

Module Title: **Commercial Off-the-shelf Software 1**

Module Code: **CS1TQ2**

Level: **C**

Providing Department: **Comp. Science**

Number of Credits: **20**

Terms in which taught: **Autumn, Spring, Summer** Module Convener: **Shirley Williams**

Pre-requisites: **None**

Modules excluded: **None**

Co-requisites: **None**

Current from: **2002**

Aims

This module will provide students with an understanding of the software packages that are commonly used in business. It will ensure that students can provide a resource for companies to support the basic usage of common business software.

Assessable Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module, it is expected that the student will be able to:

- identify what software packages are generally available
- evaluate and select suitable software packages for a given purpose
- use such common business software with a reasonable level of competence.

Additional Outcomes:

The module also aims to encourage the development of the following skills:

- the ability to advise and help users of common business software
- achieve a level of understanding of packages comparable to that required for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
- research, evaluation and reflection
- written and oral skills.

Outline Content

This module has 2 themes:

Firstly, students must learn about the software packages that are commonly used in business.

They must know what software packages are commonly used and what packages are available from different suppliers for a given purpose. They must be capable of establishing and comparatively evaluating the features of different packages for a given set of user requirements and they must be able to select the most suitable package based on their evaluation. They must also be aware of the other factors that might influence the selection

such as the viability of the supplier, quality of support, compatibility, quality of documentation, etc.

Secondly, students must develop a reasonable level of expertise in using the software packages that are commonly used in business.

Students must be competent with the packages that are used in the following activities:

- word processing
- spreadsheets
- database
- presentation software
- information retrieval (Internet)
- communication (E-mail).

In all areas the level of expertise that must be attained is at least that required to achieve the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). This qualification is independently assessed and students will be encouraged to take the tests.

Students will also be required to undertake small exercises in automating common office applications both by recording macros and programming in the Visual Basic for Applications language.

Brief Description of Teaching and Learning Methods

This module is characterised by being almost entirely practical in nature. There are 2 components

Students will develop expertise in the packages mentioned above in a variety of ways:

- self-study, computer-based materials that students can use at any time
- scheduled classes run by ITS that students can book into depending on their needs
- drop-in sessions run by ITS that students can use when required
- some tutorials/seminars may be used to cover a small number of theoretical topics .

Students will be able to validate their learning by taking tests incorporated into the learning material.

Students will undertake an extensive project that will last for 2 terms. This project will be based on a complicated scenario and will require the students to study available packages that can be used to satisfy the requirements. This will ensure that students have a good knowledge of the state of the art in business software and will develop their research and evaluation skills.

In order to check on progress and to facilitate completion, a tutor will be assigned to the module. The tutor will meet regularly with students, probably individually and in small

groups, to check on progress, advise on problems, suggest ways forward, etc. The tutor will also formally record progress for record-keeping purposes.

A small number of tutorials at the beginning could be used to cover some general aspects of business software and packages. This would be useful to students as background information.

Tutorials will be used to allow individual students to develop transferable skills. Students will give short informal presentations on the progress of their research on the scenario and their thinking on their recommendations. This will develop presentation skills in advance of their end-of-module presentation.

Contact Hours

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Lectures			
Tutorials/seminars	4	4	1
Practicals			
Other contact (e.g. study visits)	20	20	8
Total hours	24	24	9
Number of essays or assignments	1 (Report)	1 (Report)	
Other (e.g. major seminar paper)	Test	Test	1 (Presentation)

Assessment:

Coursework

Project (40% overall)

Students will carry out an extensive project to establish requirements and to recommend software packages to satisfy those requirements for a commercial organisation. The organisation and its requirements will be described in a complex scenario that will be given to the students. Students will be required to present their findings in a number of ways: 1) as a written report that will require them to present their findings and to demonstrate the competent use of the full range of business software covered by this module (the assignment will be constructed to give opportunities to use the full range of software), and 2) in a formal presentation that will require them to produce slides using presentation software. The marks will be split 30% for the reports and 10% for the presentation.

The report detailing the recommendations will be required at the end of the Spring Term, along with the presentation materials. A presentation on the solution will be given early in the Summer term.

Tests (10% overall)

Tests will be held during the Autumn and Spring terms.

Penalties for late submission of course work will be in accordance with University policy.

Examinations

Students will also sit a 1½ hour paper that will constitute 50% of the marks overall. The examination will test the theoretical aspects of the module.

Requirements for a pass

Students will be required to obtain a mark of 40% overall based on coursework and the examination.

Re-assessment

Students will be re-examined in September.