



Undergraduate Student Handbook 2011-2012

Department of Computer Science

Important differences between Part 1 and Part 2

Every year some students in the second year have failed to note the following key differences between year 1 and the other years:

- All your marks in Part 2 count towards your degree – you cannot just ‘do the second year again from scratch’
- If you do not hand in a major piece of coursework and you fail the module you will get an ‘N’ grade
- ‘N’ grades cannot be resat – ever!
- ‘F’ grades are capped at 40%

We don’t want to sound like we are nagging you – but please don’t be a student who gets caught this way.

Current copies of this handbook can be found at
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/>

Many of the resources pointed to in this document can be found at
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/>

Student Handbook 2010-2011: Department of Computer Science
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Preface

This handbook, which is also available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/> is intended for all students taking modules in the Department of Computer Science. It has been prepared to help you understand how the teaching in the department is organised and, in accordance with the requirements of the University, to bring relevant rules and regulations to your attention.

It is structured as two parts. *General Information*, which is relevant to all students, and a series of appendices that describe assessment criteria for different kinds of assessments.

Students following the Diploma/MSc in Computer Science in Aberystwyth should receive and read the handbook for that scheme in addition to this handbook.

If you are following degrees with the Department, note that if you are taking modules offered by other departments they may organise their teaching differently and may have different rules about, for example, handing in assignments. Make sure you know what their rules and conventions are.

The contents of this booklet are available on the department's web pages (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook>).

A detailed description of every module offered at Aberystwyth is available on the College's web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/modules>). You should ensure that you read the descriptions of all the modules that you take.

Descriptions of schemes offered at Aberystwyth are available on the College's web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/schemes>).

The Department's programme specifications are at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/prog-specs/Compsci.shtml>

Note that this material is in addition to:

- Academic regulations on the web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/>)
- Formal descriptions of the modules provided on the College Web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/modules>).
- Course notes or handouts provided by the lecturers (accessible directly from the Department's web site or Blackboard.)

1. Communication with Students

In the department we use **electronic mail** as the first means of communication with our students. **You should therefore log into the system at least three times a week and read your e-mail.** If you make any arrangements (such as forwarding), which mean that your e-mail service may become unreliable, that is not an excuse for failure to respond.

In certain cases messages for students will be left in the **pigeon holes** at the bottom of the stairs outside room B53. Messages for students of other departments will be sent to their department. Letters may also be posted to your local or home address. **Important information, such as exam results and advice letters are sent to your 'exam' address, so you must inform the University of changes. You can do this by visiting your on-line personal file <https://studentrecord.aber.ac.uk/en/login.php>**

You should look regularly at the information displayed on the **notice-boards** around the department on the ground floor corridor. They are used to display details of practical groups, assignment results, examination timetables, vacancies for industrial placements, *etc.*

2. Changes of Registration

It is very important that you are registered for the correct degree scheme and for the correct modules. The lecture timetable, examination timetable and monitoring of attendance all use information collected by the Academic Office about which modules each student is taking.

If you want to change the modules you are taking, you must speak to one of the Departmental advising team (see Section 12) and fill in a Change of Registration Form. Usually the main office has these available, or you should be able to find one on your student record page, or follow the link for 'Form' at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/registration/changing/>

You will need to obtain a signature from the department whose module you are leaving, and from the department whose module you are moving to, and from the Department Advisor (or his/her deputy) who will help you check that your choice is consistent with your degree scheme. Students taking electives in Computer Science should seek advice from their own department. You will need permission from the Dean of your Faculty if you change modules after a prescribed date.

There is a similar procedure if you want to change the degree scheme for which you are registered. It should be done by approaching an advisor from the department responsible for the scheme you want to change to. You must then fill in a Change of Registration form and get it signed by both departments and, in some cases, by the Dean or Deans concerned. It is difficult after the first few weeks to change department, but In the Department of Computer Science we try to maintain flexibility and allow students to change their scheme within the department. The rules for changing schemes and for being allowed to progress on your current scheme within the department are in Section 7.

It is your responsibility to liaise with your funding body/bodies. Changes of schemes almost always have implications for funding. This can be a simple process if it is done at the correct time.

3. Teaching Methods

Students should note that each 10 credits of credit should correspond to approximately 100 hours of effort. This includes lectures, tutorials, practicals, assignments and outside study and review.

3.1. Formal lectures

Lectures are used to describe and explain the topics covered by the course. Lecturers will frequently use visual aids to illustrate their lectures and copies of the displayed material, or other handouts, may be made available on the web – often on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.aber.ac.uk>) or in the Department's web space (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/CourseNotes/current/>) At best, the displayed material is only an outline of the lecture content and you are *strongly* advised to make your own detailed notes to supplement any material that is made available. You should follow up on each lecture by reading your notes, reading relevant sections of appropriate textbooks, and then amplifying your notes. If there are still points that you don't understand, you should make a note of them, for discussion in workshops, or with the lecturer concerned.

It is not possible to obtain high marks simply by reading lecture handouts or slides.

While most material will be made available on the web, it is sometimes necessary to provide paper handouts. Where these are substantial, a charge will be made to cover copying costs.

3.2. Tutorials

The aim of the first year tutorials is to promote an understanding of the course you are studying as a whole, that is, to bring together the material studied in the individual modules. These tutorials are sometimes based on articles from the professional and academic literature.

Tutorials are also intended to provide the opportunity to develop personal skills that will help you in your studies and in getting a job.

Tutorials in other years are associated with specific modules (CS22120, CHM5940, CS39440, etc.) but also still serve the purpose of a place where you can ask your tutor for advice with any of your modules.

You will also be assigned a personal tutor. See Section 9.

