

NEWS FROM COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Written by the Beta Team of CSEsoc
 Produced by Wen Di LIM
 Edited by Tim Willey,
 Samuel Pollock and Wen Di.

β ETA

Free as in speech and we know you have
 no money.

Beta Issue # 73
 Alpha edition
 Week 0, Session 1, 2013



CSE Student Network - page 3



FAQ - page 4



Your student society - page 5

First Year Survival Guide

Special Edition of Beta



Camp - page 6



CSEsoc Events - page 6



CSE Revue - page 7

ANNOUNCEMENT

Welcome to CSE!

On behalf of the CSE Society, welcome to CSE! What you're holding is a copy of our society's fortnightly publication, Beta.

Beta is a student newsletter produced by students in CSE for students in CSE. This means that Beta:

- Bridges the gap between the staff and students of CSE;
- Keeps you up to date with some of the cutting-edge research being done by staff, postgrad and undergrad students;

- Lets you know about the many cool things CSE students get up to in their spare time;
- Allows students to express and debate their opinions; and
- Keeps you entertained with fun segments, puzzles, crosswords and much more.

You can grab your copy of Beta at CSESoc's free weekly BBQ (Mondays 12.30 - 1.30 on the Physics lawn) or at the student office on the ground floor of K17.

This special edition of Beta is designed to help you get through that confusing first week where you're seeing new faces and finding new places. Turn the pages to find out more about upcoming events, what the society does, handy bookmarks you should have and your frequently asked questions answered.

The entire Beta Team looks forward to keeping you informed and entertained this year.

THE BETA TEAM

BOOKMARKS

Mandatory Bookmarks

The Beta Team lists the bookmarks you need on your bookmarks bar.

CSE

Taggi

<http://taggi.cse.unsw.edu.au>

The comprehensive FAQ for anything related to using CSE systems and resources. If you have a question, check out this site first before posting on the CSE Forums or emailing SS (Student Support).

CSE Control Panel

https://status.cse.unsw.edu.au/Control_Panel/

Need to configure or check something on your CSE account? The control panel lets you change all of your account options such as mailing lists, check how much quota (disk, printing internet) you have left, and more.

Rectangles

<http://mahler.cse.unsw.edu.au/rectangles/>

Having trouble choosing your timetable? Written by CSE students, this site allows you to enter the courses you are taking, select some desirable options like having regular lunch breaks or days off, and generates a set of valid timetables for you to choose from.

CSE Forums

<http://cgi.cse.unsw.edu.au/forums/support/>

Forums just for CSE students and staff. Ask questions, get help or advice, or just have a chat.

myCSE

<http://my.cse.unsw.edu.au>

Used by honours students, postgraduate students and staff to maintain their profiles, book rooms and manage thesis submissions.

Marks - Give online

<https://cgi.cse.unsw.edu.au/give/Student/sturec.php>

Stressed out about how you didn't get that HD and unable to

pull up a console to check? Login with this link and key in your course code to check your marks. Available for CSE courses only.

Tech News

The Verge

<http://www.theverge.com>

Breaking tech news coverage, product information & reviews, and community content.

Tech Crunch

<http://www.techcrunch.com>

Tech news site dedicated to profiling startups and new internet products.

TED

<http://www.ted.com>

Technology, Education, Design. A non-profit organisation devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, renowned for their annual TED Conference and inspirational videos.

Webcomics

XKCD

<http://xkcd.com>

Piled Higher & Deeper

<http://phdcomics.com/comics.php>

Geek And Poke

<http://geekandpoke.typepad.com>

Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal

<http://smbc-comics.com>

The Oatmeal

<http://theoatmeal.com>

Order of the Stick

<http://www.giantitp.com/Comics.html>

THE BETA TEAM

ADVICE**Do I need to buy a computer?**

Tim answers the age old question of whether you need a new computer for uni.

One question that I am regularly asked by new first year students is, Do I need to buy a computer?. While the answer often depends upon the individual's circumstances, there are five common situations.

Q1. I do not own a computer, do I need one?

A. Yes. Every degree has a key set of resources necessary to study it effectively. For CSE degrees this resource is a computer. Why? Most CSE courses (especially first year courses) use practical assignments to help with learning the course theory. Also course material and help is largely on the internet in the form of online notes, wikis, forums, email, and Google. What you will need is on-demand and uninterrupted access to a computer. CSE does provide computer labs and the resources necessary to allow you to complete your studies. However, as the year and your degree progresses, you will find it less practical, and more frustrating to only use these machine (which are often occupied with classes and other students) and to be unable to work at home. That being said, you can afford to wait before buying a computer as discussed in Q5. A computer can be expensive, but buying one is an investment in your career.

