Computer Principles for Programmers FAQ

Check your Seneca email frequently. When sending email:

- Use only your @mySeneca.ca email account when sending to other @mySeneca.ca and @SenecaCollege.ca addresses; the college spam filter can be very aggressive with email from other domains.
- Include your full *ABC123**XAA*** course code in messages to instructors. It really helps. Like you, we have more than one class. Unlike you, all our classes may have the same course code; we don't know where to find you without the last three letters.

For technical issues with college systems, email ServiceDesk@SenecaCollege.ca or telephone them at 416-491-5050 x22129 – available 24/7.

For academic issues, your first point of contact is your Student Adviser.

See Seneca's Technical Requirements for Online Learning

Watch some short introductions to using Blackboard Learn Ultra, our learning management system which hosts your courses and online learning materials.

- CAUTION: Blackboard's "Activity Stream" seems like a good thing to track important things like tests and assignment due dates. It *mostly* works. There are documented cases where it has not – at least one student has failed the course because they relied on the Activity Stream. Use it ONLY as a double-check of your own tasks list. If you miss a quiz, test, or deadline because you were relying on the Activity Stream to organize your life and it missed something, it is entirely your problem. Sue Blackboard. It is neither an excuse nor a reason that your instructor will accept. Blackboard's documentation does not tell instructors how to ensure critical items appear in the Activity Stream. Effectively, no one knows how it works. *We do know it does not work all the time for everyone*.

At https://learn.senecacollege.ca/, go to our Computer Principles for Programmers course. In Announcements: Read "Welcome New Students" again. Although it was likely sent to you by email, sometimes small changes are not worth another long email.

- Yes, there is a lot of reading. ICT is a endeavour of many details.
- Make notes. Create your own Tasks list and/or use your smartphone's calendar for tests, quizzes, and assignment due dates.

In Course Documents, weekly lecture material, course resources, activity (assignment) instructions, and notes are posted.

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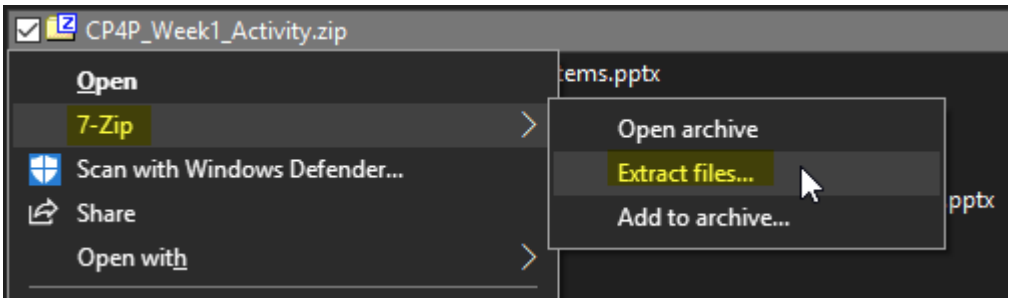
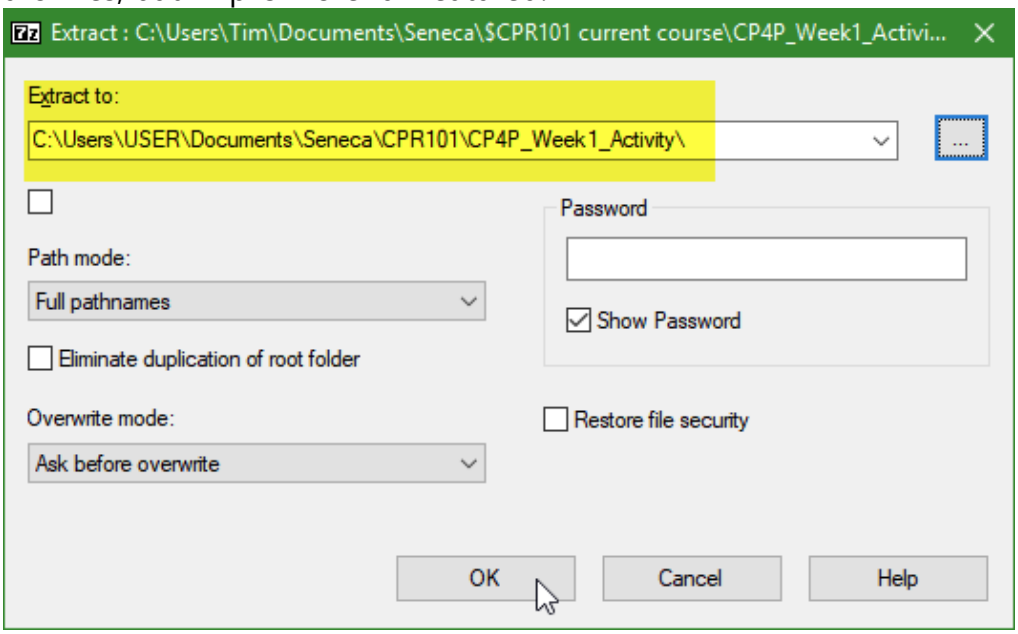
- Yes, there is a lot of reading. ICT always has, is now, and forever will be like that. No one can remember everything, so make notes. Create your own To Do list for each course you have.
- Each week's Quiz questions are based on what you see in the PowerPoint slides. (not the notes under the slides)
- Download files for any week's activity (assignment) from the CPR101 course site (in "Blackboard"), Course Documents, link in Course selecting files beginning with `CP4P_Week#...`
  Click the ... submenu icon to the right of each filename and select Download.

