**Instructor Guidebook 2021**

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering to teach a Code First Girls (CFG) class. We would be delighted to have you on board with our mission to get young women skilled up and pursue careers in tech and entrepreneurship.

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**Background to Code First Girls**

Since 2015, we have worked with 20,000+ young women, providing them with free coding classes. We have a real impact on the careers the participants choose - from working in or building their own tech startup to becoming junior software developers.

The work you do as volunteer instructors really is making a difference to these young women's lives.

**What we offer**

Free activities we run for our students include:

Free community classes:

* **Introduction to Web Development**
* **Introduction to Python Programming**
* **Introduction to Data & SQL**

To read more about what we do and how we do it, visit [our website](https://codefirstgirls.org.uk/). If you have any queries, please contact us at [programmes@codefirstgirls.org.uk](mailto:programmes@codefirstgirls.org.uk)

**The Instructor’s role**

As an instructor, you play a critical role in our organisation and how we run the classes. We find that the instructor is pivotal to how the students experience a CFG class - you not only guide them through the class, but set the tone and atmosphere for the class.

The core instructor responsibilities:

* Take attendance for each class. Please do this via the Arlo (our online course management platform) app. Once you have been added to Arlo as a “presenter” you will be emailed with a prompt to download the app and activate your account. Once you have done this you will be able to mark attendance at each session using the app. This can be done quickly by getting students to respond in slack. If you have any issues with this then you can create and use a Google Sheet register instead
* We will try to set-up the class on the university virtual delivery platform (Blackboard, Zoom, Teams etc). However, if we are unable to do this it will be up to the instructor team to choose a video conferencing platform to deliver the sessions. We can recommend Zoom, Teams, G Meet, or [Jitsi](https://meet.jit.si/) (a free open source video conferencing platform). Please note, Jitsi should ideally be used on a chrome browser, which students should have downloaded and be using anyway. If you have access to any of these through your university, please do feel free to set-up the course on that platform
* Deliver the classes
* You are not required to mark any homework, but we do ask you to answer questions/ students posts about the class on the course Slack channel
* Select the winner of the competition from your students’ projects in the last session of your course
* At the end of the class, ensure that attendance is uptodate and email the CFG class coordinator a link to the winning project/presentation and the names of the winning team members
* Update Code First Girls on the progress of the class

All new instructors are required to attend a briefing call. This is a critical part of your onboarding, as this is where we will take you through important information and advise you on how to best deliver the class.

**The Students’ role**

**Student Participant obligations:**

* Have a working laptop/desktop and good internet connection
* Complete the pre-class preparation and optional homework during the programme
* Attend all the classes (it’s ok to miss two)
* Complete their project by the final session

**Necessary documents**

**Instructor Guidebook**

This will be your guide to unlocking your amazing instructor skills. It includes all the key contacts, tips, and advice.   
  
**Course curriculum**

The key course documents that the instructors and students use for the course. All relevant links, including syllabus and individual week-by-week course outlines will be shared with you by a CFG Programme Manager (Fiona or Kim).

If you have any questions, please email your course coordinator: Kim at kim@codefirstgirls.org.uk or Fiona at fiona@codefirstgirls.org.uk.   
  
**Competition**

Every course involves a Competition project. This gives students the opportunity to apply their knowledge, and we also offer an enhanced certificate for each person in the winning project team.

**PLEASE NOTE:** while in the past we offered Amazon vouchers to the winning group, we are no longer doing that. Instead, we will be sending out additional certificates to the winning groups, commending them on their project excellence.

**The course process from beginning to end**

**Before the course**

Our responsibilities:

❏ Let you know when the instructor briefing will take place

❏ Connect you to other instructors you will be delivering the course with

❏ Provide the teaching materials and course delivery guidance material

❏ Recruit students to attend the course (via our online applications)

Your responsibilities:

❏ Attend the pre-course briefing call

❏ Study the course materials and familiarise yourself with the content for each class

❏ Contact your fellow instructors to discuss and agree between you how you would like to deliver the course (you can do this via Slack or email after the briefing call)

❏ Share and promote the course application link on your social platforms (optional)

**Pre-course schedule**

*Please note this is in an ideal scenario, with some courses we do have a quicker turnaround, but will always endeavour to give suitable notice.*

| **Timing** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- |
| 4-8 weeks prior | ● Application forms open, publicised on our website and social media ● Briefing call with the instructors |
| 2 weeks  prior | ● Applications close  ● CFG assess applications |
| 1-2 weeks prior | ● CFG notify applicants of the outcome  ● CFG inform successful candidates of all key details (dates, times, location, syllabus, CFG contact details etc.)  ● CFG set up course Slack Workspace and invite all instructors and students to join |
|  | ● Start of the course! |

**During the course**

Our responsibilities:

❏ Support you through your involvement with CFG, answering any questions you might have about the content or delivery

❏ Respond in a timely manner to any queries you have about the course and resolve any issues you might encounter

Your responsibilities:

❏ Deliver the course

The CFG courses are all 8 weeks long (part time, one evening a week for two hours) and are attended by students in their free time, outside of their normal studies. As such we are conscious that students often have time and workload pressures which can impact their attendance and commitment to the course. We do try to screen for motivated students through our selection process, but also aim to deliver engaging course content delivered in more of an interactive ‘labs’ format, where students are encouraged to ask questions and work with each other rather than a traditional lecture approach

❏ Take the attendance in every session

All instructing teams are required to take a record attendance at each lesson ❏ Answer questions/students’ posts on the Slack channel

❏ Decide the winning project in the final session and let CFG Programme Manager (Kim or Fiona) know

**After the course - Feedback**

Feedback from instructors and students is really important to us here. You are our eyes into the class! We send feedback forms to both students and instructors following the course. Feedback analysis from previous courses can be sent upon request.

