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1 General Information

1.1 Important Contacts

Programme Administrator: Kat Miao YU (pg@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)
Admissions Tutor: Carsten Fuhs (carsten@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)
Projects Coordinator: Oded Lachish (oded@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)
Learning Development Tutor (General Skills): Richard Carabine (r.carabine@bbk.ac.uk)
Learning Development Tutor (Maths & Stats): Eva Szatmari (e.szatmari@bbk.ac.uk)
Learning Development Tutor (Maths & Stats): Daniel McVeagh (d.mcveagh@bbk.ac.uk)
Programme Director: Vladislav Ryzhikov (vlad@dcs.bbk.ac.uk)

1.2 Programme Overview

The MSc in Information Technology (MSc IT) is a programme for graduates of disciplines other than computing, focusing on practical aspects of information systems development, modern management topics, and professionalism in IT. Students who complete this programme will have gained in-depth knowledge which they will be able to use in:

- analysis of problems arising in information systems and in the management of IT
- evaluation of technology options
- information systems development
- technology-driven organisational change
- technology-based innovation.

Full-time students follow 7 taught modules and undertake a 3-4 month project. Part-time students follow 3 to 4 taught modules in each of the two years and the project component in the second year.

1.3 Student Support

Academic problems should first be addressed to the module tutor concerned. If the problem is not resolved or it does not relate to a specific module, then the Programme Director should be contacted.

The Learning Co-ordinators of the School offer study/math skills support to students, including: returning to study, note taking, critical reading skills, essay writing, referencing, making presentations, taking part in seminars, managing time and workload, avoiding plagiarism, writing a dissertation, coping with exams, motivation, pre-algebra, formulae, equations, functions, basic calculus, basic statistics, basic data analysis, and a number of other areas.

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/business/current-students/learning-co-ordinators

On Moodle, there is a School study skills area which offers tutorials and resources:
https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3905

Every student is allocated a personal tutor in the first weeks of the programme. The personal tutor is someone students can contact to discuss any problems of a non-academic nature. These may relate to special needs or personal problems that may affect
the student’s academic performance. The Department also has a disability officer whom students can contact.

On the College’s MyBirkbeck site http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck, students can find more details on

- rules and regulations
  http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules
- information and advice (including the complaints procedure)
  http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/aig
- student support services
  http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services
- student guides
  http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/guides

It is expected that students familiarise themselves with these pages so that they are aware of the services and regulations.

1.4 Additional Information

More detailed and updated information about the programme is available from the

- Internet page
  http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/mscit/

Important notices are posted throughout the year using departmental group email aliases. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the contents of both of this handbook as well as the programme’s website. Furthermore, you should check your College emails on a regular basis. We also recommend you to consult the website on a regular basis, since additional information will be posted there during the year.
2 Programme Content

An MSc IT student needs to take seven taught modules (including three compulsory and four optional), plus a final MSc project. Each taught module is worth 15 credits (except for the ISD module that is worth $15 \times 2 = 30$ credits), while the project is worth 60 credits.

2.1 Induction Session

The programme will kick off with introductory talks to new students in the week preceding the start of the first term.

The dates, times and venues of these will be made available through My Birkbeck. They are also mentioned at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7.

The talks will include a hands-on introduction to the departmental computer systems and short presentations by representatives of the library and the disability office. It is essential for all new students to attend the induction session.

2.2 Primer

The Department provides a pre-term short course “Programming Primer – A Short Introduction to Computer Programming” (with minimal charges) in September, which aims to help new students get better prepared for their studies in this intensive postgraduate programme. http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/study-with-us/modules/programming-primer/

Although it is not compulsory, all students who newly joined the MSc IT programme are strongly encouraged to take this primer course.

2.3 Pre-Course Reading

All students should work through the compulsory pre-course reading for ISD before the course starts. Please refer to Section 4.1.

2.4 Compulsory Modules

There are three compulsory modules (with 60 credits in total) which need to be taken by every student studying on the MSc IT:

- BUCI021S7: Introduction to Software Development (ISD) (30 credits)
- BUCI068H7: Concepts for Computation (COC) (15 credits)
- COIY059H7: Information Systems (IS) (15 credits)
2.5 Optional Modules

In addition to the above compulsory modules, students choose four additional modules from a range of available options. The optional module selection will be conducted online via an in-house system for this purpose.

Please note that the list of optional modules available may vary from year to year, and that choices are subject to timetabling constraints and student demand. In the event that an optional module is over-subscribed, available places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis determined by the date you return your module choice form to the Programme Administrator. The optional modules listed here are indicative and may be substituted by similar modules consonant with the aims of the programme with the approval of the Programme Director.

2.5.1 CSIS Modules

The following optional modules (at level 6 or 7) are provided by the Dept of CSIS.

- BUCI083H7: Applied Software Engineering (ASE) (15 credits)
- COIY028H6: Database Management (DM) (15 credits)
- BUCI040H7: Information and Network Security (INSEC) (15 credits)
- BUCI059H7: Interactive Systems (IRS) (15 credits)
  [PT only due to prerequisite and timetabling]
- COIY063H7: Internet and Web Technologies (IWT) (15 credits)
- BUCI041S7: Project Management for Informatics (PMI) (15 credits)
- COIY023H7: Applied Machine Learning (AML) (15 credits)
  [PT only due to prerequisite and timetabling]
- BUCI023H7: Strategic Information Systems Planning (SISP) (15 credits)
  [PT only due to prerequisite and timetabling]

The above modules are all at level 7 except for Database Management (DM) which is at level 6.

