit on the Staff-Student Exchange Committee. This committee meets three times a year and offers students the opportunity to help shape the future of the programme by discussing problems, suggestions and feedback with members of the teaching staff and the FdWT management team. You are encouraged to consider becoming a representative as it is a key part of our efforts to continually improve the programme. We do our best to organise the meetings at a time that is convenient to you – usually prior to lectures.

## **1.10 Personal Tutor**

All students are assigned a personal tutor each year. Personal tutors give advice on a range of pastoral and academic concerns. You should contact your tutor whenever you are in doubt or worried about any matter that relates to your participation in the course.

### **1.11 Break in Studies or Withdrawal from the Programme**

Circumstances may arise where you wish to take a break from your studies or you wish to withdraw from the Programme altogether. If you are considering taking a break in studies or withdrawing from the Foundation Degree, please contact the Programme Administrator or 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.

### **1.12 Transfer to the Foundation Degree in IT (FdIT)**

It is possible to transfer from the Foundation Degree in Web Technologies to the Foundation Degree in IT should you wish to.

Information about the FdIT Programme can be found on the Department website:

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

The website also contains a link to the up-to-date on-line version of this handbook, as well as contact numbers, and other useful links.

### **1.13 Any questions?**

If you have any questions that have not been addressed by this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you have a question about a particular module, please contact the lecturer concerned. A directory of useful contact numbers can be found at the end of this handbook.

## 2 General Information

### 2.1 Disabilities

The FdWT Programme Team aim to make study accessible to all regardless of ability or disability. Please see Appendix C of this handbook, or the Birkbeck disability web pages for detailed help and advice on disabilities:

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

### 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.

### 2.3 Student Union, Childcare and Catering Services

The College offers support to students in a number of ways other than academic. Please see the DCSIS handbook for information on socialising, childcare and dining at Birkbeck. Full details about the Students Union, including their counselling service, can be found on their website:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su>

### 2.4 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!

- During term-time they offer an **Early Evening Advisory Service** on Wednesday between 17.00 & 19.00. These 20-minute sessions must be pre-booked by 12 noon on Wednesday by phone or email
- **Drop-In Advice Service** - Monday-Thursday, 14.00-16.30 – always very popular with Birkbeck students.
- Longer **Advisory Interviews** can be arranged if necessary - for complete career beginners, for people wanting a practice job interview, and for every stage and situation in between.
- They also offer **Psychometric Testing** and **Personality Assessment Workshops, Employer Presentations, Computer-based Career Guidance Programs, Insight Career Courses** as well as invaluable information on **Course Funding**.

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 postgraduates).

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



SICS is located at:  
4<sup>th</sup>. Floor, ULU Building,  
Malet Street'  
WC1E 7HY,  
020 7866 3600,  
[sics@careers.lon.ac.uk](mailto:sics@careers.lon.ac.uk)

## **2.5 Learning Resources**

Full information on Birkbeck library, other libraries, personal tutors and computing facilities is available in the DCSIS student handbook.

# **3 Teaching and Learning**

## **3.1 Study Time**

You will probably need to do several additional hours of work outside of class each week. You will need to allow more time to complete reports and other coursework and prepare for exams because of the additional reading and reviewing of material required.

## **3.2 Teaching Methods**

Classes on the Foundation Degree in Web Technologies for the first year are mostly 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.

In the second year, you will still have some lab-based classes. However, you will also have lecture-based classes. These classes will have significantly more people in them, from different programmes in the DCSIS. The structure of these classes differs from that of the lab-based work. Typically a three-hour lecture will be divided into two parts, the first part will be a lecture; the second part will entail group work, tutorials, lab work or in-class tests.

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

## **3.3 Study Skills**

During your course you will be helped to improve your basic study skills.

The Centre for Learning and Professional Development offer one-to-one academic support tutorials and study skills courses during term time. These can help with such things as study skills and academic writing. Details of these can be found at:

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

ITS also organise a number of introductory computer workshops, which are held throughout the year for staff and students. A timetable is made available shortly after the start of each term. This can be found on the ITS website, <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its>, or on the ITS notice boards.