3.3. Workshops

Workshops may be associated with individual modules, and provide an opportunity for students to seek clarification on aspects of their work. In most cases exercises will be set by the lecturer(s) to provide a focus. The purpose of a workshop is to reinforce what has been taught in lectures.

3.4. Practical Work and Advisory

Most of the early Part I modules have specific practical classes, to which students are assigned. Apart from this, practicals are normally not timetabled for individual modules, except for those with special equipment or other requirements. You will be informed of such an exception in the lectures associated with the module.

The advisory service is offered in B57 and C56 through the skilled demonstrators on duty. Students are encouraged to use this facility as the primary mechanism for solving both practical and technical problems that they cannot solve alone. In addition to supporting practical work, the demonstrators on duty will also assist with any queries from the course as a whole, including revision for examinations. The skills of the demonstrators on duty are clearly advertised.

Students who leave their work to the last minute are likely to find a shortage of machines and/or skills. Please plan your work carefully.

3.5. Seminars and Invited Talks

We invite speakers from other research institutions and from the business community to give talks on their field. Attendance at such talks is not compulsory, but they can provide an interesting background to your studies, or a deeper insight into a particular field. You should note that a knowledge of relevant material presented in seminars and invited talks may be required to answer examination questions in level 3 and M modules.

4. Attendance

4.1. Timetables

The timetables are posted on the ground floor in the department at the start of each semester. It is sometimes necessary to make changes to the timetable and any changes will be posted on the relevant notice board. Because of the range of subjects that students study along with Computer Science, arranging the timetable to avoid clashes with other subjects is difficult. Students who find that they have a clash should immediately inform the timetable officer in the department who will make all reasonable efforts to resolve it.

The timetabling difficulties also make it necessary to place some classes at unpopular times. University rules allow classes on Saturday mornings, but it usually proves possible to avoid.

4.2. Attendance Requirements

Attendance at lectures, tutorials, practicals and workshops is **compulsory**, as is attendance at meetings with your final year project supervisor and at meetings in connection with your group project. Tutorials will be arranged at the start of the module in such a way as to try to take account of students' other academic commitments.

You should note that the attendance requirements apply to the whole of the teaching period in each semester, as well as to examination periods. In particular, students from overseas should note that difficulties in obtaining travel reservations are not an acceptable excuse for missing classes. If you have a good reason for being unable to attend classes, you should inform the department *in advance*.

It is our experience that students who miss a significant number of their lectures fail. Copying someone else's lecture notes or, worse, simply obtaining a copy of the handout (if any) is a very poor substitute for attending a lecture and absorbing its content. It is difficult to recover lost ground because lectures build upon one another.

If illness prevents you from attending classes for more than a week, University regulations require you to present a medical certificate. Copies of this should be submitted to the department office, and this probably means you should hand in a Special Circumstances form.

If, without good reason, you regularly miss lectures or other compulsory classes, or repeatedly fail to hand in assessed work, the department will initiate disciplinary action, in accordance with the Academic Regulation on Academic Progress, a copy of which was issued to you at registration. This disciplinary process can lead to your being excluded from the University:

- If your overall attendance is less than 90%, then you will normally be required to meet with your year coordinator.
- If no improvement is seen then you will normally be sent to see the Head of Department
- If attendance still fails to improve we will start proceedings to exclude you from College.

The Dean may decide to permanently exclude students with unjustified absences.

4.3. Absence from Examinations

If, without good reason, you fail to attend an examination for which you are registered, penalties apply. If you are in the first year, you may not be allowed to take the examination until the following year, delaying your graduation by one year. In the case of students in Part 2, you will not normally be allowed to resit the exam and the actual mark you have obtained, including any marks from coursework, will apply, this may lower your degree class.

If you have good reason for missing an examination, it is essential that you supply the Department Examination Board (through the department office) with documentary evidence of the reason. This should be done before the examination if at all possible. If your absence from the examination is condoned, you will be allowed to take the examination at the next opportunity and you will be awarded whatever mark your paper deserves. The only reasons for missing examinations that are normally condoned are your own illness or the death of, or sudden serious illness or injury to, a close relative.

Examining Boards are required to take into account any medical or personal problems that may have affected a student's performance during the course or in the examination. Again, this can only be done if the appropriate evidence is supplied to the Examining Board before its meeting.

If you are taken ill or suffer an accident during, or before, the examination, you may be faced with the choice of taking an examination in circumstances in which you cannot do as well as normal or of not taking the examination at that time. If this is the case you should consult your tutor or another member of staff – ideally an exam officer (see Section 12).

In any event, if you miss an examination get in touch with cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk

5. Practical Work

You will be formally assessed by a variety of means during and at the end of each module. The precise form of assessment, and the mix of formative (term-time essays, assignments etc) and summative (which often, though not always, involves, an end of semester examination), will vary according to the nature of the module, and are explained to you in detail on <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/>

If in any doubt, ask your module tutor, who will be happy to clarify anything you are unsure about.

It's important to note that at University, assessment is not only about demonstrating the range and depth of your knowledge. It is also an essential part of the learning process that actively helps you develop and enhance

your skills in addressing problems, formulating arguments and communicating often complex ideas clearly and persuasively. These skills are a vital part of your degree programme, and are in great demand in all areas of the world of work.

The feedback you obtain from your tutors on your assessed work will help you improve these skills as you progress through your degree programme.

Assessment criteria may be found in the web part of this handbook at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/>

5.1. Assignments and Projects

“Project” is a term reserved for larger pieces of work, specifically: the group project undertaken in the second and other years of undergraduate schemes and in the taught part of the MSc scheme; the final year projects for undergraduates; the MSc project typically undertaken during the summer following the taught part of that scheme.

“Assignments” are smaller pieces of work.