2.5.2 MGMT Modules

The following optional modules (at level 7) are provided by the Dept of MGMT.

- MOMN011H7: Research Methods in Management (RMM) (15 credits)
- MOMN061H7: Digital Creativity and New Media Management (DCNMM) (15 c.)
  [PT only due to prerequisite and timetabling]
- MOMN038H7: Intellectual Capital and Competitiveness (ICC) (15 credits)
- MOMN043H7: Innovation: Management and Policy (IMP) (15 credits)
- MOMN082H7: Strategic Management (SM) (15 credits)

For a description of the modules offered by the Dept of MGMT, please refer to their webpages here:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/management/prospective-students/postgraduate/modules
and also their Postgraduate Handbook which is available at:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/management/docs/handbooks (search for most recent PG version).
2.5.3 GEDS Modules

The following optional modules (at level 7) are provided by the Dept of GEDS.

- GGPH035H7: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (IGIS) (15 credits)

Students would need to use College ITS or GEDS labs for GIS software systems, as we do not have any installed in our labs.

For a description of the modules offered by the Dept of GEDS (on geographical information science), please refer to their webpages here:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/modules/ggph/GGPH035H7

and also their Postgraduate Handbook which is available at:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/geds/current-students/
2.6 MSc Project

Online Material

Please refer to the page

http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/dcswiki/index.php/MSc_IT_project

for a detailed description and guidelines.

Aims

In order to acquire a Master’s degree a student needs to complete an MSc project under the supervision of a member of staff at the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems. In the project a student will be able to demonstrate his or her skills in organising and completing a task that goes beyond a typical coursework assignment.

In the MSc Information Technology Project, the students will a) conduct a piece of research related to the requirements and the design of an information system, b) implement a piece of software essential for the system, and c) analyse the viability of the proposed solution. It is expected that all three components are present in each project submission and that more extensive work is done on at least one of them. Typical expectation of more extensive work is as follows:

- in a): a study of the state-of-art in an IT-related area using appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods for requirements gathering;
- in b): development of a substantial software system using software engineering methods;
- in c): appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods for validation and evaluation of the methods or tools resulting from the study.

Students are encouraged to come up with their own ideas for projects. Students will be asked to select areas of interest for their projects. Allocation of supervisors to students will be done automatically, based on these selected interests. The details of the project will then be discussed between the student and allocated supervisor.

Syllabus

The main part of the module will be done by a student on his or her own (supported by the supervisor).

There is a small taught part of the module in which the students are acquainted with

- How to formulate the objectives/aims of an MSc project;
- How to write a project proposal;
- How to organise and plan the project;
- How to research literature;
- How to write a project report.

Prerequisites

Passing all taught modules.
Assessment

A written project proposal (of about 2,000 – 3,000 words) and a written project report (of about 8,000 – 12,000 words), weighting 20% and 80%, respectively.

Recommended Reading

- As recommended by the supervisor.

Online Material

For overall information regarding the project (including the deadlines and the forms), see:
https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/intranet/index.php/Student_Projects, and

Submission

Students should submit two hard copies of the project report to the Programme Administrator, and one electronic copy of the project report (in PDF) via Moodle which would be checked by the plagiarism detector Turnitin.
https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

Ethical Implications

All activities carried out by Birkbeck staff and students that involve one or more of:

- intervention or interaction with human participants;
- the collection and/or study of data derived from human participants;
- a potential impact on animals or the environment;

requires ethical consideration and approval.
For details see
3 Dates and Timetables

3.1 Dates

3.1.1 Induction Sessions

The dates, times and venues of the introductory (induction) talks will be made available through My Birkbeck. They are also mentioned at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7.

3.1.2 Terms

Lectures will commence in the week starting on Monday 30 September 2019. The teaching (i.e. not including exams and projects) covers two terms of eleven weeks each (autumn and spring term). The summer term is given over to revision, exams, and the beginning of projects.

- Autumn term: Monday 5 October 2020 to Friday 18 December 2020.
- Spring term: Monday 11 January 2021 to Friday 26 March 2021.
- Summer term: Monday 26 April 2021 to Friday 9 July 2021.

The College term dates and holiday closings can be found here: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates

Students should attend lectures during term time as shown in the timetables in Section 3.2. If students are unable to attend lectures, they should arrange with lecturers or fellow-students to obtain copies of any material distributed in class.

Any student who decides to withdraw from the course should inform the Programme Administrator, in writing or by email. Students who simply stop turning up for lectures without formally withdrawing from the course will still be held liable for fees.

It is especially important for international students that they inform the department about any absence, see Section 5.13.
3.2 Timetables

3.2.1 Overview

Detailed information about the programme curriculum can be found in Section 2. Please note that due to timetabling constraints not all modules are available each year. Occasionally there might be changes (e.g. swapping of lectures between modules, or additional tutoring sessions). Please check regularly the webpages of each module and the virtual learning environment Moodle (https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/) for up-to-date information.