### 3.4 Study Guides

There are many published Study Guides that can be of assistance during your course. Many are available in the College Library. Here are some suggestions:

- Cottrel, The Study Skills Handbook (Palgrave Macmillan)
- Northedge, The Good Study Guide (Open University/Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1990")
- Maddox, How to Study (Pan, 1988)
- Marshall and Rowland, Learning Independently (2nd Edition, Open University Press, 1993)

## 4 Programme Details

### 4.1 Common Award Structure (CAS)

The College academic regulations are known as the Common Award Structure (CAS). These apply to all taught programmes in the College, including the FdWT.

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 FdWT are summarised in the following sections.

### 4.2 Programme Structure

The FdWT (full-time) 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 gain the Foundation Degree.

#### Year 1

You will take the following 15 credit modules:

- Introduction to Web Authoring
- Fundamentals of Information Technology
- Problem Solving for Programming
- Advanced Web Authoring
- JavaScript
- Introduction to Database Technologies
- Introduction to Programming (Java)
- Information Systems Concepts

#### Year 2

You will take the following 15 credit modules:

- Mathematics for Computing
- Working in Teams
- Information Systems Management
- Software and Programming 1
- Work Related Project (30 credits)
- Option 1
- Option 2

## Options

Year two options\* are drawn from the following:

	Option	Prerequisite
1.	Web Data with XML, JSON and AJAX	Introduction to Web Authoring, JavaScript
2.	Web Programming using PHP	Introduction to Web Authoring, Problem-solving for Programming
3.	Web Programming using PHP	Web Programming using PHP
4.	E-business	None
5.	Computer Networking	None
6.	Mobile Application Development	Introduction to Web Authoring, JavaScript

\* Please note that not all options will run in any given year. Options will only run where there is sufficient demand and teaching resource. All options must be chosen in cooperation with your Programme Director. You will be sent a list of available options at the beginning of year two and asked to select your preferences. If either of your first or second options are not running, you will then do option three if this option is running. If this option is not running, you will do option 4, etc.

### 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, you will progress directly to the next year. 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 the next year of their studies with more than 30 credits in total outstanding from the previous year (this may be one full-module or two half-modules). As a part-time student you are allowed to study for a maximum of 90 credits in any academic year. This means that if you are required to retake module(s) from the previous year, module(s) from your current year will be postponed to the following year. 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 your of 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).

Where a student fails to make sufficient progress in any year of their Degree the College reserves the right to withdraw that student from the Foundation Degree,

## **4.4 Scheme for Award of the Foundation Degree**

### **4.4.1 Scheme for students starting the Foundation Degree in 2008/09 or later**

To qualify for the award of Foundation Degree in Web Technologies (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 study on the Degree<sup>1</sup>, as follows:

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

In addition, students must take and pass Personal Development Planning element in each year.

The classification for students carrying pass-related credits is determined on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Examiners.

It is the Board of Examiners, not the Programme Team, which makes the decision regarding the awarding of the degree.

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<sup>1</sup> Level 5 modules on the FdWT are JavaScript, Working in Teams, all optional modules, Information Systems Management, Software and Programming 1, and the Work-related Project.

# 5 Assessment

## 5.1 Assessment Entry Forms

An Assessment Entry Form will be sent to you by the Examination Officer and should include **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 complete and return this to the **Programme Administrator** could affect your progression to the next stage of the degree.

## 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 course 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

There are no exams in Year 1 of the Foundation Degree. Modules in Year 1 are 100% coursework assessed, apart from Problem Solving for Programming, which is assessed by a combination of in-class tests and coursework. In Year 2, modules are assessed by a combination of coursework, in-class tests and examination, apart from the Work-related Project, which 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 Submission of Coursework

The following notes outline the process of coursework submission for the modules you will take during your Foundation Degree. These notes are for guidance only and you are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the requirements for each piece of coursework you submit.

## Year 1 modules

Coursework for your Year 1 modules is submitted electronically via Moodle. Please follow the instructions on the Assignment dropbox and ensure that you submit all required files.

## Year 2 modules

Coursework for many of the Computer Science modules that you take in year 2 will be submitted electronically via Moodle. Please follow the instructions on the Assignment dropbox and ensure that you submit all required files.

## 5.4 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 to your success on the Degree.**

## 5.5 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 this second 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.

### 5.5.1 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 FdWT Programme Administrator as soon as possible. You should also email the Programme Manager and Module Tutor to inform them of the reason for your late submission.