Assignments and projects are a very important part of many modules offered by the Department. They contribute to your learning and they provide some element of assessment.

The description of each individual module tells you exactly what proportion of the assessment comes from coursework. It is important to realise that, if you don't submit the coursework, you will get no marks for it; this will have a serious effect on your mark for that module as a whole. It is much better to hand in coursework that is incomplete than to hand in nothing at all.

If you fail a module that is assessed wholly or partly by coursework, and you are not considered to have fully participated in the module (normally by failing to hand in coursework worth 20% or more), you will receive an ‘N’ grade and the same penalties apply as if you had been absent from the exam.

This means that in Part 2 (years 2,3 and 4) you will not be able to resit modules with an ‘N’ grade at all.

Failure to submit coursework may also be regarded as grounds for reporting your progress as unsatisfactory, in accordance with the academic regulations on academic progress.

5.2. Worksheets

Worksheets are given primarily as learning and self assessment exercises. They may play a small part in module assessment. (If so, this will be explained in the module description).

There may be a mechanism for handing in completed worksheets or for having them “signed off” by demonstrators. Such mechanisms are designed to provide feedback to you on your progress and understanding and to provide encouragement to stay abreast of material.

The Department is anxious to strike an appropriate balance between assessed and un-assessed practical work. It is most important that you take seriously exercises such as worksheets, where you have an opportunity to develop skills and understanding without the pressures and restrictions of assessment. The Department takes a dim view of the attitude that only assessed work is worth doing.

5.3. Helping one another in coursework

You are encouraged to help one another in unassessed practicals, but assignments and projects are assessed on the basis that they are your own work. The department provides tutorials, workshops, practical classes, and an advisory desk to help you; there are also guidelines for each type of major project explaining the help you can expect from your supervisor or project tutor. You can get help simply by asking, and will lose no marks by doing so. Conscientious students who care enough about their work to seek help often create a more favourable impression than those who stumble on in partial understanding.

It is regrettable that some students feel the need to copy work and attempt to pass it off as their own. Such attempts are quite easy to spot, and we take a very serious attitude to such practices.

Of course, we encourage students to discuss problems and ideas, but there is an important difference between students helping each other to learn and helping each other to complete their work.

If you do collaborate with someone on a piece of practical work, it is very important that all parties involved clearly indicate in the work submitted the extent of the collaboration. Remember that the Declaration of Originality that you sign when submitting assessed work says: "This submission is my own, except where clearly indicated". It will usually be clear to the person marking the work if there has been collaboration and, if there is no explanation in the work submitted, they may become suspicious and instigate the unfair practice procedures. See also Section 6.

5.4. Working in groups

Unless we clearly indicate otherwise, such as in the second year group project, practical work is expected to be undertaken by individual students working independently.

However, we are sometimes asked by a group of two or three students if they can work together more formally on a particular assignment. This can be more comfortable than loosely helping one another, and can allow a more ambitious project to be undertaken.

Such group work *may* be allowed, but *only* if the lecturer responsible for the course has given his or her permission beforehand. Permission may be withheld for a variety of reasons, including unsuitability of an assignment for group work.

Some guidelines:

- A group will be expected to achieve more (in quantity and/or quality) than a single student. Our expectations for this, and the basis of our assessment, will be explained by the lecturer when setting the project, or when giving permission for a group to work together.
- Each member of the group must submit a separate, individual report.
- It is very important that the reports make clear exactly what contribution each student made to the project work. We may interview the students to clarify this.

5.5. Procedure for handing in coursework

Some 2,000 pieces of assessed work are handed into the department every year. This causes us considerable problems of organisation. We have also suffered from time to time from students claiming fraudulently to have handed in work when they have not done so. For both of these reasons we have had to institute strict, formal procedures for handing in coursework. One of the following procedures is normally used.

1. For most assignments you will be told to hand your work in using the 'post box' system, which is located in the Reception Area. Every piece of coursework **MUST** have a completed departmental cover sheet showing information about the coursework, your student reference number, name and signature. Anonymous Marking sheets are available: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching>
Note that in signing you are confirming the Declaration of Originality set out on the cover sheet. The cover sheet **MUST** show your name and signature. The secretaries use this information to check for missing submissions. If the coursework is to be marked anonymously (see below) the secretaries will fold down the corner of the cover sheet to hide your name and signature. You **MUST NOT** fold down the corner yourselves.
2. Some modules require work to be submitted instead or in addition via Blackboard (<http://blackboard.aber.ac.uk>). Note that Blackboard is fussy about what format your work is submitted, if you have a lot of files put them in a .zip file (not .rar, etc).

3. For major pieces of work you may be asked to hand work in at reception during a specified period and you will be given a receipt that will show the number of documents handed in. If you have more than one document you should put all pieces of work in a folder and compile and hand in a list of the separate documents.

If there is a good reason why you cannot hand in your work during the specified time then try to find a friend to hand it in for you. Failing this, arrange with the module coordinator, or your tutor, to hand it in to them early and obtain a receipt.

The University require us, as far as possible, to mark assessed coursework anonymously. Of course, there is some coursework that cannot be marked anonymously; presentations are an obvious example. Therefore, there are exemptions from the **anonymous marking requirement** that have been agreed by the University.

In Computer Science, we have the following exemptions from the anonymous marking requirement:

1. Coursework associated with tutorial modules, since much of the assessment in tutorial modules is done by the tutor as the result of personal knowledge about the student, and this cannot be anonymised.
2. Coursework involving computer code, since we insist that students submitting computer code identify the author of each code module.
3. Group projects, since we may need to make adjustments to the marks of individual students based on information provided by the member of staff supervising the group or by the members of the group themselves.
4. Modules involving presentations, clearly!
5. Project-based modules, where students submit a properly bound project report or dissertation.