The three compulsory modules — ISD, IS, and COC — which have to be taken by every student studying on the MSc IT are shown in bold below. All these compulsory modules are on level 7 (postgraduate). Almost all the optional modules are on level 7 as well; the only exceptions are those shown underlined that are on level 6 (final year undergraduate).

All the compulsory modules and most of the optional modules in this programme are provided by us the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS). There are some optional modules that are offered by the Department of Management (MGMT) or the Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies (GEDS).

The complete lecture timetable (with locations) of our Department will be announced online at the following address (under the heading “Modules”):
http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/

The Dept of MGMT publishes a timetable for their modules:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/management/current-students/copy_of_timetables
The Dept of GEDS publishes a timetable for their modules:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/geds/current-students/timetables

For an overview of the teaching venues, please refer to:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/guides/help/class-information
### 3.2.2 Full-time (FT) Students

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<th>Autumn Term</th>
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<td>Friday</td>
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</table>

Additionally, there will be MSc project briefing sessions. The dates, times and venues of these will be made available through My Birkbeck and at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7).

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1 The module may be cancelled in 2021/22
### 3.2.3 Part-time (PT) Students Year 1

Year 1 part-time students must take the three compulsory modules — ISD, IS, and COC — and may take up to one other module from the available options.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>INSEC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IGIS</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>PMI¹</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>19:30 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>COC</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<th>Spring Term</th>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>RMM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<td>IWT</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>19:30 – 21:00</td>
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<td>DM [level 6]</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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¹The module may be cancelled in 2021/22
3.2.4 Part-time (PT) Students Year 2

Year 2 part-time students should select as many options as necessary to complete their set of four optional modules:

### Autumn Term

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>INSEC</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGIS</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>PMI(^1)</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>IRS</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AML</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SISP</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>RMM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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### Spring Term

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Monday</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>RMM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IWT</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DM [level 6]</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>DCNMM</td>
<td>18:00 – 21:00</td>
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</table>

Additionally, in this year, there will be MSc project briefing sessions. The dates, times and venues of these will be made available through My Birkbeck and at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/?tag=7).

\(^1\)The module may be cancelled in 2021/22
4 Module Outlines

Lectures aim to introduce the key concepts of each module. The specific objectives of each module and the principal readings are circulated at the start of the term. The reading lists for individual modules given below are indicative — lecturers will specify, usually at the first lecture, whether or not specific books should be purchased for particular modules.

Most modules have dedicated webpages that provide links to relevant online literature. Depending on the nature of the material, some lecturers use lecture slides or notes to support their teaching and may distribute such learning materials via their webpages.

Students can also contact lecturers outside the classroom to discuss the material. They can meet the lecturers during scheduled office hours or can contact them via e-mail either to discuss a problem or to make an appointment. Lecturers’ contact details are given on the Department’s website.

The outline of each module offered by our Department is given here mainly for the convenience of prospective students, but they could be obsolete. For the most up-to-date description of a module, please refer to its corresponding webpage at: http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/mscit#section-course_content
4.1 Introduction to Software Development (ISD)

Teaching Staff
David Weston

Aims
The main aim of this module is to allow students who hold a first degree in a subject other than computing to gain understanding of solving computational problems and of the software development process, which are fundamental to the study of information systems and informatics. The module covers the principles of designing, implementing and testing programs, with a specific focus on object-oriented design. The module explains the fundamental aspects of these techniques utilising a series of practical lab sessions. Students will be able to apply this knowledge in learning new programming languages, developing software systems, and managing software development projects within given time constraints.

Syllabus

- The software development process.
- Principles of programming and programming languages.
- Solving computational problems (problem decomposition, abstraction, sequencing, branching, iteration).
- Classes, objects, variables, values, types, arithmetic operations, control expressions, methods, string manipulation, exceptions, arrays, collections, I/O, GUIs, documentation.
- Designing, implementing and testing programs.

Prerequisites
None. However, students should work through the first chapter of the course text, see the recommended readings.

Assessment
By a 2-hour unseen written examination and practical coursework, weighting 75% and 25% respectively.

Coursework
Several pieces of practical coursework will be set.
Recommended Reading


Online material

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

4.2 Concepts of Computation (COC)

Teaching Staff

Oded Lachish

Aims

To provide students with the basic mathematical and algorithmic tools of Computer Science.

Outline

Discrete mathematics, mathematical logic and algorithms form the underlying language of computer hardware and software. Digital computers are machines literally built out of memory and logic (logical gates). The same elements appear in all programming languages; hence the importance of this knowledge for understanding information technology. In this module we introduce these areas. The focus will be not just on the technical aspects but also on how these abstract concepts manifest themselves in reality.

Syllabus

- Numbers from the digital computer point of view (Binary, Hexadecimal, 2s Complement, Floating Point, Integers)
- Binary Logic and Boolean Circuits
- Sets and the universal and existential quantifiers
• O-notation and the important complexity classes
• Pattern matching and sorting
• Binary search
• Graph algorithms such as Breadth First Search, Depth First Search, Dijkstra’s algorithm
• State machines and regular expressions
• Basic probability
• Histograms

Prerequisites
Introduction to Software Development (ISD) or suitable experience with a modern programming language.
Information Systems (IS).

