DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS

Postgraduate Taught Handbook 2021/2022

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Summary and Contents

This handbook contains important information about the Department of Informatics at the University of Sussex – where to find things, who does what, and who you can speak to about various issues. The information given here, and a lot more besides, can be found on the School of Engineering & Informatics website: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/forstudents**.

You can access information about your courses and modules through **Sussex Direct** and **Canvas**. These online systems are designed to give you easy access to the information you need as a student.

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SECTION ONE: Academic Information

Term Dates – 2021/22

	Arrival Weekend	Sat 18 Sep to Sun 19 Sep 2021
	Autumn term begins	Mon 20 Sep 2021
	Welcome Week	Mon 20 Sep to Fri 24 Sep 2021
Semester One	**Semester One begins**	Mon 27 Sep 2021
	Teaching begins	Mon 27 Sep 2021
	Teaching ends	Fri 10 Dec 2021
	Autumn term ends	Fri 10 Dec 2021
	Winter vacation	Sat 11 Dec 2021 to Sun 2 Jan 2022
	Spring term begins	Mon 3 Jan 2022
	Semester one assessment period begins	Mon 3 Jan 2022
	Semester one assessment period ends	Sat 15 Jan 2022
	Semester One ends	Sat 15 Jan 2022
	Intersemester week	Mon 17 Jan to Fri 21 Jan 2022
	Winter graduation	Mon 24 Jan to Fri 28 Jan 2022 – TBC
Semester Two	**Semester Two begins**	Mon 24 Jan 2022
	Teaching begins	Mon 24 Jan 2022
	Spring term ends	Fri 1 April 2022
	Spring vacation	Sat 2 April to Sun 24 April 2022

Communication

We will need to communicate with you for various purposes. **Sussex email** is the main mode of communication within the University so it is very important that you check your **Sussex email account** – every day if at all possible. All University emails will be sent automatically to this account and not to any other personal email accounts. You can obtain details of your email account from IT Services.

Official University communications are sometimes sent to you by post, so it is vital that you keep your term-time address and contact details up to date on **Sussex Direct.** Paper-based communications are also sent via the student pigeonholes**,** so you will need to check yours regularly. The Informatics pigeonholes are located at the boundary between the Chichester 1 and Chichester 2 buildings on level 2 (on the 2nd floor, just off the photocopier room).

We will be using Microsoft Teams as a communication tool to provide easy access to your Academic Advisers and to your peers. Teams as well as much other software can be found at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/services/software/teams

Please look at the noticeboards in the Engineering & Informatics School Office foyer area in Chichester 1 for information on examinations, student reps, student mentors, careers and placements, competitions etc.

Teaching faculty are encouraged to use an automated text messaging facility to issue emergency messages to class groups in cases of cancellation of classes, e.g. due to staff illness. This is another good reason for keeping your mobile phone details accurate on **Sussex Direct**.

What we expect from you

Being a student carries obligations as well as rights, especially at Sussex where so much emphasis is placed on group teaching and project work.

Therefore, attendance at your taught sessions is a requirement and is not optional - this is monitored by the School. We expect all our students to attend at least 80% of their timetabled teaching sessions. Where sessions are being delivered online due to Covid-19, your engagement with online material will be monitored as proof of attendance. These sessions include lectures, laboratory sessions, workshops and seminars held in person where a register is taken, or their equivalent replacement online sessions. If you are unable to attend, you should let the tutor for the session know in advance, if possible. If you are away from teaching for more than 2-3 days (due to illness, for example), you should send an email to:
enginf-attendance@sussex.ac.uk – please give details of your absence and expected return date. Any unexplained or persistent absences will be noticed and you may be required to attend a meeting of the School Student Progress Committee, who may then recommend that you be required to withdraw from the University, either temporarily or permanently.

Prepare for teaching sessions.

Just turning up is not enough. You need to have done any specified work in advance and be prepared for the session. This is particularly important for labs, where the time for practical work is limited and cannot be wasted in reading the lab script to find out what you should be doing. You should contribute to seminars, as well as benefiting from other people's contributions. The success of a seminar depends on everyone turning up

Observe deadlines.

Being able to organise your time and to plan ahead to meet deadlines is an important skill. So we insist that you meet deadlines for all formal assessments. Penalties will be imposed for submissions that do not meet specified deadlines and for which there are no Exceptional Circumstances. You can find more information about the procedure for applying for exceptional circumstances from **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/.** The student life centre also handles a wide range of other academic and personal issues, and is a useful resource to know about during your studies. More information on this is available in section two of this handbook.

