

Instructor Handbook 2020

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering to teach a Code First Girls (CFG) course. 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 12,000+ young women, providing them with £6.5 million worth of free coding courses. 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 courses:

- An **Introduction to Web Development** (8 weeks)
- An **Introduction to Python Programming** (8 weeks)

To read more about what we do and how we do it, visit [our website](#). If you have any queries, please contact us at Kim at kim@codefirstgirls.org.uk or Fiona at fiona@codefirstgirls.org.uk.

The Instructor's role

As a course 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 girls experience CFG - you not only guide them through the course, but set the tone and atmosphere for the class. We will provide you with all course materials and share what we have found to be good ways to deliver the content.

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 take a paper/pen register and update Arlo later (or send a list of the session attendees to the CFG course coordinator) or use a Google Sheet register instead.
- Deliver the course
- You are not required to mark any homework, but we do ask you to answer questions/ students posts about the course on the course Slack channel
- Select the winner of the competition from your class in the last session of your course

- At the end of the course, ensure that attendance is up to date and email the CFG course 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 course

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 the content and the application process, and advise you on how to deliver course (based on previous instructors feedback).

The Student's role

Student Participant obligations:

- Provide their own laptop
- Complete the pre-class preparation, and homework during the programme
- Attend all the classes (it's ok to miss two)
- Complete their final course competition by the final session (more about this is on the next page)

Necessary documents

Instructor Handbook

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 students use for the course:

- [HTML/CSS](#)
- [Python](#)

Instructor slides (Introduction to Web Development course)

The slides have been compiled to help you with remote delivery of the course. Please cover all the content for each week in each class.

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.

You can view some examples of previous winners on our [website](#).

The course process from beginning to end

Before the course

Our responsibilities:

- ☐ Let you know when the instructor briefings 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 lead instructor/assistant instructor(s) to discuss and agree between you how you would like to deliver the course
- ☐ Share and promote the course application link on your personal and/or company social platforms

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Application forms open, publicised on our website and social media● Briefing call with the instructors
2 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Applications close● CFG assess applications

1-2 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 regarding the room or other stakeholders

Your responsibilities:

- ☐ Deliver the course
The CFG courses are all 8 weeks long 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
- ☐ Identify which students should receive a certificate of completion at the end of the course.
- ☐ Feed back any comments regarding the course content to the CFG team via your nominated CFG team member

After the course - Feedback

Feedback from instructors and students is really important to us here. You are our eyes into the course, and whilst we will aim to visit as many courses as we can in person, due to the number of courses we run this is not always possible.

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 be around the room and supporting students with specific issues when working through exercises/codealongs.

Some instructor groups still choose to have a 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 take 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 in order to troubleshoot/ solve problems with students.

CFG is flexible and understands that you might all want the experience of being a Lead. Some instructor groups set-up a separate Slack Channel/WhatsApp group or meet before the course 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 notes slide by slide, instead use your own words & run the sessions as a lab; let people get cracking. As and when issues arise, get everyone's attention and go through the issues.

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- **Encourage students to ask questions;** do this in whatever way you can, even if it means just standing 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. Try and give *optional* challenges, which is what usually keeps the really good students going. Try and give extra support out of hours for weaker students if you want to keep them coming back (assuming you have the time).
- **Translate concepts into simple English;** Concepts such as classes versus IDs in CSS and why they're distinct and important 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

We recommend that you utilise meet.jit.si as your webinar platform, which should have all the tools necessary to teach the course. You can create a room with your course code (also the name of your slack channel) as the title, making it easy for students, instructors, and CFG staff to identify. However, if you choose to use a different platform, do just let us know.

It is still necessary for students to attend sessions in real time, and so sessions should not be recorded by either students or instructors

(please note, Jitsi should ideally be used on a chrome browser, which students should have downloaded and be using anyway)

Final note & Contact details

If you have any questions about any of the content in this handbook, 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 a tonne of 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.

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 ask instructors to use their best judgement based on the number of applications received.
- We do expect around a 25% drop off over the course (so we admit circa 25% more than you want on the course)