Q2. My family owns a shared computer, do I need my own?

A. Probably. Unless the rest of your family uses the computer only occasionally, you will most likely find it problematic to use a shared computer. As noted in Q1, you will be using a computer frequently, and interruptions when completing assignment can be frustrating. You will also need to install custom software on your computer to complete coursework. Having your own computer will make your life so much easier, but see Q5 before buying your own.

Q3. I have my own desktop, do I need a laptop as well?

A. Probably no. The combination of a personal computer at home and the CSE lab machines at uni will be more than adequate for at least first year. That being said, the vast majority of CSE students own a personal laptop by the time they graduate, often purchased during the course of their degree. Most students find that a laptop is simply far more practical than a desktop because it aids with lectures and note-taking, is useful for group work, and comes in handy socially around CSE.

Q4. I own an old laptop, should I upgrade to a newer one?

A. No. For the first year computing courses all you really need to use is a web browser, text editor, terminal and gcc (complete Lab0 if you are confused). Unless your laptop is really, really ancient, then it will meet these needs.

Q5. I'm buying a computer, what should I get?

A. Probably a laptop. Which model? That is difficult to answer. Almost all new laptops are capable of meeting your study needs, so the choice of which laptop to buy depends on a variety of other factors. These include what else you will use your laptop for (eg. just for uni, gaming, carrying it 24/7, etc.), preferred operating system, processor speed, memory, screen/laptop size, weight, ports, and many more. Figuring out what you want exactly in all of these areas can be hard, so the best advice is to wait a few weeks, months or even until the end of session. There are lots of places to find cheap laptops; some vendors sell refurbished models at reduced prices. This will let you get a better idea of what you want in a laptop.

Please remember this is general advice and your circumstances may be different.

TIMOTHY WILEY

**CSE Societies & Events****Join the CSE Student Network**

New to CSE? A mentor can help you find your feet.

The School of Computer Science and

Engineering (CSE) runs the CSE Student Network to assist you with your transition into life at CSE & UNSW. CSE will assign a Mentor to you personally and run group events. The Mentor will be a student who is in 2nd year or above. This program is NOT academic - the Mentors will not help you with your assignments, etc. But they will help you find your way around UNSW, give advice on opportunities, and help you form a social network. It is aimed at new undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students.

<http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/db/do/mentee/>

**CSE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
- BRAD HALL**



You must register to participate:

ADVICE

FAQ

Nervous about starting at UNSW Computing? Don't be! A previous first year provides some answers to some common questions from new students.

What's a CSE Account?

CSE currently provides students with their own separate account (different to your Z-Pass) to use the CSE lab machines and servers. These systems let you store files and run programs specific to CSE courses. You also get free print quota, among other services. Finally these systems are different and separate from the UNSW Central IT machines and servers.

How do I get my CSE Account?

You get your account by completing Lab 0.

What is Lab 0?

Lab 0 is a special lab designed to help you familiarise yourself with the basics of working with CSE lab machines. It deals with topics like using Linux, working with files, launching programs, using the terminal, and much more. It's a good idea to do the lab before your first COMP1917/1911 class, but if you can't, don't worry since it will be done in week 1. To get started just walk into a CSE lab.

Lab 0 link: <http://wiki.csesoc.unsw.edu.au/Tech/Lab0/Worksheet>

What is Linux?

Linux is an operating system that the majority of the CSE lab machines are running. This is because it's a rather good environment to program in, as well as being open-source.

Are lectures compulsory?

No, but attending them is a very good idea.

Why bother with lectures?

Lectures are where all of the course content is covered. At first you may find that you know all of the content, but if you keep skipping lectures you run the risk of being so far behind that you can't catch up. Lectures are also where a lot of other important course information is discussed, such as assignments and exams. It's a good idea to treat them as compulsory.

What time do lectures/tutorials/labs start?

Each class starts 5 minutes past the scheduled hour. Likewise they finish 5 minutes before the scheduled hour. This is to give you time to travel between classes. If you need to go a long way make sure you remind your lecturer to finish on time, because many have a tendency to go over time.

If I'm running late, should I still go to the lecture?

Yes, but be prepared for the lecturer say something to you when you sneak in. Just try not to disturb everyone too much. For the parts you missed some courses will have Lectopia recordings. Failing that, make friends with those who don't run late!