You can download the mitigating circumstances claim form from the ITApps intranet page:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/exams/mitigating-circumstances>

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 on the Registry webpage:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs/mitcircspol>.

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 the Programme Director, who will be able to advise you on the best course of action.

## **5.6 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.

You are strongly advised to read very carefully through the information on plagiarism in the DCSIS handbook. There is also an 'Avoiding Plagiarism' module in Moodle that you can self-enrol for. If you have any questions, please contact the Programme Team.

## **5.7 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 Mark Pimm (see Disabilities section in Appendix C below). He 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.

## 5.8 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 Manager of the FdWT, 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>

You should do this at least 14 days *before* the exam or by the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 5.9 Results

Exam results (pass/fail) are posted on a notice board outside the Registry normally in mid-July of each year. The exact dates will be announced. The Registry will then write to you two to three weeks after this posting to give you more detailed marks. 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.

## 5.10 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. When making appeals you should consult Jackie Barnes in the Examinations Office (020 7631 6385).

Full details regarding the appeals process can be found on the Birkbeck website<sup>2</sup>.

## 5.11 Retaking assessment and examinations

You must have credit (a pass or a compensated fail – see below) for all modules for the FdWT 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.

### 5.11.1 Reassessment

Reassessment means that you resubmit coursework and/or retake the exam for any

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/appeals>



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 90 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%.

Reassessment for a module must be at the next available opportunity. For the Year 1 Mathematical Methods module you will be required to retake the in-class tests and/or submit coursework assignments during the summer term. For other Year 1 modules resubmission deadlines are as follows:

<b>Initial submission</b>	<b>Resubmission</b>
April/May	Aug/September
Aug/September	January

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.

If you are required to resubmit coursework for Year 2 modules, 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 90 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.

### **5.11.2 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 90 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.

### **5.11.3 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. Compensatory credit will not normally be awarded for Year 1 modules until all possible assessment attempts have been exhausted.

### **5.12 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

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.

### 6.1 First Year Modules

#### Fundamentals of Information Technology

(COIY067H4)

15 credits, level 4

**Module Convenor:** TBC

**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 the Web using a browser

#### 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:

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

#### 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:** TBC

**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 CSS3 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:** See module learning materials in Moodle.

**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**

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

- 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 a mixture of in-class test and coursework.

**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.

**Advanced Web Authoring**  
(SSCS008H4)

15 credits, level 4

**Module Convenor:** Tingting Han

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

**Pre-requisites:** Introduction to Web Authoring

**Description**

This module teaches you the skills and theory behind the development of professional level, small business websites. It employs advanced HTML and CSS3, focusing on a standards-compliant, accessible approach to design and coding.

**Aims and Objectives**

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

- develop a professional level, small business website.
- write advanced HTML 5 and CSS code
- use a range of open source authoring tools to write advanced HTML 5.
- use a range of open source authoring tools to create CSS.
- manage multiple website projects.
- optimise website accessibility.
- create advanced website layouts.
- create professional forms.

**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**

Please consult your tutor for the best reading for this module.

**JavaScript**  
(SSCS019H5)

15 credits, level 5

**Module Convenor:** Gordon McIntyre

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

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Description**

The first part module steps you through the basic principles and techniques of client-side web programming using JavaScript. Topics covered include: data types, variables, arrays, conditionals, iteration, functions etc. The second part of the module focuses on JavaScript in context, looking at how Javascript brings interactivity and advanced functionality to the web, Topics covered include: processing user input (forms), navigation, event-handling, Document Object Model, and JQuery.

**Aims and Objectives**

During this module you will: -

- Learn the rudiments of the JavaScript programming language, including file creation, variables, arrays, conditional statements, loops, functions, etc.
- Use JavaScript to develop forms supporting client-side validation on a web page.
- Create objects, functions, events and event handlers in JavaScript.
- Create dynamic web pages using JavaScript, HTML 5 and CSS.
- Build small scale web applications using JavaScript and JQuery.

**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.

**Required Reading**

Sawyer McFarland, D. (2013). *JavaScript and JQuery*. O'Reilly.