Assessment
By a 2-hour unseen written examination and Moodle quizzes, weighting 90% and 10% respectively.

Coursework
Five Moodle quizzes. Each quiz will cover the material of up to three sessions. The quizzes will be on Moodle and hence automatically checked. This will ensure feedback immediately after the deadline.

Recommended Reading
• David Makinson, Sets, Logic and Maths for Computing. 2012, Springer.

Online Material
https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

4.3 Information Systems (IS)
Teaching Staff
Brian Gannon
Aims

The primary aim of the module is to describe enterprise information systems (EIS) and to set out the considerations and approaches used to implement (deploy) these systems in the business enterprise. This covers predominantly the Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC) and the various methodologies used to formalise it, including waterfall and agile approaches, with particular emphasis on the Scrum method. In the course of this module students are introduced to a range of topics relevant to EIS deployment and the SDLC, including object-orientation, the Unified Process and Universal Modelling Language (UML), enterprise architecture and technical architecture.

Alongside describing the SDLC, students will be introduced to practical aspects associated with a career as an IS professional, and social and organisational aspects of enterprise computing. This will include topics such as Intellectual Property, Digital Surveillance, Data Privacy and Ethical issues in computing.

Outline

The module describes approaches, processes, methodologies and techniques commonly used for large-scale information systems development. It covers the systems development life cycle (SDLC), including project initiation, analysis, design and implementation, addressing key aspects and techniques at each stage. Project methodologies are described, with an emphasis on the Scrum methodology. The module also incorporates insights into professional and legal issues associated with EIS development.

Syllabus

- Introduction to Enterprise Information Systems (EIS)
- SDLC, IS project methodologies and the Unified Process
- Unified Process – Planning & Analysis
- Scrum I – Process, Roles, Activities & Ceremonies
- Scrum II – Artefacts & Concepts
- Enterprise Architecture & Technical Architecture;
- EIS Implementation and Operation;
- GDPR, Freedom of Information & Intellectual Property Rights, Contracts & Business Planning, and
Assessment
By a 2-hour unseen written examination and in-class tests, weighting 80% and 20% respectively.

Recommended Reading
Multiple sources including various academic papers. Also, various textbooks including:


Online Material
https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

4.4 Applied Software Engineering (ASE)

Teaching Staff
Keith Mannock

Online material
http://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

Aims
To further develop the student’s programming knowledge (in Python) enabling them to implement systems based upon knowledge obtained in the core modules of the degree programme.

Syllabus

1. Practical application of Software Engineering techniques using the Python programming language.

   - Revision of Software Engineering Principles including source code management using Git
   - Application of the Agile development in Python
   - User story realisation
• Object-oriented modelling
• Incremental refinement

2. Design principles for modular applications

• Software infrastructures for utility computing
• Principles of Object-Oriented design including SOLID
• Refactoring, testing, and maintaining a codebase

3. Further programming

• More Python (building on the student’s existing programming knowledge, e.g., Introduction to Software Development)
• Functions-as-a-Service (FaaS) architectures
• Web development frameworks (e.g., Django)
• Services computing

4. Case study and group work

Prerequisites
Prospective students need to have either completed, or will be examined in the same year, the following modules:

• BUCI021S7 - Introduction to Software Development
• BUCI068H7 - Concepts of Computation
• COIY059H7 - Information Systems

Assessment

• Coursework Programming Portfolio (50%)
• Unseen Examination - online (50%)

An overall pass is required in this module.

Reading

• TBC but will include online resources and notes together with video courses from the Birkbeck Library collection (e.g., LinkedIn Learning).
4.5 Database Management (DM)

Teaching Staff

Peter Wood

Aims

To familiarise the student with the main concepts underlying Database Management, and in particular with the Relational Database model which is the dominant database system used within corporate IT departments.

The course has three main strands:

1. Fundamental concepts introduced using the Entity-Relationship model,
2. Querying a relational database,
3. Relational database design.

Syllabus

- Entity-Relationship Model
- Relational Model
- Querying Relational Databases using SQL
- Updates, Views and Transactions
- Integrity Constraints in the Relational Model
- Relational Database Design
- Normal Forms
- Normalisation Algorithms
- Non-Relational Databases
- SQL Programming and the Web

Prerequisites

Introduction to Software Development (ISD) and Information Systems (IS).

Assessment

By a 2-hour unseen written examination and practical coursework, weighting 80% and 20% respectively.

Recommended Reading

Online Material

http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~ptw/teaching/DBM/

4.6 Information and Network Security (INS)

Teaching Staff

Igor Razgon

Aims

Information security is about protecting information (and information systems) against unauthorised access and tampering. Avoiding security breaches has a high priority for organisations storing and handling confidential data.

The main aim of this module is to provide broad coverage of the field of information security. This course covers the technical as well as the management side of security in information systems. Despite being an essential part of security, technical methods such as cryptography are not enough to guarantee a high level of security. They have to be embedded into a wider context in order to make them more effective. Users of technology have to understand the underlying principles and follow certain policies to avoid security breaches. This module introduces the fundamental approaches to security engineering and includes a detailed look at some important applications.

