DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS

Undergraduate Handbook 2021

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 **Engineering and Informatics** website

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

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

Policy on Unacceptable Behaviour

The University of Sussex is committed to creating a learning environment free of harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying, where every person is treated with dignity and respect. All students have the right to work and study in an environment which encourages harmonious relationships.

For further advice and University procedures in the event of prejudice, harassment or bullying, please visit our dedicated website page: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/studentlife/harassment**

However, unacceptable behaviour covers much more than this, and you will find many more resources at the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion site **https://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/**

The School of Engineering & Informatics is committed to a zero-tolerance approach in all areas of equality and respect, and will take any transgressions extremely seriously. This includes within our online learning environment.

If you have any concerns in these areas, our School Dignity & Respect Champion is **Elizabeth Rendon-Morales.**

Staff and Student Charter

The School of Engineering & Informatics has produced the following charter in collaboration between staff and students:

Conduct in the Future Technologies Labs.

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/ugcourses

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 students (who have them in their degree course structure) in the Spring Term for the forthcoming 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

Degree courses at Sussex are modular, with each academic year being a largely 'self-contained' unit of study. Full-time students are expected to put in a 40-hour average working week over the academic year - a grand total of at least 1,200 study-hours per year. Sussex, like other Universities, uses a measure called "credit" which reflects this input of time. In the system used here, each academic year contains 120 credits, where 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. This can include time spent on many relevant learning activities such as reading background material, preparing and writing assessments, attending lectures, labs, seminars and workshops and revising for exams.
These figures are only a guide. Individual students have different backgrounds and different strengths, and this will affect the amount of effort - and time - needed to cope with the various modules in your course. If you find yourself spending much more, or much less, time on a module than would be expected for the credit load, then you should talk to your Academic Advisor to make sure you are spending your time effectively.

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 (this applies especially to grouped activities such as labs and workshops). Requests to change the teaching session you have been allocated to will be accommodated if possible, but please do not assume that this will be the case as in many cases teaching groups will already be full, leaving little scope for change.

Assessment: What You Need to Know

The definitive source of

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and Collusion, Cheating in Unseen Exams

Don't do it! We take all forms of academic misconduct very seriously and have systems in place to detect when it happens. Misconduct penalties will be applied if you are found in breach of the rules. Students sometimes commit academic misconduct without fully understanding why they have done something wrong. To counteract this, a web page has been developed to offer guidance and advice to students and staff about issues relating to collusion and plagiarism:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adge/standards/academicmisconduct It is important that you understand what constitutes collusion and plagiarism so that you can avoid them. The full University rules on academic misconduct are set out in the Undergraduate Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook. Please also see p19 of this handbook.

Study Abroad

Sussex Abroad offers University of Sussex students the opportunity to spend part of their degree abroad at one of our university partner institutions in countries all around the globe.
For more information please refer to the International and Study Abroad Office web pages:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/students/support/studyabroad/.
If you successfully complete a year abroad, "with a study abroad year" will be added to the title of your degree in order to reflect this.
Please note, if your degree incorporates an Industrial Placement year, you cannot additionally take a Year Abroad.

Industrial Placement Year

The Department offers all students (other than Foundation year students) the opportunity to apply for an Industrial Placement, to be undertaken as part of their degree course. Some students will already be registered on the "with an industrial placement year" version of the course, but the opportunity is available to all, and information about placements is sent out to all students.
The placement would normally take place after year 2, although MComp students may wish to take it after year 3. If you are not already on the placement version of your course, all students have the option of adding a placement to their degree once they have a confirmed place. In order to take up the opportunity, you have to commit to attending a programme of Placement Preparation, run jointly by the Department and the Careers and Employability Centre, and to make a number of placement applications. The placement is assessed, but does not count towards your degree classification. If you are successful in securing a placement, and pass the assessment, you will have "with Industrial Placement year" added to your degree title. For more information, see the Placements pages on the Careers and Employability Centre website at
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/gettingexperience/placements
Please note, it is your responsibility to find and secure an industrial placement, though the Placements team are there to help you with this. If you do not secure a placement, you will automatically be transferred to the non-placement version of the course.

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.

Opportunities specifically aimed at students in our School are also often highlighted on the School's Facebook page:
https://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/category/Community-College/University-of-Sussex-School-of-Engineering-Informatics-173932752711006/.

Volunteering

There are many volunteering opportunities available in a wide variety of locally based organisations and community projects, as well as for the Students' Union. If you are interested in volunteering please email Project V at: **projectv@sussex.ac.uk** or see the Students' Union website at:
https://www.sussexstudent.com/volunteer/.

