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1 General Information

1.1 Contacts

Programme Director: Dr Alessandro Provetti, ale@dcs.bbk.ac.uk
Programme Administrator: TBA (interim: Liam Simmonds), pgadmin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk
Admissions Tutor: Dr Carsten Fuhs, carsten@dcs.bbk.ac.uk
Projects Tutor: Dr Oded Lachish, oded@dcs.bbk.ac.uk

1.2 Student Support

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.

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

On the MyBirkbeck web site

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

students can find more details on

• information and advice
  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.

The School of Business, Economics and Informatics has Learning Co-ordinators. Their role is to support students in their studies. They can offer help and support on a variety of topics ranging from writing skills to basic maths. See

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

for details.
1.3 Additional Information

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

- internet page:
  www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/study-with-us/postgraduate/msc-data-science/

- an introduction to Data Science:
  www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/study-with-us/postgraduate/msc-data-science/what-is-data-science/

- intranet page (for enrolled students):
  www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/dcs/wiki/index.php/MSc_DS_Intranet

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the contents of both of this booklet as well as the programme’s web site, and to consult the web site on a regular basis, since additional information will be posted there during the year. You should also read your College email on a regular basis.
2 Important Dates

2.1 Introductory Talks

The programme will kick off with introductory talks to new students:

- Part-time students: 18:00, Thursday September 29th 2016, room MAL 404;

These will include a short hands-on introduction to the departmental computer system. There will also be short presentations by representatives of the library and the disability office.

2.2 Term Dates

Lectures will commence in the week starting on Monday October 3rd 2016. The teaching (i.e., not including exams and project) covers two terms of eleven weeks each (autumn and spring term). The summer term is given over to revision (including revision lectures), exams, and the project.

- Summer term: Monday April 24th 2017 – Friday July 7th 2017

Please refer to

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates

for the College holiday closing times.

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

It is especially important for international students that they inform the department about any absence, see

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/management/current-students/overseas-students.
3 Syllabus and Timetables

3.1 Syllabus

We give a general overview of the content of the programme here; detailed description of the individual modules is in the next section.

3.1.1 Compulsory Modules

- Fundamentals of Computing — FoC (15 credits)
- Information Systems — IS (15 credits)
- Introduction to Software Development — ISD (30 credits)
- Computer Systems — CS (15 credits)
- Big Data Analytics using R — BDA (15 credits)
- Data Science Techniques and Applications — DSTA (15 credits)
- MSc Data Science Project (60 credits)

3.1.2 Optional Modules

Students also have to choose one optional module from the following list.

- Cloud Computing — CC (15 credits)
- Information and Network Security — INSEC (15 credits)

- A 15-credit, level 7 module offered on the Advanced Computing Technologies MSc programme. For a detailed description of these modules and the timetable, see the following web page:

  \[ \text{http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/courses/mscact/} \]

  Please note that this programme runs on a different timetable, so you can only take these modules if you are able to fit them into your schedule. If you are interested in taking a module from the Advanced Computing Technologies MSc programme as an option, please discuss this with the MSc DS Programme Director.

  Optional module availability is 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.
3.2 Timetables

The teaching venues will be announced online:

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

For an overview of the teaching venue locations, please refer to

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/guides/help/class-information/

Below is the timetable for the modules. Note that occasionally there might be changes (e.g. swapping of lectures between modules, or additional tutoring sessions). Please contact regularly the web pages of the modules for up-to-date information.

Part-time Students, Year 1

In the first year, Data Science students take only compulsory modules as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Term 1 (Autumn)</th>
<th>18:00–19:20</th>
<th>19:40–21:00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
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<td>Tue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>FoC</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Thu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Term 2 (Spring)</th>
<th>18:00–19:20</th>
<th>19:40–21:00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td>ISD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>IS/FoC</td>
<td>IS/FoC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu.</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>CS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part-time Students, Year 2

In the second year, PT students take the compulsory modules Big Data Analytics using R (BDA) and Data Science Techniques and Applications (DSTA), and also one optional module. The timetable is TBA by the start of the second year.
4 Module Descriptions

4.1 Fundamentals of Computing (FoC)

Teaching Staff
Prof. Michael Zakharyaschev (module coordinator), Prof. Trevor Fenner

Online material
http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~michael/foc/foc.html
http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~trevor/FoC/focTF.html

Aims
Discrete mathematics, mathematical logic, and the related fundamental areas of data structures and algorithms lie at the heart of any modern study of Computer Science. Any understanding of how computers operate and how to use them effectively and efficiently, in terms of either their hardware or software, inevitably involves numerous mathematical concepts.

This module introduces and develops mathematical notions, data structures and algorithms that are used in various areas of Computer Science, in particular those required for other modules of the programme.