What are tutorials/labs and how do they differ to lectures?

These are where you put into practice what is covered in lectures. Tutorials focus on discussions and theory. In labs you flex your fingers and get down to some programming.

Are tutorials/labs compulsory?

Yes. Technically you can fail the course if you don't attend enough. They are also the best place to put into practice course material and ask lots of questions.

Who are the tutors?

Tutors are most often other undergraduate students. This is because they've recently completed the course and scored high marks. However, some courses have postgraduate tutors, other lecturing staff or even the course lecturer. Tutors are one of the best bits about taking a CSE course. They're great people and tend to take a great interest in helping their students.

My tutor is late. What do I do?

Remember classes start 5 minutes past the hour, and they may be coming from their own class. If it gets to quarter-past and they aren't there, you could do some self-motivated study. The tutorials are usually available on your course webpage.

How do I contact my lecturers and tutors?

For lecturers, email is often the best. Some will stay after lectures to answer questions. Most will also have consultations hours to ask questions in-person. Outside of these times they are quite busy, so expect that a response to an email may take a day (especially if it's sent after midnight). For tutors, email is good. Tutors may also be able to spend time with you after labs, or meet up with you at random times during the day. They are also the best person to contact if you have problems. But remember they are students to, and may not always be free.

Finally, there is often a class forum where you can ask questions. Lecturers and tutors frequently read these. Other students in the course may also be able to help.

How much time should I spend studying?

That depends. Outside of class you need to complete assignments, revise lecture material, prepare for tutorials and study for exams. The Faculty of Engineering suggests 1 hour of study outside of class for each contact-hour.

That said, make sure to leave plenty of time for socialising and relaxing. You are a uni student, after all! There are many great societies on campus to get involved in.

Can I cram for the exam?

In CSE courses, it's generally very hard to do. That's because you are learning new skills, like programming. These take time to practice and learn.

What is the Student Office?

The Student Office is the place to go for any concerns about anything related to your program, such as enrolment, timetabling, or electives. You can find them in the K17 foyer just inside the front door, next to the lifts. They are only usually open weekdays from 9.30am - 12.30pm and 2pm - 4.30pm.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

ADVICE

First Year FAQ - continued

What is the Socs Office?

It's a room the School of CSE provides for the CSE students societies (CSESoc, CSE Revue and the StuReps) to use. It's also usually open during the day. It's a great place to meet and hang out with people from CSE. It's located in the basement of K17, underneath the steps (next to room B02).

The Socs Office is closed, how do I get in?

Only those students who are on the Executive of CSESoc and CSE Revue, or are a StuRep can open the room. If none of them are there, the office must be closed. Those are the rules.

I'm lost, what do I do?

Firstly, don't be embarrassed. 38 hectares of campus is a lot to wrap your head around. Even for old students some rooms are hard to find, especially in Old Main.

Secondly, you're not alone!. Just ask someone. Most people on campus are friendly. There are also maps all around the campus.

Finally, wandering around the campus can be quite a fun way to explore it (if you don't need to be anywhere in a hurry).

WILL KORTELAND

CSE Societies & Events

CSESoc - Your Student Society

CSESoc is the principal representative body for computing students on campus - all CSE Students are automatically members. We're here to grow the school community and provide opportunities for all computing students to have fun and meet other students outside of your studies. To this end, we run weekly social and technical events throughout the year (and nearly all are free to attend!).

Our social events are an opportunity for you to meet other CSE students and take a break from studying. In the past we've run:

- Our famous free weekly BBQ
- Trivia Nights
- Poker Nights
- Movie Nights
- LAN Parties
- Cocktail Parties

Technical events allow you to learn about, practice and explore any technical interests outside of your studies with others who share them. These take the form of:

- Tech Talks (on anything from Google Maps to Tapit's NFC work to a Security Workshop from Deloitte)
- Android and iPhone Workshops



- Project teams (anyone can contribute to something CSESoc is working on)

We announce these events by email, so make sure you sign up to the 'soc-announce' mailing list during Lab 0 to receive them! Our events are open to all students, although if you're not a CSE student (enrolled in a CSE degree or course) and want the full benefits of membership, ask the exec about becoming an associate member.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved with running events and activities; we're always looking for volunteers, and it's a great way to develop your leadership and teamwork skills.