Co-operate with your fellow students.
You are not in a competition! Doing well does not necessarily mean doing better than others. You can learn a lot and help each other by sharing resources, such as reading material and notes. In many cases you will be working in pairs or teams and need to work co-operatively to achieve the objectives of the assignment. Students often set up their own study groups and revision groups and there are plenty of places for you to work together, including Labs 1 & 2 in Chichester 1 and the mezzanine space in John Clifford West. When working together on assignments, keep in mind, however, the rules about academic misconduct, addressed on page 10 of this handbook.
Use the Library.
Sussex has one of the best **University libraries** in the country, and it is especially good in its support for undergraduate teaching. To get the best from the Library, you should attend one of the vid at.056 Tw [1.1

Attendance Etiquette:
As a courtesy to your lecturer and fellow students, the School asks that you abide by the following guidance for attendance at all timetabled sessions:

- Arrive in good time for the start of the session. If you are unavoidably late please enter the room with minimum disturbance and do not interrupt the proceedings.
- Do not use mobile phones during sessions. They must be OFF, or on silent if you need to be contacted.
- Do not engage in private conversations during sessions.
- Do not pack-up and/or leave before the session AND questions are finished.

All of the above are very distracting for the lecturer and your fellow students and will affect the teaching experience.

- If you need to record lectures then you should inform the lecturer at the start of the module. Such recordings are for your own personal use and should not be circulated.
- As outlined above, attendance at all timetabled sessions is compulsory and the best learning experience comes from being there as it happens. However, if you have a period of absence, try to catch up quickly. The materials (including lecture notes) posted on **Canvas** should help you do this.

Courses & Modules

Degree course syllabus information, including learning outcomes and curriculum details, and information about your modules, can be viewed via the School website:
www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/coursesandmodules/informatics/pgcourses

Sussex Direct is your personalised web portal to University information. The system will help you to track your marks and attendance and ensure that these are accurate. Behind the scenes, Sussex Direct helps your Academic Advisor, and Student Advisors, to support your studies.
You will find:

- Syllabus Information
- Module descriptions
- Assessment information
- Module evaluations

Canvas is the web resource used to support every module taught at the University. Lecturers put their teaching materials on Canvas, and it also contains tools to help you with your modules.

Options

Optional modules are chosen by all full-time PG students (who have them in their degree course structure) at the beginning of the academic year. You can consult the Course Convenor, your Academic Advisor and Module Convenors about the options on offer before making your selection. The School Office will contact you by email regarding your module option form.

Credit System

Full-time students are expected to put in a 40-hour average working week over the 12 month academic year – a total of at least 1,800 study-hours. Sussex, like other Universities, uses a measure called “credit” which reflects this input of time. In the system used here, a full time postgraduate academic year contains 180 credits (i.e. a credit is equivalent to 10 hours of student effort). These credits are divided amongst the different modules. The majority of modules are worth 15 credits, which equates to 150 hours of study for that module. Study time will include several kinds

Timetabling

You can view your timetable on your **Study Pages** on **Sussex Direct**. **Please check your timetable every week and make sure you are allocated to the right modules and that you have no timetable clashes**. You must attend the teaching session you have been timetabled for

Giving you feedback and returning work to you

Subject to certain conditions, feedback for coursework and marks will normally be communicated to you within 15 working days of the submission date. Please note that this means that marks and feedback for work submitted in the last week of a term may not be available until the second or third week of the next term. It is your responsibility to read any feedback comments. Work that is submitted electronically will receive electronic feedback on Canvas.

Feedback on your progress may take many forms and is not confined to the mark you receive. The module lecturer will explain to you how they intend to provide feedback to help you to improve. Examples of feedback include: individual comments on Sussex Direct; generic feedback to all of the class on Canvas or Sussex Direct;

Health and Safety

You must

Beyond your degree

Careers

Don't leave it too late. You should start thinking about your career early on, and then plan for it. You may want to think about what else you could do while you are here which will strengthen your CV and perhaps give you an edge in getting the job you want.

The Careers and Employability Centre is located in the Library or go to: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/**. They can help you to:

- Explore career options
- Build your skills
- Develop your employability
- Gain the experience employers are looking for
- Find a placement, either during a vacation or as a year out
- Construct your own webfolio to encompass all of your University experience and enhance your CV.

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School of Engineering and Informatics based Societies

This society has been set up to act as a chapter of Robogals **www.robogals.org**. This is a multi-national, student run organisation in which the committee, and student volunteers, aim to promote female participation in engineering by conducting fun workshops for local students.
https://www.facebook.com/sussexrobogals/
The aim of this society is to engage Brighton and Hove based pupils into science and engineering. The current female participation in Engineering, throughout the country, is around 11%, and Sussex's own statistics don't fare too well. We want to promote engineering as a discipline that is as much for females as males. We do so by engaging volunteers across all disciplines to get involved in our fun workshops, which are run for local schools to engage in.

HackSussex would like to welcome you to a society about building computer based projects. Whether you like developing apps, building websites, constructing databases or just plain programming, we are the society for you. Our primary goal is to build a community of like-minded individuals who all have one thing in common, and that is creativity on the computing front. We're open to novices and experts alike and we hope to drive forward a collective knowledge base here at Sussex. **https://www.facebook.com/hacksussex/**

SECTION TWO: General advice and other information

Where to get advice and support

The School Office

The Engineering and Informatics School Office is the first point of contact for general enquiries. For some of the most popular requests, you will find forms at **the Virtual Reception.**

For anything not covered here, the office staff will probably be able to give you an answer or, if not, point you in the right direction. While Covid-19 mitigation

Other useful contacts:

Senior Tutor

Within the Department, one member of faculty acts as the Senior Tutor, who will be able to provide support if you are starting to struggle academically. This is currently Dr Simon Bowes. The School Office may contact you if you miss a number of teaching sessions or submissions and ask you to make an appointment with the Senior Tutor.