Syllabus

- Overview of Information Security
- Access Control Matrix Model
- Security Policies
- Social Engineering
- Basic Cryptography
- Identity Management
- Access Control Mechanisms
- Confinement
- Assurance and Trust
- Network Intruders and Intrusion Detection
- Firewalls and Malicious Software
- Cryptographic Protocol Concepts
- Authentication
- Key Exchange
- Economics of Information Security
Assessment

Two-hour written examination (80%) and practical coursework (20%).

Reading


Online material

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

4.7 Interactive Systems (IRS)

Teaching Staff

George Magoulas

Aims

The module aims to present a coherent introduction to the practical issues of creating interactive systems and products from a human-centred perspective. It covers fundamental concepts of interactive systems design, essential processes, and techniques for the design, development, and evaluation of interactive systems in different contexts.

Syllabus

The module covers theory, methods, and techniques used for the design of interactive systems. Indicative topics are listed below:

- Essentials of designing interactive systems: key concepts and how these are applied to different types of systems.
- The process of human-centred design
- Usability
- Techniques for designing interactive systems: understanding the requirements, prototyping and evaluating design ideas.
• Methods for understanding users
• Design methods
• Evaluation methods
• Task analysis
• Contexts for designing interactive systems: case studies of interaction design in contexts that are dominating the subject today.
• Web-based interactive systems
• Agents and avatars
• Mobile computing

Prerequisites
None.

Assessment
By 2-hour written examination and practical coursework, weighting 80% and 20%, respectively.

Reading

Online material
http://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

4.8 Internet and Web Technologies (IWT)

Teaching Staff
Peter Wood

Aims
To provide students with an understanding of how network protocols work, particularly those used on the Internet, and the ability to present and manipulate information on the World Wide Web, with an emphasis on XML and JSON.
Syllabus

- Introduction to the Internet and its applications
- Web languages (e.g. HTML, XHTML, XML, JSON)
- Languages for defining Web document types (e.g. DTDs)
- Web query and transformation languages (e.g. XPath, XSLT)
- Client-side processing (e.g. using Javascript, jQuery)
- Server-side processing (e.g. using PHP)
- The transport layer (e.g. TCP, UDP)
- The network layer (e.g. IP, DHCP, ICMP)
- The link layer (e.g. Ethernet, ARP)

Prerequisites

A first module in programming.

Assessment

By 2-hour written examination and coursework exercises, weighted 80% and 20% respectively.

Reading


Online material

https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~ptw/teaching/IWT/index.html
https://moodle.bbk.ac.uk

4.9 Project Management for Informatics (PMI)

Teaching Staff

Dave Wilson
Aims
Following study of the unit students will understand the issues surrounding Project Management in Information Systems projects. They will be able to effectively schedule tasks in a project and will have a clear knowledge and understanding of the frameworks and terminology of a widely used Project Management Methodology to the extent that they will be able to explain the tailoring of the methodology to typical IS projects.

Outline
The course is run in a mix mode: a number of issues being taught by lectures, a project management methodology being taught by an external provider, and current issues being examined in student led seminars. Students will also develop skills in exploring current research literature and confidence in presenting their critical views to an audience.

Syllabus
- Project Management (PM) and the SDLC
- Methodologies of PM
- Estimating for Informatics Projects
- Scheduling & resourcing
- Critical Path, PM Tools & monitoring progress
- Methodology components & techniques
- Rationale, tailoring & deployment of the methodology

Prerequisites
None.

Assessment
By a 2-hour unseen written examination and coursework exercises, weighting 80% and 20% respectively.

Coursework
Critique (10%). Presentation (10%).

Recommended Reading
- The manual provided by the external methodology education company.
- Selected research papers.

Online Material
http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~dave/PMI/
4.10 Applied Machine Learning (AML)

Teaching Staff
Paul Yoo

Online material
http://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/

Aims
This module covers the fundamental concepts and techniques of applied machine learning using Python and how to use the existing tools to analyse data. Students develop the hands-on and practical skills needed for applied machine learning including the use of existing Python libraries and tools (e.g. Scikit-Learn and TensorFlow) and the use of the techniques needed to analyse data (e.g. pre-processing, feature selection and classification). The module will use Python the most popular machine learning language to solve practical problems based on use cases extracted from real domains such as financial forecasting and computer vision.

Syllabus
- Introduction to Python for machine learning
- Preparing data
- Feature selection for machine learning
- Evaluation and resampling
- Rule-based algorithms: decision tree and random forest
- Regression-based algorithms: logistic regression and neural networks
- Large-scale machine learning using TensorFlow
- Real-life case studies (e.g. financial forecasting and computer vision)

Prerequisites
No specific module is pre- or co-requisite but knowledge of mathematical concepts and basic python will be assumed.

Assessment
By 2-hour written examination and practical coursework, weighting 70% and 30%, respectively.
Reading

- Students will also be directed to papers available online and other Web resources on the subject.

4.11 Strategic Information Systems Planning (SISP)

Teaching Staff

Dave Wilson

Aims

Following study of the unit students will be able to contribute to IS Planning and Strategy formulation in corporate enterprises and complex administrations. They will have a deep understanding of a Socio-Technical approach to the deployment of Information Technology in modern organisations. They will have an understanding of frameworks for analysing strategic issues of IS deployment and a familiarity with the most cogent current issues. They will develop insight into cases of the strategic planning of Information Systems often demand as well as confidence in addressing an audience and skills of explanation and persuasion.