## **Introduction to Programming**

15 credits, level 4

**Module Convenor:** Professor 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**

Horstmann, C, S. 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

**Information Systems Concepts**  
(COIY016H4)

15 credits, level 4

**Lecturer:** Dr. Roman Kontchakov

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

**Prerequisites:** None

**Description**

The goal of this module is to introduce the 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 (2006) *Object-Oriented Systems Analysis and Design using UML*, 3/e, McGraw-Hill.

## 6.2 Second Year Modules

### Working in Teams

15 Credits: Level 5

**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
- Recognise 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.

**Mathematics for Computing**  
(COIY040H4)

15 credits, level 4

**Module Convenor:** Dr. Igor Ragzon

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

**Prerequisites:** Problem Solving for Programming, decent basic maths.

**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

**Information Systems Management**  
(COIY019H5)

15 credits, level 5

**Lecturers:** Dr. Andrea Cali

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

**Prerequisites:** None

**Description**

This module takes a management perspective to Information Systems in organisations and markets. Data, Knowledge and Project Management are all treated in some depth. Further, the Object-Oriented analysis and Design methods introduced in Information Systems Concepts are further explored with particular reference to high level systems designs and architectures, the Human Computer Interface, Decision Objects and Control Objects.

**Aims and Objectives**

On successful completion of this module you will:

- Be able to reduce data structures to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Normal Form in relation to their use in applications;
- Understand the migration of systems of objects from Analysis to Designed architectures, packages and components;
- Understand theories of Information System Development Project Management and be able to draw up and revise realistic project planning artifacts e.g. PERT networks and Gantt Charts;
- Understand the importance of Quality and Testing in IS Development Projects;
- Have a view on various approaches to Knowledge Management.

**Assessment**

Coursework (25%): in-class tests  
One two-hour examination (75%).

**Recommended Reading**

Bennet S, McRobb S & Farmer R (2006) *Object-Oriented Systems Analysis and Design using UML*, 3/e, McGraw-Hill.

**Software and Programming 1**  
(COIY018H5)

15 credits, level 5

**Lecturer:** Dr. 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 programming. Many different languages are used for writing computer programs, e.g. C++, Pascal, Python, and Java. It is impossible to learn all the different programming languages. Fortunately, it is possible to learn principles and general techniques of programming that can be applied no matter what language you write in. In this course, students will revise and learn some basic structures of the Java programming language, one of the newer languages, which includes most of the important features of "serious" programming language such as C++, and integrates them into a modern, network and Internet-based computing environment. The module includes a review of primitive data types, loops and branching. Other subjects covered are:

- BlueJ and JDS platforms for Java;
- Objects and object instances;
- Variables and methods;
- Strings;
- Static and instance variables;
- Methods and constructors;
- 1D and 2D arrays and their usage.

**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;
- the work of a compiler and an interpreter;
- classes, objects and object instances;
- 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;
- the concept of an array and its usage;
- similarities and differences between Java and other languages such as Python.

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 and two homework assignments.  
One two-hour written examination (75%)

### **Essential Reading**

Quentin Charatan and Aaron Kans (2006), *Java in Two Semesters*, Second Edition, McGraw-Hill, ISBN 0077108892 (Chapters 1-7).

The contents of the current version of the course closely follow this book; its later chapters will be useful for the optional BSc module Software and Programming 2.

### **Recommended Reading**

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.

Tony Gaddis (2009), *Starting out with Python*, Pearson Education, Inc, ISBN-10: 0-321-54941-4.

This is an easy introduction to Python, a language similar to Java but in which it is simpler to work with files, both on your computer and on the web.

**Work-related Project**  
(COIY069S5)

30 credits, level 5

**Lecturer:** Gordon McIntyre

**Duration:** 2 terms

**Prerequisites:**

Introduction to Web Authoring

Introduction to Database Technology

**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.

**Optional Modules**

Descriptions of all optional modules can be found at:

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



## 7 Staff Contact Details

### 7.1 Programme Team

Gordon McIntyre, FdWT Programme Director  
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, Birkbeck, Room 258 Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX  
Tel: 020 7631 6851, Email: [gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:gordon@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

Andrew Moles, FdWT Administrator (year 1)  
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, Birkbeck, Room 263 Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX  
Tel: 020 7631 6729, Email: [fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

Kaolina Kokula, FdWT Administrator (year 2 and 3)  
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, Birkbeck, Room 263 Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX  
Tel: 020 7631 6724, Email: [fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:fdadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