Any coursework not covered by one (or more) of the exemptions above will be marked anonymously. For such coursework, the secretaries will hide your name and signature on the cover sheet by folding down and sealing the corner of the sheet.

5.6. Late Hand-ins

We attach great importance to handing coursework in on time; if it is handed in late, without prior permission (which is rarely given), **you will get no marks for it**. The ability to meet deadlines is something which employers value very highly; several employers have congratulated us on the fact that our graduates are better at meeting deadlines than those from many other CS departments.

If you feel you have a very good reason for handing a piece of assessed coursework in late, you must seek the permission of the **year coordinator** (see Section 12), before the deadline for handing in the work.

If an extension is granted, you should ask for written confirmation. In almost all cases, however, you will be told to hand the work in in an incomplete state by the appointed deadline, with a note explaining the circumstances that made it impossible for you to complete it. If the reasons are medical, your note should refer to any medical certificate you may have submitted. For a major piece of work the Department may offer an extension after consultation and in the best interests of the student.

If you miss the deadline for handing in an assignment then you should still submit it, but along with the Declaration of Originality, you should attach a completed "Late Assignment Form" explaining why the assignment is handed in late. If this is soon after the deadline, hand in the assignment and form to the secretary dealing with the assignment submission. Failing that, hand them in to the module co-ordinator. Blank Late Assignment Forms are available from Computer Science reception or from the web at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/>

If the excuse for handing in late is accepted then the work will be marked as normal. Also, by handing in the assignment you will avoid being N'ed (see Section 5.1 above) and you will receive feedback on the work.

5.7. Assignment and Project Classification

Unless otherwise stated, projects, assignments and worksheets will be graded according to one of the schemes shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Clearly, the fine grained scheme will not be appropriate for some small pieces of work. You will be told which scheme has been used.

Table 1: Coarse Grained Grades

Grade	Percentage
A	70 - 100
B	60 - 69
C	50 - 59

Grade	Percentage
D	40 - 49
E	35 - 39
F	0 - 34

Table 2. Fine grained grades

Grade	Percentage
A++	96 - 100
A+	90 - 95
A	80 - 89
A-	70 - 79
B+	67 - 69
B	64 - 66
B-	60 - 63
C+	57 - 59
C	54 - 56

Grade	Percentage
C-	50 - 53
D+	47 - 49
D	44 - 46
D-	40 - 43
E	35 - 39
F+	31 - 34
F	16 - 30
F-	0 - 15

Table 3. Additional codes

O	no assessment recorded	I	assessment incomplete for valid reasons	Z	grade cancelled – assessment offence
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5.9. General

Methods of assessment for individual modules are described in the module descriptions, on the college web. Individual lecturers will be willing to give some feedback to individual students on individual modules. Personal tutors are able to discuss general examination performance with the intention of providing feedback on technique.

Assessment criteria are provided for each piece of assessed work. Standard criteria are provided above and in appendices to this handbook (See “*Assessment Criteria*”). Specific criteria may be in particular module appendices (See <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/>).

You have the right to be assessed through the medium of Welsh. Please inform the department as early as possible so that we can arrange for assignments to be translated if necessary. If you wish to sit exams in Welsh, notify the Administrative Secretary in the Registry by the advertised dates.

6. Plagiarism and Unfair Practice

Unfair Practice includes more than just plagiarism. We have been asked to include a link to the **University Statement on Plagiarism** available with other information about rules governing examinations and assessment: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-13/>

As you see, it is important to indicate clearly in your own work where you have included the work of others. In Computer Science this could include reuse of designs and programs as well as copying or quoting text. Make sure you understand how to acknowledge the work of others in all your submissions. Ignorance of how to do this is not a valid defense.

The following simple guidelines are intended to help you avoid straying from legitimate and desirable co-operation into the area of plagiarism:

- append a bibliography to your work listing all the sources you have used, including electronic ones;
- surround all direct quotations with inverted commas, and cite the precise source (including page numbers, or the URL and the date you accessed it if the source is on the Web) either in a footnote or in parentheses directly after the quotation;
- use quotations sparingly and make sure that the bulk of the work is in your own words;
- even if you don't use direct quotations, important ideas should still be credited;
- remember that it is your own input that gives a piece of work merit. Whatever sources you have used, the structure and presentation of the argument should be your own. If you are using electronic sources, don't cut and paste sections into your work. If you are using books or papers, put them aside when you actually sit down to write. In this way you won't be tempted to copy in material that you don't understand, or be at risk of unintentionally copying in more material than a brief quotation, or of accidentally leaving quotations unmarked. Including someone else's work in your own is readily detectable because the style will be different.

Keep a sense of proportion, and exercise common sense and judgement. For example, it is not necessary to attribute to a source, statements which have passed into the public domain and become commonplace.

It is usually unnecessary to attribute lecture material, though again you should avoid quoting copiously, and you should never rely wholly on lecture notes.

If in doubt, make sure that you properly quote and cite material in order to avoid any suspicion that you are trying to cheat and ask for advice if you are not sure.

7. Assessment and Progression

7.1. Progress

The first year of our schemes is formally known as Part I. The rest of the years comprise Part 2.

In all of the following, note that any changes of degree registration may give rise to funding problems. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their funding body.