Syllabus
• Digital logic. Arithmetic for computers.
• Elements of set theory.
• Finite state machines (automata). Nondeterministic automata.
• Regular languages.
• Context-free languages and pushdown automata.
• Turing machines. Universal Turing machines. Undecidable problems.
• Data structures: representations and operations.
• Lists, stacks, queues and dequesues.
• Trees, forests, binary trees.
• Tree traversal and other operations; binary search trees.
• Organisation of disk storage; methods of file organisation; B-trees.
• Design and analysis of algorithms. Sorting and searching.
**Assessment**

By 3-hour written examination and coursework exercises, weighting 80% and 20% respectively.

**Reading**


4.2 Information Systems (IS)

Teaching Staff
Dr Brian Gannon

Online material
At the college Moodle server (i.e. at http://moodle.bbk.ac.uk/).

Aims and Outline
The primary aim of the module is to help students understand how information and communications technologies are deployed and to make informed professional decisions about IS development in fast changing socio-technical environments. This includes understanding how to use information processing constructs including files and data schemata, programs and other coded units, and the contexts to which they will be fitted. A subsidiary aim is to introduce students to some of the practical aspects associated with a career as an IS professional, and to describe key social and organisational aspects of enterprise computing.

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, such as the use of class and object diagrams. Several project methodologies are described, including Agile (Scrum) methodology. The module also incorporates insights into professional and legal issues surrounding Information Systems development.

Syllabus
- Theories of Information Systems
- The Information Systems Development Life Cycle
- Project Initiation - Identification and Selection
- Requirements Analysis & High Level Design
- Detailed design, including Architecture, DB design and UI design
- IS implementation
- Agile methodologies
- IS in everyday life
- IS contracts and legal issues
- Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Intellectual Property Rights
- Computer Misuse and Information Surveillance
Assessment

By 2-hour written examination and in-class tests, weighting 80% and 20%, resp.

Reading


• Other supplementary readings will be advised.
4.3 Introduction to Software Development (ISD)

Teaching Staff
Dr David Weston (module leader) and Dr Igor Razgon

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

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
1. The software development process.
2. Principles of programming and programming languages.
4. Classes, objects, variables, values, types, arithmetic operations, control expressions, methods, string manipulation, exceptions, arrays, collections, I/O, GUIs, documentation.
5. 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 2-hour written examination and practical coursework, each weighting 50%.
Reading


4.4 Computer Systems (CS)

Teaching Staff
Dr Szabolcs Mikulás

Online material
http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/~szabolcs/compsys.html

Aims
To learn the basics of computer architecture and organisation, and the role and mechanism of operating systems.

Syllabus
1. Introduction: Computer architecture (CA) and Operating system (OS) overview
2. Processors
3. Processes and threads
4. Concurrency
5. Memory management
6. I/O and file systems
7. Protection and security
8. Distributed and parallel processing

Assessment
By 2-hour written examination and coursework, weighting 90% and 10%, respectively.

Reading
• Recommended reading:
4.5 MSc Graduation Project

Please refer to the page already available for the MSc Computer Science program:

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

Aims

In the MSc project students will be able to demonstrate their skills in organising and completing a task that goes beyond a typical coursework assignment. This includes planning and executing a major piece of programming work or an experimental campaign appropriate to the MSc Data Science programme and presenting existing approaches in the problem area (placing the student’s own approach in the wider technical and conceptual context).

Students are encouraged to come up with their own ideas for projects. In order to arrange supervision for the project a student should discuss possible projects with the Projects Tutor, Programme Director or with the lecturer who seems the most appropriate for the topic.

Syllabus

The main part of the module will be done by the students on their 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.

Assessment

Written project proposal (of about 2000-3000 words) and written project report (of about 10,000 words), weighting 20% and 80%, respectively.

Reading

- As recommended by the supervisor.
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 summarise the most relevant rules for the MSc Data Science.

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. The project module 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). Up to 30 credits of the taught modules with a mark between 40% and 49% can be compensated (assuming that the total weighted average mark is above 50%) on the MSc (note that College regulations do not allow compensation on PGDip and PGCert). Additionally, there is a 60-credit project module.

To gain an award, the following is required:

- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert): pass 4 compulsory 15-credit modules.
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip): pass all compulsory taught modules and one optional taught module.
- Master of Science (MSc): requirements for PGDip and pass the project.

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 and, normally, at least 70% on the project.
5.2 Announcement of Results

The Examination Board 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 exam board you will receive a letter from the Department about your results. Your results and grades will be officially confirmed by the College on your MyBirkbeck profile.

Students who have not paid their fees won’t be served any information about their examination results.

5.3 Choosing the Optional Module

You will receive a form from the Programme Administrator at the beginning of the relevant term to indicate your choice of the optional module. You have to return this form by the specified deadline so that your chosen module can be listed among the modules that you wanted to be assessed that year.

Optional module availability is 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.