### 7.2 Student Support Staff

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

Lisa Colbran, Registry Assistant,  
The Registry  
Tel: 020 7631 6307, Email: [l.colbran@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.colbran@bbk.ac.uk)

Susan Lomas, Income Officer,  
Finance Office,  
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Student Financial Support Office  
Tel: 020 7631 6362

Mark Pimm, Disabilities Officer,  
Disability Office,  
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Stephen Short, Disabilities Assistant,  
Disability Office  
Tel: 020 7631 6336, Email: [disability@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bbk.ac.uk)

Aidan Smith, Subject Librarian,  
Birkbeck College Library  
Tel: 020 7631 6062, Email: [am.smith@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:am.smith@bbk.ac.uk)  
IT Services Help Desk,  
Room 151, Main Building Extension,

Tel: 020 7631 6543, Email [its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk), Website: [www.bbk.ac.uk/its](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its)

Systems Support Group (DCSIS)

Room 134, Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, Senate House  
Tel: 020 7631 6737, Email: [sg@dcs.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:sg@dcs.bbk.ac.uk), Website: [www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/support](http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/support)

Students Union

Union President – Tel: 020 7631 6365, Email: [president@bcu.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:president@bcu.bbk.ac.uk)

Student Advice Centre – Tel: 020 7631 6335, Email: [advice@bcu.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:advice@bcu.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](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hr/policies_services/nursery)

## 7.3 On-line Support

[www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/FdWT](http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/FdWT)

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

[www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps](http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps)

This site provides further information about some FdWT modules.

[www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps/assessment.html](http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/itapps/assessment.html)

This site provides information on assessment, deadlines, policy and practices within the IT Applications, FdWT and FdIT programmes.

<https://www.ble.ac.uk/>

This is the online management system that is continually updated with learning resources and information and deadline details for the IT Applications modules.

<http://www.clpd.bbk.ac.uk/students/Academicsupporttutorials>

The Centre for Learning and Professional Development offer one-to-one academic support tutorials during term time.

<http://www.clpd.bbk.ac.uk/students/>

Information about study skills courses can be found here.

## 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 friend or family

## Appendix B: Common Awards Scheme

### Introduction

1. The majority of Birkbeck's undergraduate programmes are offered as part of the College's Common Awards Scheme. Programmes within the Scheme have common regulations, and a common structure, and this makes it possible for you to take modules from programmes across the College which are outside of your normal programme (subject to programme regulations and timetable constraints).
2. This is a brief introduction to the Common Awards Scheme. Further details on programme regulation and areas of interest are available on the Registry website:

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

### Structure of Programmes

3. All programmes offered as part of the Common Awards Scheme consist of modules, each of which is "credit-rated". In order to achieve your award you will need to gain at least the following, and meet the requirements outlined in your programme specification:

Qualification	Credits needed	Minimum at upper level	Maximum at lower level	Number of Birkbeck modules
Honours Degree	360	120 level 6	120 at level 4 (level 4 modules are not included in the calculation for the final classification)	24 modules
Graduate Diploma	90	90 level 6	30 level 5 (120 credit Diplomas only)	8 modules
Graduate Certificate	60	45 level 6	15 level 5	4 modules
Foundation Degree	240	90 level 5	120 at level 4	16 modules
Diploma of Higher Education	240	90 level 5	120 at level 4	8 modules
Certificate of Higher Education	120	90 level 4	30 at A Level or NVQ level 3	4 modules

Certificate of Continuing Education	60	60 level 4	60 level 4	4 modules
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4. Each undergraduate degree programme has three levels – level 4 (certificate), level 5 (intermediate) and level 6 (honours). The Common Awards Scheme offers, for undergraduate programmes, half modules (15 credits), modules (30 credits) or double modules (60 modules).
5. The detailed requirements for each programme are published in the relevant programme specification. Each module on a programme is designated as one of the following:

**core** the module must be taken and passed to allow the student to complete the degree

**compulsory** the module must be taken, and Programme Regulations must stipulate the minimum assessment that must be *attempted*

**option** students may choose a stipulated number of modules from a range made available to them. Option modules are clearly identified in Programme Regulations.

**elective** students may replace an option module with modules from another programme, subject to approval of Programme Directors, availability of places and timetable requirements.