7.1.1 Progression from Part I to Part 2

1. To progress to Part 2 of BSc in *Business Information Technology* (G500 or G501), a student must satisfy the College regulations for the completion of Part I (ie. Pass 80 credits get no less than 30% in 40 remaining credits.)
2. To progress to Part 2 of all other schemes, a student must normally achieve at least 50% in modules CS12230 Introduction to Programming or CS12130 Concepts in Programming, and CS12420 Software Development as well as satisfying the College regulations for the completion of Part I. To progress to Part 2 in *Internet Computing* (H620 or H621) students must obtain at least 40% in CS12130 or CS12230, and CS12420.
3. To progress to Part 2 of BEng in *Software Engineering* (G600) or BSc. in *Computer Graphics, Vision and Games* (G450 or G451), a student must satisfy the requirements listed in point 2 and achieve at least 40% in module CS10410 The Mathematics Driving License for Computer Science (or equivalent).
4. To progress to Part 2 of MEng in *Software Engineering* (G601), a student must satisfy the requirements for BEng (G600) and achieve an average of at least 60% in first year Computer Science modules.
5. To progress to Part 2 of BSc in *Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence* (GG4R/7) or BSc in *Artificial Intelligence and Robotics* (GH76/GH7P), a student must satisfy the requirements listed in point 2 and achieve at least 40% in modules CS18110 Professional and Personal Development with AI Concepts and CS10410 The Mathematics Driving License for Computer Science (or equivalent e.g. A level maths).
6. To progress to Part 2 of BEng in *Internet Engineering* (H622), a student must satisfy requirements for BEng (G600) and achieve at least 40% in CS15210 Introduction to Telematics.
7. For joint honours schemes and minors outside Computer Science, other Departments will have their own regulations for progression in their part of the scheme.

Students who have passed Part I but have not done sufficiently well to be allowed to progress to Part 2 of their registered scheme will normally (and at the discretion of the Exam Board) be required to transfer to a scheme for which they are qualified. Students are normally allowed to transfer to any other scheme for which they are qualified, subject to having taken the appropriate modules. This is best done at the end of year 1 but may be done later under some circumstances.

7.1.2. Progression from Year 2

The College publishes general regulations for progression at this point.

In addition to these, it should be noted:

1. To progress from Year 2 to year 3, students must have passed at least 60 credits, so that they will be in an appropriate position to obtain a degree. The department's recommendation, however, is that students take resits so that they do not carry more than 20 credits of fail out of year 2.
2. To progress from Year 2, an MEng student must achieve an overall mark of at least 55%. Students who achieve this mark but have poor performance in some areas (e.g., a bad mark in CS21120) may be advised to change from MEng to BEng or BSc.
3. Students with the right modules choices may transfer to G601 (MEng) if they have obtained a 60% average in their Computer Science modules.
4. Students on schemes requiring a sandwich year cannot normally proceed to that year if they have not met the requirements for progression from year 2.
5. A student who does not obtain a placement for a sandwich year must transfer to a scheme without such a requirement.
6. Students who wish to change degree scheme after Year 2 are normally allowed to do this, subject to having taken the appropriate modules and to obtaining continuing funding.

7.1.3. Progression from Year 4 to Year 5 (MEng only)

1. To progress from Year 4 to Year 5 a student must satisfy the College's regulations for progression.
2. A student who does not meet these regulations will normally be offered a resit.
3. A student who is not successful in the resit will not be allowed to proceed and must leave College.
4. Students may leave the MEng programme and take a BEng degree if they are qualified.
5. Students may transfer onto the MEng programme provided they have taken the right modules and have an acceptable average (normally 60% at the start of year 4).

7.1.4. Gaining a degree

It is a University regulation that, in order to obtain a degree, students must pass at least three quarters of their Part 2 credits i.e. BSc and BEng students must pass at least 180 of the 240 credits they take in Part 2 and MEng students must pass 270 of the 360 credits they take in Part 2.

In addition, students must pass two thirds of the credits at the level of the award – level ‘3’ for BSc and BEng, and level ‘M’ for MEng.

Students who fail to gain a degree normally have resit opportunities – but they should be very careful that they do not receive ‘N’ grades since these modules cannot be resat. See Section 10.

Students who enter Part 2 from 2008-2009 onwards should note that to gain an honours degree, they must pass in CS39440, CC39440, CS39620, CS39540 or CS39930 as appropriate (possibly after a resit). If they do not resit they MAY be eligible for an unclassified honours degree. In addition MEng students must pass SEM5640.

BCS accreditation will be given to honours students who pass the project at the FIRST attempt.

7.1.5. Prizes

The Glyn Emery Prize, named in honour of the founder and first head of the Computer Science Department, is awarded every year to the best first year computing student. The prize is worth £100.

A British Computer Society (BCS) prize of £150 plus a year's free BCS membership will be offered for the best project by a student in CS39440 or CC39440.

The PortalTech Bursary of £1000, is awarded to a final year MEng student for the best performance during their penultimate year.

A number of other bodies, such as the BCS and Microsoft, offer prizes for student projects. These prizes are quite valuable, typically between £500 and £1,000, and students from the department have an impressive record of success in winning them. Notices about the prizes will be displayed in the department and information about them circulated by e-mail.

7.2 Degree Classification

For general information on class of degree etc. see:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/exam-assess/conventions/>

- Band 3** Best 80 level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
- Band 2** Next best 80 level 3 and level 2 credits, with a weighting of 2
- Band 1** Remainder of level 3, 2 and 1 credits, with a weighting of 1

Note that level 2 modules cannot go in a higher band than level 3 modules and that all marks in Part 2 count towards the degree.

7.2.1 An Example

In your final year after the winter exams, a cascade calculator will appear on your student record page, which will help you approximate your final degree class. This example is for illustration.