Dr Simon Bowes
E: **S.C.Bowes@sussex.ac.uk**
T: +44 (0)1273 678581

Director of Student Experience

Within the School, one member of faculty has the responsibility of overseeing and co-ordinating those aspects of student life which are part of the academic life of the School in general. This is currently **Dr Kate Howland**. She works with Student Representatives and Heads of Department to improve communication between students and faculty. You are welcome to contact her with any concerns you have about these matters. In addition, Dr Howland has responsibility for monitoring student attendance, but she hopes that she will not need to contact any of you about this! Although Dr Howland has a formal role with respect to Exceptional Circumstances claims, she cannot talk to you about specific issues, but is happy to try to give general advice where she can. You should go (ou)]TJ

Where can I get a Council Tax Exemption letter?
Council Tax Exemption letters are NOT provided by the School Office. Letters can be requested via an online form at: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ssro/counciltax.** Please note that the regulations vary depending on where you are currently living.

Where can I find my candidate number? Why do I need it?
On your Study pages on **Sussex Direct:** click to view your candidate number. This number is also shown on your University ID card. You will need both your candidate number and ID card for when you sit exams. Please make sure that you do not confuse your candidate number with your registration number. These are two different identifiers used by the University, and it is the six digit candidate number that you should use on your submissions.

What should I do if I lose my University ID card?
If you lose your card, or if you suspect it has been stolen, you should immediately report the loss to the Library: **(library.membership@sussex.ac.uk**). The Library will prevent your card being used by anyone else, but you are responsible for any borrowing undertaken up to the time when the card is reported lost.
To obtain a replacement card, which you will need to do if you want to benefit from University services, you must contact the print unit: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sef/services/print**. Lost or damaged ID cards will be charged at £10.00 per card, payable. **Please note that the payment cannot be taken from your student account**. If your card has been stolen and you can provide a Crime Reference number from the police in support of this, you will not be charged for a new card.

When and where do I hand in my work?
You will find instructions for coursework submission on Sussex Direct in your Assessment Deadlines & Exam Timetable. See the previous section “Assessment: What you need to know”, page 9).

How can I print my work?
The University provides a large number of networked printers which you can access using your printer PIN. Your printer PIN will be issued to you within 48 hours of the official start date of your course. You will receive this PIN by email to your Sussex email address. Details of how to use the printers, along with the printing charges, are given on the IT Services web pages at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/services/clusterrooms/clusterprinting

Where can I get an official transcript of my marks?
For graduating postgraduate students, official transcripts of marks are posted to your home address, normally at the end of November. Please check that your address is up to date on the University database– it can be changed via **Sussex Direct**.

Who do I ask for reference letters for jobs, etc.?
Your Academic Advisor is the bes

The **academic misconduct regulations** at the University of Sussex may be different to the regulations at your previous school or college. **Don't assume the regulations will be the same: it is your responsibility to check.** Read the University's **full definitions for the various types of academic misconduct** on the Student Hub.
A number of first time misconduct cases occur because students have not familiarised themselves with the requirements for good academic conduct in assessment and sometimes do not know or fully understand that they have done anything wrong. However, this is not an excuse: all students have a responsibility to understand the academic requirements and to complete their assessments with academic integrity. *On some courses, for example Law, the University will have to report any cases of academic misconduct to a professional and/or regulatory body. This may mean that you are unable to register to practise.*
At the start of the academic year, when you registered online, you were asked to agree to follow and uphold the Academic Integrity Values. You were asked to watch some short videos explaining what is meant by Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct. If you did not watch these videos or would like to watch them again, they are available via Canvas.
The **Skills Hub** also provides resources to support you with the academic integrity requirements for assessment. Resources to support academic integrity include: **avoiding plagiarism**, **avoiding collusion** and **referencing information**. In addition, the **Skills Hub** provides a range of guidance on **writing and assessment skills**.

2. School Referencing System
To work with Academic Integrity you must learn how to reference appropriately within your discipline, and continue to develop good academic practice throughout your studies. This may take a little time, but you will be more confident that the work you submit for assessment will meet the required standards for good academic conduct. You should attend all workshops, tutorials and academic advising session offered by the School.
You are required to use one of the Academic Referencing styles listed on Skills Hub.

Proof reading
You may arrange for someone to proof read your assessments, unless the assessment task specifies that proof reading is not permitted. You should not ask another student on the same module to proof read your work. Where a proof reader is used, it remains your responsibility to ensure that any suggested changes comply with the University **guidance on proof reading.**
The formal **policy on proof reading is available here**.
You should retain a copy of any suggestions made by the proof reader in case a concern is raised about academic misconduct.