Modules may also be designated as **pre-requisite** modules, meaning they must be taken and passed to allow for progression to a specified follow-up module.

### Degree Classification

6. An honours classification may only be awarded for undergraduate honours programmes (single, joint and major/minor) once the programme requirements have been fulfilled. The degree classification formula is as follows:
- Module results at Level 4 DO NOT contribute to the determination of classification.
  - Each module has a weighting (w), - level 5 modules have a weighting of 1, and level 6 modules have a weighting of 2.
  - Each module has a value (v), where v= one thirtieth of the credit value of the module.

- d) Each module has a result ( $m$ ), assigned by the relevant board of examiners
- e) The weighted average result will be calculated by the sum of the products ( $w*v*m$ ) for all level 5 and 6 modules, divided by the sum of the products ( $w*v$ )
- f) The final degree classification is decided by the relevant board of examiners – as a guide, results are usually in line with the following:

<b>First:</b>	70% or above for the average weighted module results
<b>Upper Second:</b>	60% or above for the average weighted module results
<b>Lower Second:</b>	50% or above for the average weighted module results
<b>Third:</b>	40% or above for the average weighted module results

- 7. If you have accumulated 300 credits and passed all the prescribed core modules, but have not fulfilled the requirements for honours then you may be eligible for a pass degree.
- 8. Certificates of Higher Education and Diplomas of Higher Education may be awarded with Distinction, usually where the weighted average of the modules taken exceeds 70%. Full details on how an award of distinction may be made are available in the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study.
- 9. Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas may be awarded with Merit or with Distinction. A Merit is usually awarded where a student has achieved an average result of between 60% and 70% for modules taken at level 6, while a Distinction is usually awarded where a student has achieved an average result of over 70% for modules taken at level 6. Full details are available in the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study.

### **Failure and Re-assessment of a Module**

- 10. The Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study outline how a Sub-board of Examiners should treat a failed module when considering progression and awards. However, each Sub-board of Examiners is responsible for judging, within these regulations, whether a fail can be “compensated” (i.e. whether you can be awarded credit for that module even if you have not actually passed), whether you will need to re-take the module (see paragraph 11) or whether you will be able to attempt a re-assessment (see 12)
- 11. For any module on an undergraduate programme, if you fail to pass a module at your first attempt then you may be “re-assessed” or you may be required to “re-take”. Re-assessment is where a student will re-attempt a failed element of a failed module; it does not require attendance at lectures and seminars. A re-take requires attendance at the module’s lectures and seminars as well as another



- attempt at the assessment. A decision on whether you will be permitted to be re-assessed in one or more elements of a module that has not been passed is at the discretion of the sub-board of examiners.
12. A Sub-board of Examiners may offer an alternative form of assessment for failed elements as part of a re-assessment regime.
  13. The timing of any re-assessment will be at the discretion of the Sub-board of Examiners; this will normally be either at the next normal assessment opportunity or in some instances before the beginning of the next academic year.
  14. You will normally be offered three attempts at passing a module (the original attempt plus two further attempts, each of which will either be a re-assessment or a re-take). After this, if the module has not been passed it will be classed either as a "compensated fail" (see 15) or a fail. In some cases this will mean that it will not be possible for you to gain the award that you have registered for; in such cases, your registration will normally be terminated.
  15. If your module result is between 30 and 39% your Board of Examiners may award a "compensated fail". This will mean that you retain the module result, but are awarded credit for that module. A Foundation Degree may be awarded to a student carrying no more than 30 credits as compensated fail, and a BA / BSc may be awarded to a student carrying no more than 60 credits as compensated fail. A core module may not be treated as a compensated fail; core modules must be passed in order to gain the award.

## **Common Award Scheme Policies**

1. As part of the introduction of the Common Awards Scheme, the College has implemented a number of College-wide policies. The full policies can be seen at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules>  
Some brief details on key policies are included here:

### **Late Submission of work for assessment**

2. College policy dictates how Schools will treat work that is due for assessment but is submitted after the published deadline. Any work that is submitted for formal assessment after the published deadline is given two marks: a penalty mark of 40% for undergraduate students, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the 'real' mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late. Both marks are given to the student on a cover sheet. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.
3. If you submit late work that is to be considered for assessment then you should provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late. You will need to complete a standard pro-forma and submit it, with documentary evidence as appropriate, to your Tutor or Programme Director. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel.
4. If no case is made then the penalty mark will stand. If a case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the 'real' mark to stand.