Suppose you are in G400 and received marks on your level 3 modules of:

70,70,70,70,70,70,70,70,60,60,60,60

(perhaps you received 70 on your CS39440 project, in which case we have counted it 4 times)

On your level 2 modules you received marks of:

60,60,60,60,50,50,50,50,50,50,50,50

Then you would calculate your final mark as:

$((70*8) * 3$	+	$(60*8)*2$	+	$(50*8)*1$	/ 48
top band		middle band		bottom band	to obtain weighted avg
(top 80 level 3s)		(bottom 40 level 3s +top 40 level 2s)		(bottom 80 level 2s)	$8*3+8*2+8*1=48$

Your final average would be 63% which is a II(1)

7.2.2 Three year + 1 schemes

Some degree schemes include an obligatory, assessed year in industry. This is called a sandwich year. Degree classification for schemes which include a sandwich year involve a variant of the standard method.

For schemes involving 3 taught years plus an assessed sandwich year, marks are arranged in the standard cascade but an additional *Band S* comprising 120 credits from the sandwich year assessment is weighted at 0.25. To summarise:

- Band 3** Best 80 level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
- Band 2** Next best 80 level 3 and 2 credits, with a weighting of 2
- Band 1** Remainder of level 3, 2 and 1 credits, with a weighting of 1
- Band S** 120 credits with a weighting of 0.25.

7.2.3 Four year + 1 schemes

For schemes involving 4 taught years plus a sandwich year, marks are arranged in a 4-band cascade (each band containing 90 credits) with a *Band S* comprising 120 credits from the sandwich year assessment weighted at 0.25. To summarise:

- Band 4** Best 90 level M credits, with a weighting of 4
- Band 3** Next best 90 level M and level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
- Band 2** Next best 90 level 3 and 2 credits, with a weighting of 2
- Band 1** Remainder of level 3, 2 and level 1 credits, with a weighting of 1
- Band S** 120 credits with a weighting of 0.25

7.3. Supplementary and Resit Examination Policy

Students should consult the University's policies, which may be found at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/modular-degrees/> Point 15. The following provides a very simplified view of this area.

'Supplementary Assessment' is any assessment that takes place over the summer. 'Resit Assessment' refers to retaking a module's assessment at any time.

There are several flags that may accompany a failed mark. See: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/handbook/section-10/> for a complete list.

The main ones in Part 2 are:

- 'F' failed – may be resat for a maximum of 40%
- 'N' missed a large part of the assessment – may not be resat
- 'H' may be resat for full marks – no fee

The main ones in Part 1 are:

- 'C' 30-40%
- 'R' below 30%
- 'N' as above
- 'M' may be resat for full marks – no fee

As of 2009-2010 resits may take place over the summer or in the following academic year.

Part 2 students are normally expected to resit assessments by "resitting failed examination and/or resubmission of failed/non-submitted coursework components or ones of equivalent value." Usually that means that they need only resit the failed pieces of assessment. The department will tell you of exceptions.

Part 1 students are normally expected to resit all assessments.

When results are released and if you have failed a module, the department will send you a letter containing our advice given your circumstances. If you do not get such a letter within a few days of your results please get in touch (and make sure that your contact addresses are up to date).

If you are in any doubt about what you need to do to retake the assessment or progress with your degree you should consult: cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk

7.3.1. 'H' resits

University regulations do not allow you to retake the examination for a module that you have passed. It may therefore be better to postpone taking the examination, but you should **always discuss this with the department first**. Where appropriate, special examining arrangements can be made, such as extra time or separate seating, to alleviate the effects of medical problems.

In Part I, it is usually better to take the examination if at all possible. Part I marks do not contribute to your final degree result so nothing is lost by trying the examination; even if you do badly, the Examining Board will take into account your problems and may still award a pass. If, however, you decide not to take the examination, you will need to take it again in the August/September examination period. This may very well be inconvenient for you and means that, if you fail then, you have no chance to resit until the following year.

All Part 2 marks contribute to your final degree classification. The Examining Board will try to make allowance for your illness in one of three ways:

- Recommending an H resit (ie. for full marks) that may be taken in the summer, or
- By returning '39H' which allows you to resit for full marks, even if you have passed with a low mark due to your illness. The department will contact you before recommending this mark, or
- By carrying forward the circumstances to be considered at your final exam board. These will then be considered if you are borderline between two classes of degree.

8. Computer Resources

The department believes that the computing facilities available to our students are more than sufficient. Furthermore, the University Information Services facilities, which are closely integrated with those of the department, are available to all students. Even so, availability is not unlimited and there may be occasions when difficulties arise. Students are asked to be understanding in such cases and to comply with any requests the department may make over the use of resources. The Computer Science Department takes no responsibility for the correct functioning of any equipment or software, nor for the security or integrity of any stored program or data except as required by the Data Protection Act.

Do not leave assignments until the last minute. Computer problems are not an excuse for handing in an assignment late.

8.1. Use of Personal Computers

If you own a personal computer, you will enjoy considerable advantages of flexibility and convenience. You must, however, be careful not to let these advantages turn into a disadvantage.

The two most widely used software environments are Microsoft Windows and UNIX. After the first year, some of the practical work set by the department requires, explicitly or implicitly, the use of UNIX; unless you become thoroughly familiar with UNIX, you may have difficulty with the practical work.

If you are sensible, you can gain a lot of advantage by becoming familiar with both major development environments. Not only will this make you attractive to potential employers, but it will also give you a deeper understanding of a lot of the issues in software engineering.

A second danger that can arise from using your own computer is that you become isolated. You can learn a lot from working in the company of other students and discussing your work with them. If you always sit in your room working at your PC, you will lose the opportunity for doing this.

Finally, departmental facilities are maintained and backed up by support staff. If you depend on your own private machine, your work may suffer if it malfunctions. **It is your responsibility to make sure that you take adequate precautions to back up your important work.**

You may use a laptop in lectures subject to the department's policy:

Students can find it very helpful to be able to use laptops during lectures. Some students take lecture notes directly on their laptops, and laptops can be used to find information from the Internet in support of the lecture. However, using a laptop can be very distracting for the other students who are sitting near or behind the laptop user, and for the member of staff giving the lecture. Therefore, it is not acceptable to use a laptop for anything not directly in support of the lecture.