5.4 Mitigating Circumstances and Deferral

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

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

If a student feels their circumstances warrant consideration by the Board of Examiners they should notify the Programme Director, in writing, in advance, at the earliest opportunity (within 7 days of the assessment deadline or examination) using a Mitigating Circumstances Claim Form, which can be downloaded from MyBirkbeck:

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/exams/mitigating-circumstances
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). 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.

For further information, students may consult the document on mitigating circumstances through MyBirkbeck:

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

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. Students have to do this before May 1st for exams and by September 1st for the project.

A student who defers an element of assessment normally 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.

5.5 Retake and Reassessment

One reassessment (but only one) is allowed for each element. You maybe reassessed in a failed coursework, written exam or the project if your marks for that module are below 50%. If your marks are below 40%, then you have to retake the whole module (i.e., attend lectures and be reassessed in each element of the module, including coursework and exam).

Students who fail an assessment and 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.

There are no special resit exams; students resit alongside the other candidates in May/June the following year. They normally do so a year after their first attempt. Where the syllabus 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 45 credits (out of the available 75) in their first year in order to progress into the second year.

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
- have deferred their examinations and are not taking any new modules
- have deferred the project and do not require supervision (resubmitting only)

pay a reduced fee that will allow them access to College facilities (Library and workstation rooms). While deferred students are classed 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 resubmit the dissertation and be reassessed for examination or coursework will be progressed as dissertation only
- a student who has to resubmit the dissertation and also repeat modules will be progressed as repeat and fees are based pro-rata on the number of credits.

5.7 Examinations

Please consult the programme’s intranet web page (for enrolled students):

http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/dcswiki/index.php/MSc_CS_Intranet
5.8 Coursework

A number of modules require students to submit coursework as part of the assessment. Please consult the web page of the relevant module or contact the teaching staff of the module for particular details.

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 the section “Assessment Offences and Plagiarism” of this booklet.

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 on a cover sheet. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.

If you submit late work that is to be considered for assessment, then you should submit a mitigating circumstances form, see above, and provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late. 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.

5.9 Projects

Please consult the programme’s intranet web page (for enrolled students):

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

5.10 Assessment Offences and Plagiarism

See at MyBirkbeck

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

for the College Policy on Assessment Offences.

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, please see

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/get-ahead-stay-ahead/academic-support

and guidelines on plagiarism

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

and

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

The Wellbeing Service

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/well-being-service

is made up of the Counselling Service, the Disability and Dyslexia Service, and the Mental Health Service. They provide specialist support to students.

You can contact the Wellbeing Service by emailing wellbeingservices@bbk.ac.uk or by calling on 020-7631-6316, where you will be able to speak to one of the Wellbeing Service Administrators. The telephone service opening hours are:

- Monday to Thursday: 11AM-1PM and 2PM-4PM
- Friday: 11AM-2PM

6.1 Counselling Service

The Counselling Service

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/well-being-service/counselling-service

provides assistance to students who are experiencing emotional difficulties which may be impacting upon their studies or overall experience at Birkbeck.

6.2 Mental Health Service

Many students experience mental health difficulties at some point in their time at university. Whether you have a formally diagnosed psychiatric condition or other form of mental health difficulty such as anxiety or depression, we encourage you to seek support in your studies. Birkbecks Mental Health Service

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/well-being-service/mental-health-service

is a first point of contact for students experiencing mental health issues at any stage during their studies.
6.3 Disability and Dyslexia Service

At Birkbeck we welcome students with disabilities. We aim to provide all of our students with a study environment that enables them to participate fully in our courses.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service:

[web link]

can provide advice and support to students with conditions that impact their ability to study, such as:

- specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D)
- sensory impairments (blind/partially sighted, deaf/hearing impaired)
- mobility conditions (including RSI, arthritis, neck back and knee conditions etc.)
- medical conditions (e.g. HIV, CFS, diabetes, cancer, chest and respiratory conditions etc.)
- autism-spectrum conditions (autism or Aspergers syndrome)

They can provide support during your studies including

- Your Study Support Plan
- The Disabled Students’ Allowance
- Access to Learning Fund
- Charities and trusts
- Dyslexia screening test
- Government benefits
- Personal emergency evacuation plans
- Pager alert system
- Rest Room
- Toilet facilities
- Car parking
- Disability and Dyslexia Support in the Library and IT Services
7 Career Development

Most students are interested in developing their careers, either within their current field of work or in a completely new direction. The Careers Group, University of London

http://www.thecareersgroup.co.uk/

offers great expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of all ages and at all stages of career development.

The Careers and Employability Service

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

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

There is also Birkbeck Talent, a professional recruitment service aimed exclusively at assisting Birkbeck students to find work whilst studying and after graduation. They work with Londons top employers to offer innovative internships, prestigious job vacancies and exciting graduate opportunities. To find out more please visit

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