### **Assessment Offences**

5. The College Policy on Assessment Offences incorporates the College policy on plagiarism.
6. The policy describes two stages in the process for dealing with assessment offences (which include plagiarism, collusion, examination offences and other offences). The first stage allows for a formal school investigation, of an allegation; Stage 2 involves a centrally convened panel for serious offences, dealt with under the Code of Student Discipline.
7. The College treats all assessment offences seriously. It makes strenuous efforts to detect plagiarism, including using web-based software that can provide clear evidence. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes acceptable conduct you should consult your personal tutor or another member of academic staff. The College has a wide range of sanctions that it may apply in cases of plagiarism, including the termination of a student's registration in the most serious cases.

### **Mitigating Circumstances**

8. The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how Sub-boards of examiners will treat assessment that has been affected by adverse circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your performance in assessment. This should not be confused with long term issues such as medical conditions, for which the College can make adjustments before assessment (for guidance on how arrangements can be made in these cases please see the College's Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements).
9. A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:
  - a) the late or non-submission of assessment;
  - b) non-attendance at examination(s);
  - c) poor performance in assessment.
10. For a claim to be accepted you must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:
  - a) have detrimentally affected your performance or will do so, with respect to 9a, 9b and 9c above;
  - b) were unforeseen;
  - c) were out of your control and could not have been prevented;
  - d) relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.
11. Documentation should be presented, wherever possible, on the official headed paper of the issuing body, and should normally include the dates of the period in which the circumstances applied. Copies of documentary evidence will not normally be accepted. If you need an original document for another purpose, you should bring the original into the Departmental Office so that a copy can be made by a member of College staff. (Where a photocopy is made by a member of staff they should indicate on the copy that they have seen the original).
12. Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.
13. You are encouraged to submit your claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is *normally* 1 week after the final examination unless otherwise stated by your Department. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form (available from your Department office) which should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your Department. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
14. You should be aware that individual marks will almost never be changed in the light of mitigating circumstances. Assessment is designed to test your achievement rather than your potential; it is not normally possible to gauge what you would have achieved had mitigating circumstances not arisen. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, and it is judged by an examination board that these circumstances were sufficiently severe to have affected your

performance in assessment the usual response will be to offer you another opportunity for assessment without penalty, at the next available opportunity.

15. Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules> or your Departmental office; you should note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that each case will be treated on its merits by the relevant sub-board or delegated body.

### **Break-in-Studies Policy**

16. The Common Awards Scheme regulations allow you to suspend studies for a maximum of two years in total during your programme of study. This may be for one period of two years, or for non-consecutive shorter periods (see 17) that add up to a total of two years or less.
17. Any break-in-studies on an undergraduate programme would normally be for a minimum of one year; breaks may also be permitted for a period of one or two terms, dependent on the structure of the programme.
18. Any application for a break-in-studies should be made in writing to your programme director or personal tutor. If you are applying for an approved break-in-studies, you should give details of the length of the proposed break and the reasons for the application.
19. You will not be liable for fees while on an approved break-in-studies. If you have attended for part of a term you will normally be liable for the fees due in that term.
20. If you are on a break-in-studies you will not have access to the Library or ITS unless you make an application and pay the appropriate fee to use these facilities. Applications must be made directly to the Library and/or ITS.
21. If you do not re-enrol after having completed two years of break-in-studies you will be deemed to have withdrawn from your programme. If you wish to resume your programme after having been withdrawn, you will normally be required to re-apply for admission.

### **Other Policies**

22. In addition to the policies above, other College academic-related policies include:

Accredited Prior Learning  
Termination of Registration  
Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements  
Suspension of Regulations  
The Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners  
The Role of External & Intercollegiate Examiners  
Marking and Moderation  
Feedback on Assessment

To see these policies, please see the Common Awards Scheme website:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs>

23. The College also operates a Procedure for Appeals Against Decisions of Boards of Examiners; this is also available from this website.

# **Appendix C: Disability Statement for the School of Business Economics and Informatics**

At Birkbeck there are students with a wide range of disabilities including dyslexia, visual or hearing impairments, mobility difficulties, mental health needs, HIV, M.E., respiratory conditions etc. Many of them have benefited from the advice and support provided by the College's disability service.