  Extract the files within the zip to a folder where you can work with uncompressed files.



The 7zip application is the open source standard for dealing with zip and other archives. Operating systems now have built-in ability to read, and sometimes write zip archives, but 7zip is more full featured.



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Work with the extracted, uncompressed files.

CP4P_Week1_Overview and Basics of File Systems.pptx	The first week's content is here. It is downloaded separately from the CP4P_Week1_Activity.zip file.
CP4P_Week1_Activity_Instructions.pdf	Open this after reviewing the pptx slides.
CP4P_Week1_Activity.docx	Your activity answers go in this document. This is the only file to be submitted.
CP4P_Week1_Activity_WorkFiles folder	Instructions.pdf will explain and guide you
CP4P_Week1_Visual-Studio_demo.pdf	Also see **Getting Started**. There is much there to show and demonstrate the step-by-step documentation in this file.
CP4P_Week1_FYI File systems and mounting.docx	Knowledge of file systems is less and less necessary in order to navigate your files on personal computers, smartphones, and tablets. *However*, it is critical for ICT people to know in a server environment.

Lastly: How-to submit weekly activities (AKA assignments) through the course site on Blackboard is detailed in the activity notes under the Course Documents "File Systems, Visual Studio" item. The upload link is the item's title. Only the completed CP4P_Week1_Activity.docx needs to be uploaded.

Student messages and questions

New beginnings are always a challenge because we do not have any experience or context to relate to. This is true for new students and sometimes for old professors who may be as surprised as you regarding anything that happens in the first week. IT systems are often changed without notice at the start of a semester.

NEVER send a photo of text on a screen if you want someone in ICT to take you seriously. Learn how to take a screen shot and describe a test case.

Student: “I am really confused so please help me out.”
"What particular things do I have to do?"
Professor: “I am really confused about what help you need.”
Student: "...with everything."

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The first thing to do is to understand the start up information you have seen. It is time to make notes while you reread – no one can keep all that new information in their heads – what do you need to know now, do soon, and remember to do when classes start?

Please review your college email, check MS Office 365 Teams, see the course Announcements, and examine the instructions within the course resources. All of it is there because of previous pleas for help.

When sending a message to your professor, tell them *what* you are confused about. If the answer is “everything”, please make notes to focus the issues. Your professor trying to tell you "everything" all over again could just make it worse.

"It doesn't work."

When things go wrong, create repeatable test case: clearly detail the problem with screen shots and the steps you took leading up to problem. Anyone trying to help needs to see what you see and understand how you got there. Otherwise, the only answer you can expect is, “Hmm, it works for me…have no idea why it doesn't work for you.”

“There is a Visual Studio version for Mac. I can try to install it to my Macbook …”

Do. Not. Do. It. As has been said and noted, it will waste your time. “Visual Studio for Mac” does not support C / C++ languages. (more info below)

“Instead of Visual Studio, can I use …*something else*…?”

We not only show how to code in a programming language, we demonstrate the practice of programming.

Our teaching and learning resources use Visual Studio IDE (e.g. for code-completion, code formatting, debugging, assignment frameworks) to help you be a programmer, not just a coder. More professional programmers use VS than any other IDE; our Program Advisory Committee members – your future employers – have asked that you know this; unlike many pro tools, VS works for students, too.

Yes, it is possible to use something other than Visual Studio (VS) to complete your C programming course. Visual Studio Code is cross-platform for macOS, Linux, and Windows; it has become a close second to Visual Studio IDE. However, expect to be somewhat on your own with respect to configuration, debugging steps, and some aspects of support from your instructor. Be prepared to translate anything referring to Visual Studio into your own tool's equivalents. Our courses may provide a Visual Studio project for an assignment; you will have to extract the code. Experienced programmers can probably manage this easily, but for most people it will all take extra time…

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“Why is this a PDF document instead of HTML or via social media?“

> Because professors don't have staff. If they had staff, this FAQ would be 2.1. We also don't snapgram, instabook, tictweet, toktube, or facechat. Sorry. We just don't have the cycles, nor does the college have perfect IT systems that work for every conceivable – and inconceivable – use case, nor to everyone’s preferred application or interface or form factor or platform. Tuition would be utterly unaffordable if we did. After you graduate and get into industry, they won’t care what *you* like to use, they only care about what *they* like to use.