Become a Student Ambassador. Our current students are the University's best ambassadors and there are several central University offices that employ current students on an hourly basis for recruitment work, both on campus and via external visits to schools and colleges. This sometimes has a particular focus on talking about university life to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, look out for these opportunities, which are usually advertised via **student web pages.**

Become a Student Representative or join the 'PAL' Team

There are many ways to help your fellow students and enhance your own experience and CV. See the information about the Student Representative Scheme in Section Two. After your first year, you could consider applying to join the Informatics **Peer Assisted Learning** team:
www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/forstudents/informatics/undergraduate/pal.

Get involved in the Students' Union (USSU). There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in clubs, societies and the political processes of USSU. Visit the website:
http://www.sussexstudent.com/

School of Engineering and Informatics based Societies

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-

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 S

Student Union Advice

We offer independent and confidential help & advice to Sussex students. We can offer detailed advice on a range of academic issues (appeals, academic misconduct, concerns about course quality, tutors/supervisors etc), general complaints about University services, student discipline issues and housing/tenancy issues. In addition, we would be happy to have a chat to you about any issue which is concerning you -- If we cannot help directly then we will put you in contact with someone who can, either on campus or externally.
You have the option of booking a one-hour appointment using this booking facility:
https://sussexstudentunionadvice.simplybook.it/v2/
We are currently working from home, so appointments will be via phone, Zoom or Skype.
A link to the above facility can also be found on the main 'Support' page of the Student Union website:
https://www.sussexstudent.com/support/

You can also send us an email at **advice@sussexstudent.com** if you would prefer.

Making your voice heard

We want you to tell us about your experience of studying at the University so that we can improve it for you and our future students. Here's how you can do this:

Student Representatives
The Student Representative Scheme is run jointly by the Students' Union (USSU) and the University. Student Reps provide an essential link between students, the School, the University and the Students' Union. Because Reps are themselves students, fellow students are happy to seek assistance from them when they have concerns or opinions about their education and experience at the University. Being a Student Rep gives an opportunity to learn and practise new life skills that can improve your employability.
There is a Student Rep for each level of study. Elections are held at the beginning of the Autumn Term. Full details of the scheme are online at **http://www.sussexstudent.com/student-reps/** including how to become a Rep yourself and the electoral process.

Measuring the quality of your overall experience:
In your final year, you are asked to respond to the National Student Survey (NSS), which asks about your overall academic experience at Sussex. The NSS is a UK-wide survey measuring student satisfaction in a common way across different institutions, and is run independently of the University. It is important since it helps future students in making their choices, and it gives universities additional feedback so we can improve what we do. In addition, the results contribute to a number of the national league tables of universities. For taking part in the Survey you can claim a reward, the details of which will be advised at a later date.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to provide and pay for to support my studies?
You should aim to start your studies with a basic set of equipment and materials, including notebooks and other stationery, and one or more memory sticks to back up your work.
Look at the reading lists in advance and consider whether you wish to buy any of the textbooks. Note that the Library will stock the editions specified but, for many introductory texts, older editions which can be found cheaper second-hand will still be helpful. Many students find it useful to bring their own laptop, notebook, computer or smartphone, but we do not assume you have any of these. There are many student PCs around campus, accessible 24 hours a day.
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Where can I get a letter that confirms that I am a student?
Undergraduate students can request a variety of letters via the **Virtual Reception**
These will normally be sent via email in pdf format, and take approximately 48 hours to process. If you require a hard copy, please let us know on the form. If your required letter is not on the list at Virtual Reception, email your request to **ei@sussex.ac.uk** and we'll try to help.

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 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

What happens if I submit my work late?
Work submitted after the published deadline is penalised unless you have submitted an Exceptional Circumstances claim (see below). See the previous section 'Assessment: What you need to know' (Late Submissions Policy, page 9).

What happens if I miss an assessment deadline or submit my work late for medical reasons/exceptional circumstances?
If you have exceptional circumstances beyond your control which you would like to be taken into account, you can submit an exceptional circumstances claim. If you would like to discuss your circumstances before submitting your claim, you should visit the **Student Life Centre** and speak to a Student Advisor. Claims are submitted through your Sussex Direct pages. Detailed instructions on how to submit a claim are available at: **http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/circumstances.**

How do I find out if my exceptional circumstances claim has been accepted?
Decisions will be fed back to you via Sussex Direct, and those decisions are also passed on to the Exam Boards which consider your year-to-year progression and your final classification.
If you are required to provide more evidence, you will be emailed and told when/where to submit additional documentation.
If the claim is rejected, you will be informed by email and given information about the appeals process. Appeals can only be made after the Exam Board has met.
Where can I get an official transcript of my marks?

All finalists who have completed their degree will receive a single copy of their transcript with their undergraduate degree certificate. If you have not yet completed your degree the **Virtual Reception** can provide you with an unofficial academic record at the end of the academic year. This lists the results of completed modules but NOT individual coursework marks. The School Office requires at least 48 hours' notice for this service, and it can take lo