## **The Disability Office**

The College has a Disability Office located on the main corridor of the Malet Street building. We have a Disability Service Manager, Mark Pimm, and a Disability Advisor, Steve Short.

Mark is your first point of referral for disability enquiries at the College whilst Steve is for dyslexia. They can provide advice and support on travel and parking, physical access, the Disabled Students Allowance, special equipment, personal support, examination arrangements etc. If you have a disability or dyslexia, we recommend you come to our drop in session where we can discuss support and make follow up appointments as necessary. The drop-in sessions are between 4pm and 6pm Monday to Friday.

At your first appointment at the Disability Office they will ask you to complete a Confidentiality Consent Form. This allows you to state who in the College can be informed of your disability. Remember, if you wish, we do not need to inform people of the exact nature of your disability, just your disability related needs.

They will also complete an Individual Student Support Agreement form, confirming your support requirements and send this to your School and relevant Departments at the College so they are informed of your needs.

## **Access at Birkbeck**

Birkbeck's main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks have induction loops for people with hearing impairments and we have large print and tactile signage. Disabled parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops etc. can all be arranged by the Disability Office.

## **The Disabled Students Allowance**

UK and most EU students with disabilities on undergraduate and postgraduate courses are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The DSA usually provides thousands of pounds worth of support and all the evidence shows that students who receive it are more likely to complete their courses successfully. The Disability Office can provide further information on the DSA and can assist you in applying to Student Finance England for this support.

## **The Personal Assistance Scheme**

Some students need a personal assistant to provide support on their course, for example a note-taker, sign language interpreter, reader, personal assistant, disability mentor or dyslexia support tutor. Birkbeck uses a specialist agency to recruit Personal Assistants and they can assist you with recruiting, training and paying your personal assistant. Please contact Steve for information on this scheme.

## **Support in your School**

The provision which can be made for students with disabilities by Schools is set out in the Procedures for Students with Disabilities. This is available from the Disability Office and the Disability website (see below).

As mentioned above your School will receive a copy of your Individual Student Support Agreement from the Disability Office. This will make specific recommendations about the support you should receive from the School.

Whilst we anticipate that this support will be provided by the Programme Director, tutors and School Administrator, the School of Business Economics and Informatics also has a Student Disability Liaison Officer. If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the School then they may also be able to assist you. They may be contacted through the School Office or the Disability Office.

## **Support in IT Services and Library Services**

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes software packages for dyslexic students (TextHELP Read and Write and Inspiration), screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments, specialist scanning software, large monitors, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs etc. For advice and assistance please contact Disability IT Support. There is also a range of specialist equipment in the Library including a CCTV reading machine for visually impaired students as well as specialist orthopaedic chairs and writing slopes. The Disability Office refers all students with disabilities to the Library Access Support service who provides a comprehensive range of services for students with disabilities.

## **Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)**

Mature students who experienced problems at school are often unaware that these problems may result from their being dyslexic. Whilst dyslexia cannot be cured, you can learn strategies, which make studying significantly easier. If you think you may be dyslexic you should contact Steve, he can screen you and where appropriate refer you to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. These assessments cost £215. Some students can receive assistance in meeting this cost from their employer. In exceptional cases students may receive assistance from the Access to Learning Fund.

## **Examinations**

Students with disabilities and dyslexia may be eligible for special arrangements for examinations e.g. extra time, use of a word processor, amanuensis, enlarged examination papers etc. In order to receive special arrangements a student must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologists Report if you are dyslexic) to the Disability Office. For School examinations you should contact your Programme Director to request special arrangements at least 2 weeks before the examination. For main College summer examinations you are given the opportunity to declare that you require special provision on your assessment entry form. Students who require provision should then attend an appointment with the Disability Office to discuss and formalise the appropriate arrangements. The closing date for making special examination arrangements in College examinations is the 15th March and beyond this date consideration will only be given to emergency cases.

## **The Disability Handbook**

The Disability Handbook provides detailed information on the support available from the College. Copies are available from all main reception areas, the Disability Office and from the College disability web site at:

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

For further information or to make an appointment to see Mark or Steve, please call Steve Short (Disability Advisor) on 020 7631 6336 or email [disability@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bbk.ac.uk)