Outline

This course builds on both Management and Information Systems skills. It ties the study of management and computing together at the top level and focuses on issues that bring modern partially automated organisations competitive advantage.

Syllabus

- IS,IM,IT Strategy
- Alignment & Maturity
- Packages & Information Infrastructures
- The CIO & IT Governance
- Knowledge Management
- Outsourcing & Offshoring
- Evaluation & Risk Management

Prerequisites

None.
Assessment

By a 2-hour unseen written examination and coursework exercises, weighting 60% and 40% respectively.

Coursework

Critique (20%). Presentation (20%).

Recommended Reading

  ISBN: 0415996473
- Selected research papers.

Online Material

http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~dave/SIS/
5 Administration and Assessment

For detailed College rules and regulations see
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules
and, in particular,
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/casregs.pdf
Below we summarize the most relevant rules for the MSc in Information Technology.

5.1 Requirements for the Award of the MSc

Each taught module (all modules except the project) is assessed by a written exam and, in most cases, by additional coursework. Additionally, there is a 60 credit project module which is assessed by the project proposal document (20%) and the project report (80%).

For each module, a Pass requires at least 50% of the available marks (computed according to the corresponding weights of the parts of the assessment).

To gain an award the following is required:
- **Master of Science (MSc)**:
  a student must have accumulated 180 credits at level 7 or level 6 (of which no more than 30 credits may be from level 6). This implies passing all the seven taught modules worth 120 credits and the final project worth 60 credits.
- **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**:
  a student must have passed modules to the value of 120 credits at level 7 or level 6 (of which no more than 30 credits may be from level 6);
- **Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**:
  a student must have passed modules to the value of 60 credits at level 7;

Up to 30 credits of the taught modules with a mark between 40% and 49% (called marginal fail) can be compensated (assuming that the total weighted average mark is above 50%) on the MSc or PGDip (note that College regulations do not allow compensation on PGCert).

The final grade is computed by taking the weighted average (according to the credits) of the module assessment marks. The following has to be satisfied:
- Pass requires at least a 50% weighted average pass mark;
- Merit requires at least a 60% weighted average pass mark;
- Distinction requires at least a 70% weighted average pass mark.

The level 6 modules do not contribute to the determination of the final grade, though students do need to pass them to get the degree.

5.2 Announcement of Results

The Sub-board of Examiners meets in July to consider the results of the written exams and coursework, and in November to consider the results of the projects and to award degree.

Shortly after the meeting of the Sub-board you will receive a letter from the Department about your results. Your results and grades will be officially confirmed by a letter
(and/or via the MyBirkbeck site) some time later by the College.

Keep the Department notified of any change of address; the letters after the Sub-board go to whatever address the Department holds for you. The College letters go to whatever address you put on your examination entry forms.

Students who have not paid their fees are given no information at all about their examination results.

5.3 Deferral

In exceptional cases, students may be permitted to defer the written exams and/or the project to the following year. They must apply by filling in a Mitigating Circumstances claim form (see Section 5.4) setting out the reasons for wishing to defer. They have to do this before 1 May for exams and before 1 September for the project. A student who defers an element of assessment has to enter for that element the following year; usually no further deferrals are permitted.

Simply not turning up for an exam or failing to submit a coursework or project, without permission to defer, will be considered to be the same as failing it, in the sense that it will count as one of the two attempts that you are permitted to make at passing that element.

5.4 Mitigating Circumstances

The Academic Board has approved the following guidelines for dealing with mitigating circumstances in relation to examinations and other forms of assessment in order to ensure consistent and fair practice across the College. For further information, students may consult the document on mitigating circumstances through MyBirkbeck: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules

A mitigating circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:

- the late or non-submission of assessment;
- non-attendance of examination(s);
- poor performance in assessment.

If a student feels their circumstances warrant consideration by the Sub-board of Examiners they should notify the Postgraduate Programme Administrator in writing at the earliest opportunity and within two weeks period (see below) using a Mitigating Circumstances claim form that can be downloaded from http://goo.gl/HR39vf or obtained from the Programme Administrator. In the form, students should state whether the circumstances relate to non-attendance at an examination or late submission of an assignment and should include supporting evidence (e.g. a medical certificate giving the nature and duration of any illness). They may inform their personal tutor, in confidence, of any problem they may not wish to disclose in writing. They should also complete late submission of coursework forms. If they discover subsequently that there are circumstances they could not report in advance, these should be notified to the Programme Director in writing as soon as possible. Students should be aware that discussing their
claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.

For a claim to be accepted a student must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:

- have detrimentally affected their performance/submission/attendance in assessment or will do so;
- were unforeseen;
- were out of their control and could not have been prevented;
- relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.

