

## OUA Database Concepts.

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

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Here are some questions students often ask when starting Database Concepts. They are presented in no particular order.

If the question you have is not here or is not covered to the level of detail you require, please go to Blackboard and post the question into the Discussion forums there. You can expect a response within a day or so.

Q. Do I need a calculator for this subject?

A. There is no specific need for a calculator in this course. You may want to use a calculator to check your answers in assignment work but you could use Excel or the Calculator application in Windows if you do not have a calculator.

Q. Do I *need* to buy the text book for this subject?

A. It is strongly advised that you buy the text book. The course is based on the text book and it provides additional explanations to help understand more complex concepts. In addition, the course uses the same symbol set as the book (different books use different symbol sets). Some of the examples given in the course notes are based on examples in the text. For all these reasons, you are advised to get the text book.

Q. Can I use a *different* text book?

A. The concepts in the prescribed text book are similar to those in other Database text books so if you want to use an alternative reference book that would be fine, but you have to be prepared to find the topics in your book yourself. A different book will not help you with the examples and the symbol set used in this course.

Q. Can I use a *different edition* of the prescribed text book?

A. If you use a different edition, there is no guarantee that the material will be in the same location. References will be given for the prescribed edition only. There is also no guarantee that previous editions used the same symbol set either.

Q. Will I need to purchase a database application to do this course?

A. No. RMIT provides access to an Oracle Database System for all lab and assignment work.

Q. What is the assessment for this subject?

- A. There are two assignments and an exam. To pass the course, you must do both of these;
- Get an average of 50% for the assignments.
  - Pass the final exam.

Q. What are the weightings given to the assignments and the exam?

A. 40% for the assignments and 60% for the final exam.

Q. Are there penalties for late submission of assignments?

A. Yes. Details are supplied in the assignment documentation.

Q. How do I get access to the RMIT database?

A. There are two ways to access the RMITs Oracle database system.

- Oracle provide a java application suitable for accessing RMITs Oracle system. It is called SQLDeveloper. Most students use SQL Developer for there tutorial and assignment work. It is free to download after you have registered with the company or you can download it from Blackboard. It uses a GUI-type interface. It is fairly large to download.
- If you are familiar with a Command Line Interface (CLI), you can access the front-end system by logging on to yallara. You can do this with any terminal simulator application. One in common use is called Putty (free download from the internet). To get access use these settings;
  - Host Name = yallara.cs.rmit.edu.au
  - Port = 22
  - Your user name and password

From there, you can login to SQLPlus (a general database interface) or login to specific preloaded read-only databases using the appropriate command.

Q. What level of previous skill/knowledge do I need to undertake this course?

A. There is no specific pre-requisite knowledge required. A general understanding of how to use a computer is needed and some knowledge about spreadsheets may be helpful but is not necessary.

This course does require you to access RMITs systems with software you may not have used before. Paying attention to this requirement and getting it working early on will make things run more smoothly later when you want to concentrate on the content rather than the technology.