**Class delivery best practice**

**Instructors**

In the past, there was one Lead instructor and some Assistant Instructors. The Lead would do the main teaching and guiding through the slides while the Assistants would support students with specific issues when working through exercises/codealongs.

Some instructor groups still choose to have one Lead Instructor. However, we now encourage sharing the Lead role week to week depending on your knowledge, interests and confidence. Your course coordinator will introduce all instructors to each other via email prior to the course starting and you can decide among yourselves how you would like to teach each session:

● you can choose a different Lead for each week

● you can share the Lead role throughout the session

● someone can be Lead across all 8

**For remote teaching, we suggest that each week one instructor takes the lead presenting on the call, whilst the others are available live via slack or the chat box in order to troubleshoot/ solve problems with students.**

CFG is flexible and understands that you might all want the experience of being a Lead. We suggest you connect as a group (Slack/WhatsApp) before the class starts, to discuss the curriculum, go through slides and choose who will be Lead for each session/the course.

**Instructor Top Tips**

● **Use your own words and explanations**; don't go through the slides word by word, instead use your own words

● **Encourage students to ask questions**; do this in whatever way you can, even if it means just stopping and not saying anything for a few seconds and just reiterating that people should ask any questions they may have. The hardest bit is to get people to ask the first question - once that happens, then you will get a flood of questions.

● **Catering for all ability levels**; each intake will naturally have a small number of students that are really good, a small number of students that are struggling to keep up and the large majority of them somewhere in the middle. Try and balance each session to cater for as many people as possible. If you can and have the time, try and give extra support out of hours for weaker students if you want to keep them coming back

**● Translate concepts into simple English**; Concepts such as classes versus IDs in CSS and why they're distinct and important, for example, might be obvious to instructors, but not so much to someone who might not immediately see why it's important

● **Overrunning**; one of the most common class issues is that they overrun. Have a chat with your fellow instructors about timings in advance, plan how much time you want to spend on each introduction and exercise. Please make sure you cover each session within the time allocated to it.

Delivering Remotely

**It is still necessary for students to attend sessions in real time, and so sessions should not be recorded by either students or instructors. Students need to attend at least 6/8 of the live sessions and contribute to a project in order to receive a course completion certificate.**

**General points**

**Student selection process**

● CFG manage course applications and will notify students if they are successful or not

**General points about the courses**

● Most of the courses we run aim to have a minimum of 15 people on the course, and a maximum of 35. We value your time spent on this programme, so we wouldn’t ask you to commit to a course without a reasonable number of students attending

● We do expect around a 20% drop off over the course (so we admit circa 20% more than you want on the course)

**Final note & Contact details**

If you have any questions about any of the content in this guidebook, send us an email at Kim at kim@codefirstgirls.org.uk or Fiona at fiona@codefirstgirls.org.uk or discuss your questions during the instructor briefing call.

*Thank you again for taking part in this wonderful project. We hope you have just as much fun as the students on this journey and take away a lot from the experience.*

**Frequently asked questions about Code First Girls**

***How do you fund Code First Girls?***

We fund the programme through corporate and philanthropic donations. We are keen that the course is always free to non-sponsored participants - charging creates another barrier to entry.

***How do you select the participants?***

We are frequently inundated with applications for each course. The application requires the learner to demonstrate their interest in coding and tech, but they are not required to have any previous experience or specialist knowledge. We are looking for smart, ambitious young women who really see that coding can become part of their future career path.

***I want to include some other material in my course, is that ok?***

If you find any support materials that you think would be useful to the learners, we would love you to use them. Please do share them with us so we can add them to the curriculum for the future to assist other Instructors.

***Why do you talk about girls, rather than women?***

We know that calling the programme Code First ‘Girls’ can be controversial. The reason we are branded this way is because while doing customer research we found university stage women self identified as being ‘girls’ rather than ‘women’.

***Why do you focus on university level and early career women?***

We know there are many fantastic organisations teaching people at schools and sixth forms across the country. Using our university network, we wanted to reach young women who might not have had the chance to learn about programming while at school, but who are still interested in careers at tech. We believe that catching them at this stage is vital to helping them change their career preferences.

***What is your relationship with the universities?***

It depends on the university. Some universities are involved on a departmental level, others through the careers service and some through the students themselves. We are always keen to build our relationship with the university and if you’re able to help us with this, please drop us a line.