There are a number of teams that you can volunteer for:

- Beta - Writes the publication you're reading now
- Publicity - Promotes our events by creating posters and running our social media

- Dev - Runs projects and code jams and maintains CSESoc's website/server

- Social - Organises and runs all of our social events

- Tech - Organises and runs the society's technical talks and workshops

Keep an eye out for our **First Year Camp at the end of Week 3 (March 22-24)** - we encourage all new students (postgraduate coursework/research and undergraduate alike) to attend. First Year Camp is the best way to meet people in your courses (great for groupwork!) and the rest of CSE.

Most of all, we're here to help you settle in and have a great time at UNSW - we look forward to meeting all of you and helping you get the most out of this year!

CSESOC EXEC

CSE Societies & Events

CSESoc Events - Current and Ongoing

CSESoc offers a range of social and tech events throughout the year. Naturally, our events this year are bigger and better than ever!

The CSESoc signature social event is our **weekly free BBQ**; these run throughout the semester no matter rain or shine. We have a range of different food options, so even if you are a meatasaurus or a vegetarian, you will be still be able to have a great time! When do you start getting our free food? Well the first BBQ will be on Friday of O-Week from 12pm to 1pm outside K17 on the John Lions Garden - make sure to be there!

In week 1, we'll be hosting a **Cardboard night** (cards and board game). It's not just fun - you will also meet tonnes of new people! For the postgraduates there is a postgrad drinks night right after the school's O-week welcome on Thursday

from 7pm at k17. Be sure to come by and mingle with fellow CSE postgrad students.

On top of this plethora of social events, CSESoc also holds many tech based events throughout the year to help you explore your interests outside of the classroom! These events range from workshops, to seminars, to coding competitions that are always fun to be a part of.

One of the first tech events of this year will be the **Linux Installfest**, which will be held on the weekend of Week 2. If you would like to install Linux on computer and have any worries, reservations or questions about the process, bring it to the Installfest, there will be many experienced students willing to help you out on the day. Postgraduates and undergraduates are all welcome.

Not only that, CSESoc also has a few activities/events to get you started in UNSW CSE. Be sure to check out **Lab 0**. It will show you how to log on with/set up your cse account, teach you some basic commands for navigating the CSE lab computers, and teach you a few cool tricks, like how to play games on the cse network. If you're a postgrad, you can do Lab 0 on Thursday 3-5pm during O-week in the Bugle and Pipe computer labs. Undergraduates will partake in Lab 0 at their first COMP1917 tutorial.

For more information, feel free to come by our O-Week stall or the Socs office (K17 Basement), or visit <https://www.csesoc.unsw.edu.au/>.

PIERRE ESTEPHAN

EVELYN CHENSEN

VINCENT WONG

CSE Societies & Events

CSE First Year Camp

CSESoc have been running first year camp since 2009. It is a camp for first year CSE students only, so it will be a great opportunity to bond with the people who will be in your lectures and tutorials for the next few years. The camp have been a huge success over the years, just ask any of the second years who have been to camp last year!

So what do we do at first year camp? It's definitely not like high school camp: there are no hikes, no leeches, and definitely no sleeping outdoors (unless you really want to). Instead, we'll be organising a bunch of awesome activities, including a trivia night, scavenger hunt and a themed

dance party, where you'll have plenty of opportunities to meet everyone!

Excited? Here are the details:

Link: csesoc.unsw.edu.au/camp/signup

Date: 22 March - 24 March, at the end of week 3

Cost: \$70 for Arc member, \$80 for non Arc - and \$10 to secure your spot. There is an early bird discount of \$10 if you pay in full by the due date.

The price also includes all food, drinks, accommodation, coaches, activities and

also an awesome camp t-shirt.

Early bird offer ends at the end of week 1 (8th March 11:59pm) and camp registration closes at the end of week 2 (15th March 11:59pm)

Location: Wombaroo Adventure Centre.

Transport: By Coach, leaving from UNSW.

Dance Party Theme: Cartoon

CSESOC SOCIAL HEADS



CSE SOCIETIES & EVENTS

What's a CSE Revue?

Sketch Comedy, Dances, Songs, Tech and more.



Photo by Robin Chow

Whether you're a new student wondering what there is to do at Uni outside of class, or an old soul looking for something different to experience never fear, for CSE Revue is here! CSE Revue is a live sketch comedy show, entirely created, produced and performed by students from the society. The show might be held during September, but putting together an entertaining show begins now!

Getting involved with CSE Revue is an opportunity to share your talents and discover ones you didn't know you had. You'll learn new skills, make lots of new friends, and above all, have an amazing time!