Note that a mitigating circumstances claim relating to an assessment or examination must be submitted within 14 days of the assessment deadline or examination date, respectively. It is essential to make such claims within the specified period, even if the evidence supporting the claim (e.g., a medical diagnosis or test results for a suspected illness) is not available at the time of the claim submission. In this case, it is required to mention in the Mitigating Circumstances claim form that the evidence is pending, and the evidence may be submitted to the postgraduate administrator separately also after the 14 days period. Claims made after the 14 days period will not be accepted, unless the student can prove that, due to extraordinary circumstances, access to the means to submit the claim (e.g., email) was unavailable earlier. In that case, evidence of such extraordinary circumstances must be provided.

5.5 Reassessment and Retake

One reassessment, and only one, is allowed for each element. You may be reassessed in a failed coursework, written exam or the project if your marks for that module are below 50%. Students who fail an assessment and are awarded a reassessment opportunity have their reassessment subject to a cap of 50% for the reassessed element. The cap does not apply to a retake of a whole module and to students with accepted mitigating circumstances. Reassessment takes place over the summer, with exams taking place in August/September. For students who do not take the summer reassessment exam (perhaps because of accepted mitigating circumstances) and where the syllabus for the next year has changed, we set a paper that is suitable for resit candidates, providing alternative questions where necessary. Note, however, that we do this only for candidates from the previous year, not from further in the past.

Also note that part-time students need to accumulate at least 30 credits of compulsory modules (out of the available 60) in their first year in order to progress into the second year.

Students should consult the College’s regulation on retakes and reassessment for full details. This is available online from Registry’s website at: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/regulations
5.6 Re-enrolment

Repeat students, i.e. students who have to retake some modules (and are not taking any new modules), will be charged *pro-rata* based on the number of credits they retake.

**Assessment only students**, i.e. those students who
- are being reassessed for coursework and/or examinations only; or
- have deferred their examinations and are not taking any new modules; or
- have deferred the project and do not require supervision (re-submitting only)

pay a *reduced* fee that will allow them access to College facilities (Library and workstation rooms). While deferred students are classified as “assessment only”, they are allowed to attend lectures for revision purposes. They should formally seek the permission of module tutors to ensure classes are not oversubscribed.

**Dissertation only students**, i.e. students who retake the project with supervision, pay *one third* of full fees.

Note that
- a student who has to re-submit the dissertation and be reassessed for examination or coursework will be progressed as “dissertation only”;
- a student who has to re-submit the dissertation and also repeat modules will be progressed as “repeat” and fees are based pro-rata on the number of credits.

5.7 Alternative Modules

In the event that a failed core or compulsory module is no longer available the student must attempt an alternative module determined by the relevant Examination Board.

Where an optional module has been failed, the student may attempt an alternative module on approval from the Examination Board. Students would normally retake the original option module unless it is no longer running or the School agrees that an alternative option is appropriate.

Where an alternative module is attempted the student will have only the same number of attempts to pass the module as would have applied if the original module was available.

5.8 Attendance

The College’s attendance framework can be found at

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/Attendance-Framework.pdf

Please see below the information about *eRegisters* (electronic class register system).

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/eregisters

5.9 Coursework

A number of modules require students to submit coursework as part of the assessment. Please consult the webpage of the relevant module or contact the teaching staff of the
module for particular details. Training on on-line coursework submission through Moodle is offered by ITS: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/training

Submitted coursework must always be the students’ own work, except where explicitly noted. Students are required to confirm in writing or via e-mail that each item of coursework submitted is indeed their own work. The Department and College have strict guidelines and penalties associated with plagiarism, and routinely submit students’ work to plagiarism detection services. More details are given in Section 5.12.

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 but before the cut-off date (normally ten working days after the deadline) is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50% for postgraduate 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. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.

If your submission of work to be considered for assessment was late due to mitigating circumstances, then you should submit a mitigating circumstances form and provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late (see Section 5.4). The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel of the Board of Examiners. If no case is made then the penalty mark will stand. If the case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the “real” mark to stand.

College policy about the provision of feedback on assessment is as follows. http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/Feedback-on-Assessment.pdf Unlike many other disciplines, feedback on computer science coursework/tests is often given in the form of model answers/solutions (e.g., program code), rather than textual comments.

5.10 Examinations

Please consult the programme’s intranet webpage (for enrolled students): https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/intranet/index.php/MSc_IT_Intranet

5.11 Projects

Please consult the programme’s intranet webpage (for enrolled students): https://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/intranet/index.php/MSc_IT_Intranet

5.12 Assessment Offences and Plagiarism

For the College Policy on Assessment Offences, see at MyBirkbeck: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/AssessmentOffences.pdf

One particular assessment offence is plagiarism that is defined as “copying a whole or substantial parts of a paper from a source text (e.g., a website, journal article, book or encyclopedia), without proper acknowledgement; paraphrasing of another’s piece of
work closely, with minor changes but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained; piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole; procuring a paper from a company or essay bank (including Internet sites); submitting another student’s work, with or without that student’s knowledge; submitting a paper written by someone else (e.g., a peer or relative), and passing it off as one’s own; representing a piece of joint or group work as one’s own”. Also, a “student who knowingly assists another student to plagiarise (for example by willingly giving them their own work to copy from) is committing an examination offence.”

The College considers plagiarism a serious offence, and as such it warrants disciplinary action. This is particularly important in assessed pieces of work where plagiarism goes so far as to dishonestly claim credit for ideas that have been taken by someone else.