Please be considerate when using a laptop in lectures and do not disturb others.

8.2. Printing

Information Services provides laser printers for students to use. You will find that, to print all the teaching materials and project and assignment work you want, you will need to budget a substantial amount for printing, especially at certain times in the semester. When you are issued with an assignment make sure you know what is to be handed in and in what quality.

You may find it cheaper to learn how to use the various facilities available for fitting more than one document page on a single side of paper ("multipaging").

If there is a queue in B23 look at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/computers/rooms/> to find other printers. A queue at the last minute is NOT an excuse for late hand-in.

8.3. Regulations for the Use of Equipment

All students are required to abide by the rules laid out by Information Services at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/student/regulations/regulations-5/>

In addition, students are expected to abide by such further conditions concerning the use of the resources as the Department may impose.

If, in the opinion of the Head of the Computer Science Department, a user's use of the resources contravenes any University rules, or is in breach of any rules promulgated by the Department, access to the resources may be summarily withdrawn from that user.

9. Student Support

See under Section 12 for the list of staff currently responsible for each major role mentioned below.

9.1. APPR

The university operates an Academic and Personal Progress Review (APPR) scheme http://careers.aber.ac.uk/cas_web/interface/view_content.php?structure_id=905. This is a personal development planning (PDP) tool that helps you create the best possibilities for further study and/or your future career.

9.2 Arranging to see a member of staff

Most members of staff in the department do not restrict the times they are available to see students to a few hours a week, but neither can they be available all the time. If you need to speak to a member of staff, the best way to arrange an appointment is to e-mail them a day or two in advance suggesting two or three times which would be convenient for you, giving them time to reply to you. Members of staff will typically advertise, on their office door, times when they are available. Computer Science Reception will normally be able to tell you if a member of staff is expected to be away for more than a day.

9.2. Personal Tutors

Each student taking a degree involving the Department of Computer Science is assigned a member of staff as a personal tutor. Part 1 students have group tutorials. In Part 2 you will be seen personally by your tutor. The main role of the personal tutor is to help with non-academic problems, such as difficulties arising through illness, personal problems, financial worries, accommodation problems, difficulty with organising academic work etc. Such problems often require specialised help and your personal tutor will often be able to put you in touch with specialised counsellors.

There may be occasions on which you would prefer to deal with someone other than your personal tutor. If this happens, you should feel free to approach any member of staff.

Students with special needs should make these known to the Special Needs Coordinator.

If you are unhappy with your personal tutor you should contact the Head of Teaching.

9.3. Mature Students' Tutor

We welcome the enthusiasm and commitment that mature students bring to the Department, but are aware of the particular problems they may face in returning to education. Apart from their personal tutors, mature students may approach the Mature Students' Tutor who has a particular knowledge of the problems faced by mature students.

9.4. Overseas Students' Tutor

The Overseas Students' Tutor is available to help any student not normally resident in the United Kingdom with any problems relating to the difficulties encountered when living and studying in a foreign country. The main role of the Overseas Students' Tutor is to maintain contact with the overseas students in the department, and to provide information and help to those who need it.

9.5. Welsh Students' Tutor / Tiwtor Cymraeg

Os hoffech chi gael tiwtorial trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, mae angen i chi gysylltu â Janet Hardy (jzh@aber.ac.uk). Bydd y tiwtor yn cynnal un tiwtorial yr wythnos drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg I fyfyrwyr y flwyddyn gyntaf. Gellir addasu'r tiwtorial i gwrdd â gofynion y myfyrwyr, ac wrth drafod pynciau technegol, gellir ei gynnal yn ddwyieithog. Yn Rhan Dau bydd myfyrwyr yn cael tiwtor personol sy'n medru'r Gymraeg.

9.6. Year and Course Coordinators

There is a year coordinator for level one modules, level two modules, the industrial year, level three modules, for the Diploma/MSc courses and for third year MEng students and fourth year MEng students. They coordinate teaching and administration within their area of responsibility. The year coordinators are listed at the end of this booklet.

9.7. Industrial and Sandwich Years

Undergraduate students are strongly encouraged to spend a year with an appropriate industrial company and we help students find suitable places. This year comes between the second and the third (taught) years of the course. Students spend the year with companies that vary from small software houses to multi-national engineering and manufacturing companies, in some cases abroad.

Applications for industrial year placement are normally made early in the second year of the undergraduate course, although late applications can sometimes be accommodated.

Such a year is compulsory for some schemes, it is then known as a *Sandwich Year*. A sandwich year, spent abroad, is also compulsory for students on the BSc course in Computer Science with a European Language. Most schemes have a version with, and a version without, a Sandwich Year.

Each student on a year out is allocated to a member of staff of the department. Sandwich year students will normally be visited twice during the placement. We do our best to visit optional industrial year students (sometimes called YES placement).

9.8. The University Student Support System

The University Welfare System, under the Director of Welfare, provides support and advisory services for all students. The contact telephone number is x2955. Information is also available on the Web, <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support>

9.9. The University Complaint Procedure

The Department always tries to do its best to resolve any problems that students may experience, but if you feel that you have been treated unfairly in any way, you have the right to complain.

The University Complaint Procedure is described in an Appendix to the Rules and Regulations for students, and is available on the Web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/>).

One of the general principles of that procedure is: *“Disputes should be resolved at the lowest level possible in the procedure. In the interests of harmonious relationships informal procedures should, so far as is reasonably practicable, be exhausted prior to entering the formal procedure.”*

If you do not understand why you received particular treatment, you should first seek clarification from the member of staff involved or the course coordinator. We hope that any problem can be resolved at this point, but if you still feel that you have been treated unfairly, you should contact your year coordinator. If the situation is still not resolved, put your complaint into writing and follow the official complaints procedure through the Head of the Department. If any of these members of staff is in any way involved in your complaint you may pursue your complaint directly to the next level. You can expect to receive a written response to your written complaint.