The society has a wide variety of teams to get involved in. There is the **Cast** for those who are interested in acting, singing, dancing or just being on stage. No experience is necessary! We'll teach you everything. For those with musical inclinations, the show has a live **Band**. The **Tech** team make the show happen from backstage. They run the stage,



lighting, and sound. They also build the set and make all the props. The **Costumes & Makeup** team ensures that the actors look awesome on show nights.

Of course, there wouldn't be a show without content. Head on over to the **Scripts** team, bring your creativity and try your hand at writing. If you're interested in filming and special effects, the **VFX** team shoots and makes videos. For the visually artistic, there's the **Design** team, which create the cool looking posters and merchandise.

All the teams vary in terms of time commitment. The Cast and Tech teams require the greatest commitment. Other teams are less involved and become more active at different times of the year.

So if you're looking for something more casual and fun, try one of these teams. First there is the **Social** team. They organise all the fun events that happen throughout the year. The **Wellbeing** team is all about food. They make sure the cast and crew are fed during show a very important task, as you can imagine! The **Front of House** team take care of the audience on show nights. The **Publications and Promotions** team work on getting the word out and marketing the show on campus. Last but not least, for those who want to apply their coding skills, the **Webmin** team is responsible for running the society website servers.

You can join more than one team, depending on your interests. No experience is required. We're looking people with enthusiasm and dedication.

CSE Revue is open to students from all faculties. Get your friends involved in a fantastic show and experience. To find out more drop by our O-Week stall in the Quad and say hello!

We also have some upcoming events, which will give you a good idea of what being apart of CSE Revue is like.

Upcoming Events

O-Week Revue

Tuesday, 26th Feb 1pm-2pm, O-Week Stage

The directors all of three major revue's on campus put on a show featuring the best sketches of the last few years.

Screening of the 2012 Best-of-CSE Revue Show DVD

Tuesday, 26th Feb 6pm-9pm, K17 Seminar Room

2011 marked the 10th CSE Revue Show. In 2012 the society put on Coders Odyssey, the Best-of-CSE Revue. It featured the best sketches, dances and songs from the previous 10 years. We are screening the brand-new DVD of the show! Come, watch and enjoy!

CSE REVUE EXEC



BOOKMARKS

Helpful Places and Contact Information

The Beta team have once again put their heads together and compiled a list of places in uni that will hopefully be able to solve any further issues that you may have.

CSE Help Desk (issues with accounts or in the labs)

Mechanical Engineering (J17) Undercroft, Room G03
9385 5438
helpdesk@cse.unsw.edu.au

CSE Student Office (assistance with course selection and advice)

Ground floor of the K17 building

UNSW IT Service Centre (Zpass, student accounts and uniwide issues)

Ground Floor, Library Annexe
9385 1333
ITServiceCentre@unsw.edu.au
www.it.unsw.edu.au

The University Health Service (student friendly doctors)

Ground Floor, East Wing of the Quadrangle Building
9385 5425

Arc (advocacy & support for the students, layer)

1st Floor, Blockhouse
9385 7700
www.arc.unsw.edu.au

Careers & Employment (career planning, interview prep, casual and permanent job vacancies, resume prep)

Level 2, East Wing of the Quadrangle Building 9385 5429
careers@unsw.edu.au

Student Development International (visa advice,social support, networking)

Ground Floor, Goodsell Building
9385 5333
international.students@unsw.edu.au
www.international.unsw.edu.au

UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services (confidential counselling, workshops)

Kensington: Level 2 East Wing of the Quadrangle Building
9385 5418
CoFA: Room GG05 G Block
9385 0733
counselling@unsw.edu.au
www.counselling.unsw.edu.au

The Learning Centre (educational support, study tips)

Lower Ground Floor, North Wing, Chancellery Building,
9385 2060
CoFA: Room 109, G Block
9385 0739
www.lc.unsw.edu.au

Equity & Diversity Unit (support for disabilities and discrimination)

Ground Floor Goodsell Building
equity_diversity@unsw.edu.au
www.equity.unsw.edu.au

Housing Office (assistance finding accommodation)

Basser College
9385 4985

Contact (information and referral service - ask anything!)

Level 2, East Wing, Quadrangle Building
9385 5880
www.contact.unsw.edu.au

UNSW Security Services (crime reporting, night patrols)

Emergency: 9385 6666
Everything else: 9385 6000

THE BETA TEAM

Hope you enjoyed this edition of β eta...

...Have a fantastic O-Week!