The College also provides learning support for exams and assessments, see:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities

and guidelines on plagiarism

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/offences/plagiarism

5.13 Overseas Students

Overseas students must notify their department of their intention to: (1) withdraw from a programme; or (2) return to their country of origin (either temporarily or permanently); or (3) take a holiday. Department staff will then ensure that the Registry is notified without delay. Records will be kept of all approved holidays and breaks and students must ensure that they notify department staff on their return so they can be checked back in.

Students must report any permanent withdrawal from a programme which Birkbeck will then report to UKBA immediately.

Any intention or approval to change programme or change of programme or study period must be reported to admin staff who will then inform the Registry immediately.

Failure to comply could lead to your visa being revoked.
6 Disability Support

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.

6.1 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 make an appointment to see them as soon as possible after commencing your course. Appointments lasting one hour are available from 12 noon to 5 pm Monday to Friday and are booked by Steve (details below).

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 Department and relevant Departments at the College so they are informed of your needs.

6.2 The Disabled Students Allowance

Students with disabilities or dyslexia on undergraduate or most postgraduate courses who meet the eligibility criteria regarding residency are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). This can meet the cost of special equipment e.g. computers, cassette recorders, etc, non-medical personal help e.g. note-takers, interpreters, readers, etc, book and photocopying allowances and additional travel costs. The Disability Service Manager can assist you in applying to your Local Education Authority (LEA) for this.

6.3 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 has a Personal Assistant’s Scheme to assist you with recruiting, training and paying your personal assistant. Please contact Steve for information on this scheme.
6.4 Support in Your Department

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

As mentioned above your Department 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 Department.

If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the Department then you can contact the Programme Directors, tutors and the course Administrator.

6.5 Support in IT Services and Library Services

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments, specialist scanning software, large monitors, dyslexia software, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs etc. For advice and assistance please contact the Disability IT Officer. There is also some specialist equipment in the Malet Street Library, including a CCTV and students with disabilities may benefit from using the Library’s LAMP service for postal deliveries.

6.6 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 £300. Some students can receive assistance in meeting this cost from their employer. In exceptional cases students may receive assistance from the Access Fund.

6.7 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 students must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologists Report if you are dyslexic). The closing date for making special examination arrangements is the 15th March and beyond this date consideration will only be given to emergency cases.

6.8 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 website at:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability

6.9 Contact Details

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.
7 Career Development

Birkbeck is different: gaining useful work experience while you study for your University of London degree can give you a head start on other graduates in a highly competitive jobs market.

The Careers and Employability Service is our new in-house service for enhancing career development and employability throughout your time at Birkbeck, from enrolment through to graduation.

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/careers/careers-service

The Birkbeck Talent is a professional recruitment service linking employers with Birkbeck students and graduates.

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/careers/birkbeck-talent

The UpScale Programme is a partnership between Birkbeck College and The J.P. Morgan Foundation that offers a series of events and workshops exploring a diversity of skills, designed to inspire you to pursue careers especially in technology and social work, two high-growth and high-potential sectors in the UK and beyond.

http://www.upscaleprogramme.com/

For more information, please visit

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/careers

Furthermore, the Careers Group, University of London which is nearby also offers great expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of all ages and at all stages of career development.

http://www.thecareersgroup.co.uk/
8 Business Engagement

The School of Business, Economics and Informatics (BEI) has a dedicated Business Engagement team where you can take advantage of extra support — in addition to what is offered by Birkbeck Talent and Birkbeck Careers.

The Business Engagement team deliver a range of activities to support you in your career aspirations.

- **Mentoring Pathways**
  Mentoring Pathways pairs successful applicants with industry professionals for individual advice and guidance. There are approximately 100 places available for final year undergraduates and postgraduate students. We have partnerships with a number of key organisations and work alongside Birkbeck alumni who provide mentors.
  Please email mentoring@bbk.ac.uk

- **Enterprise Pathways**
  Whether you are setting out in your journey as an entrepreneur or have already established a thriving business, we offer various pathways to support you. These include a non-credit bearing module with workshops once a month throughout the academic year, access to digital resources, and enterprise boot camps to help you to develop your ideas and network with other students.
  Please email enterprise@bbk.ac.uk or visit http://www.bbk.ac.uk/enterprise

- **School Events**
  From time to time we run events, competitions or offer the opportunity to attend conferences, with the aim to help you to find out more about industry sectors, entrepreneurs and professional bodies.

- **Insiders’ Guides**
  We take a small number of students to visit workplaces and ask questions about the culture, the roles and career progression.
  Please email developus@bbk.ac.uk

- **Employer Sponsorship**
  Talk to a member of the team about how your current employer might sponsor you through your studies.
  Please email developus@bbk.ac.uk

Please visit our website for resources and information about all of these initiatives.
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/business/business-services

You can also follow the School of BEI on social media for information and conversations.

- Twitter: @BirkbeckBEI
- Facebook: BirkbeckBEI
- LinkedIn: Search BirkbeckBEI
- Google+: Search BirkbeckBEI

We send a regular email newsletter with details of all upcoming events and activities to students in the School of BEI who allow marketing communications through their MyBirkbeck Profile.