10. Getting the most out of your studies

10.1. Language and Learning Centre

The Language and Learning Centre is available to support your studies. If you have special needs, wish to be evaluated, or just find out more about their services, it is a good idea to make an appointment with them. They are situated in the Llandinam building and information can be found at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/learner-support/>

10.2. Personal Development Planning

The University supports students by encouraging them to reflect on their own academic performance and personal strengths and weaknesses. This reflective process leads to an increased sense of direction, improving motivation and personal development. Key skills valued by future employers are developed throughout your time with the department. See http://careers.aber.ac.uk/cas_web/interface/view_content.php?structure_id=905 for the University link – further details will be given during lectures and tutorials.

10.3. Other Services

Your general handbook gives you information about the facilities provided by the Student Union, the Student Support Office, the Careers service etc.. Students who get the most out of University life are usually also those who put in the most. If you have any problems, remember that staff in the Department care about you. Come and talk to us and we'll do our best to help.

10.4. Report Writing and Study Skills

The ability to produce well-structured reports, written in clear, concise and correct technical English, is essential for a successful professional career in computing. For this reason, we attach a lot of importance to written work in the computing courses. Many students find this sort of writing difficult and there is no easy way to success, the best method is to work at it!

The following titles have proved useful for students wishing to improve their study habits and they also support the University's personal development programme:

- Stella Cottrell, *The Study Skills Handbook 2*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- P. Race, *How to Study: Practical Tips for Students*, Blackwell, 2003.
- John W. Davies, *Communications Skills a Guide for Engineering and Applied Sciences Students*, Addison-Wesley, 2001.

Students who would like some help with study skills and finding resources should contact Janet Hardy who is the Module Coordinator for CS18010.

11. Student Feedback

The department tries hard to keep the quality of its courses as high as possible. In order to do this it looks for input from employers, professional institutions, colleagues in other universities and, most importantly, from its students. Our courses, in their current form, have benefited from student input over the years; please play your part in making them better for future generations of students. Remember, however, that we often get conflicting comments - employers, professional institutions and students do not always agree with each other. We also need your help if problems arise with equipment or timetables. If we know about a problem, there is a good chance that we can solve it quickly; if we don't, there's nothing we can do.

11.1. Staff/Student Committees and Questionnaires

Groups of students will be invited at the start of each academic year to elect representatives to these committees. Those students must make themselves known to and available to their constituents (e-mail is very useful for this). The committees meet once a semester, and provide a platform for discussion between staff and students about any relevant matters. Staff are normally represented by the head of teaching, head of support and each of the year coordinators. Formal minutes of the meetings are taken and posted on the departmental notice board and the web, and details of any actions taken as a result of the meetings are posted.

You will also be invited to complete a questionnaire providing feedback on each module that you study within the department. These questionnaires provide both quantitative and qualitative data. A anonymous questionnaires are given exactly the same consideration as ones with names on them.

12. Administrative Responsibilities

Administrative responsibilities are distributed among various members of the department.

Ones relevant to students are noted below.

From a telephone on the campus network, you need only dial the 4-figure extension number; such calls are free. All these extensions can be dialled directly from outside the campus by dialling 62 before the extension number, for example 01970 62 2424 is the number for the Department Secretary.

cs-office@aber.ac.uk will give you the main office and cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk will give you advice.

Responsibility		Room	e-mail	Ext.
Head of Department	Prof. Qiang Shen	B48	qqqs	2424
Director of Teaching	Dr. Fred Long	B58b	fwl	2440
Director of Research	Prof. Reyer Zwiggelaar	B61	rrz	8691
Head of Infrastructure	Mr. Sandy Spence	B59	axs	2430
Department Secretary	Mrs. Margaret Walker	B50	zzy	2424
Year 1 Coordinator	Mr. Richard Shipman	C54?	res	2450
Year 2 Coordinator	Mr. Rhys Parry	C49	rrp	2427
Year 3 Coordinator	Mr. Neil Taylor	C47	nst	1528
MEng (Year 5) Coordinator	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
Dip/MSc Coordinator	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
MSc. Secretary	Mrs. Lorraine Langford	B50	lal	2540
PhD. Secretary	Mrs. Margaret Anthony	E46	mta	8521
Tiwtor Cymraeg	Dr. Adrian Shaw	B44	ais	2215
Mature Students' Tutor	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
Overseas Students' Tutor	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
Special Needs Coordinator	Mr. David Smith	B46	dhs	2446
Staff/Student Committee	Dr. Hannah Dee	E44	hmd1	1577
Timetable Officer	Mrs. Meinir Davies	B53	met	2424
IS and Library Representative	Dr. Richard Jensen	C36	rkj	8510
Departmental Advisor	Dr. Lynda Thomas	B62	ltt	2452
Examination Board Chair	Dr. Yonghuai Liu	C38	yyl	1688
Examination Officers	Mr. David Smith	B46	dhs	2446
	Mrs. Janet Hardy	B43	jzh	2431
	Mrs. Meinir Davies	B53	met	2439
	Mrs. Bridget Bewick	B53	brb	2232
Industrial Year Administrator	Mrs. Lorraine Langford	B50	lal	2540
Industrial Placement Coordinator	Dr. Adrian Shaw	B44	ais	2215
Careers Liaison Officer	Dr. Adrian Shaw	B44	ais	2215
Schools Liaison Officer	Mrs. Meinir Davies	B53	met	2439

