News from Computer Science and Engineering

Written by the Beta Team of CSESoc
Produced by Angelo Tamayo

βETA

Free as in speech and our awesome BBQs.

First Year
Survival Guide
Special O-Week Edition

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 that 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 1pm-2pm on the Physics lawn) or at the student office Level 3 of K17. This special edition of Beta is de-signed 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, potentially starting your acting career, and your frequently asked questions answered.

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

THE BETA TEAM

CSE SOCIETIES AND EVENTS

CSESoc - Where all the *cool* nerds are!

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

Tech events allow you to learn about, practise and explore any technical interests outside of your studies with others who share them. These take the form of:
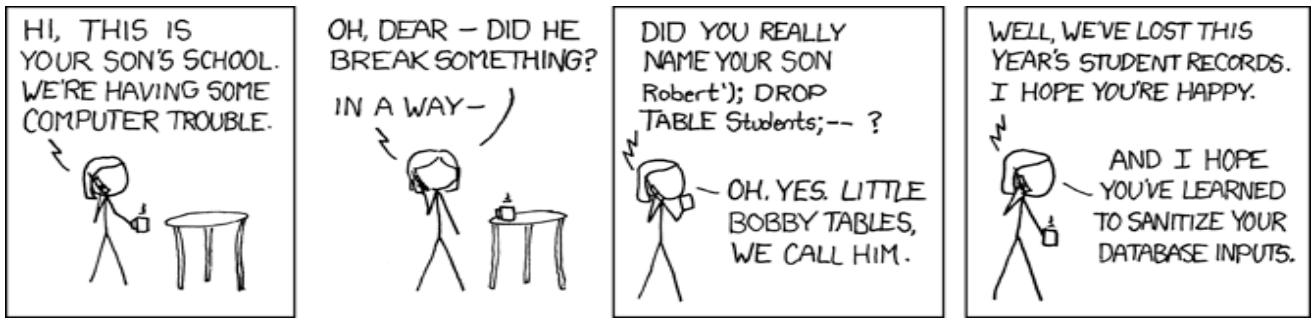
- Tech Talks (on anything from Google Maps to a Security Workshop from Deloitte)

- 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 executives 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.

CSE Societies and Events
CSESoc - continued

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
- High School Comp Club - Provides a head start for high school students to explore computing and eat pizza.

Keep an eye out for our First Year Camp at the end of Week 3 (March 21-23) - 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!

Evelyn Chensen   Vincent Wong
Pierre Estephan   Angelo Tamayo

CSE Societies and Events
CSESoc Events - Current and Ongoing

Now that you know what CSESoc is, come join us in some upcoming events:

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 1:30pm on the Physics Lawn - make sure to be there!

Also, on the Wednesday of week 1, we'll be hosting a **Cardboard night** (card and board games). It's not just fun - you will also meet tonnes of people!

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 all the way from workshops and 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 early in the semester. If you would like to install Linux on computer and have any worries, reservations or questions about the process, bring it to the Installfest where there will be many experienced students will-

ing 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 access and set up your own 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 Wednesday 4-6pm during O-Week (just check out the venue on the O-Week events calendar), followed by the Postgraduate welcome up until 5:30pm at the K17 Seminar Room. Undergraduates, however, 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 (Room 306, Level 3 K17), or visit https://www.csesoc. unsw.edu.au/.

The Beta Team

ADVICE

FAQ

Nervous about starting at UNSW Computing? Don't be!

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 and if there is a rear entrance, use it. 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, for most subjects they are. 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 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 lecturer/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 practise 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.

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 and is also usually open during the day. It's a great place to meet and hang out with people from CSE. It's currently located on Level 3 of K17, in Room 306.

FAQ - continued

The Socs Office is closed, how do I get in?
Only a select few students are authorised to supervise the office, and only a few of these students have the keys. 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).

WILLIAM KORTELAND

Do I need to buy a computer?

Tim answers the age old question of whether or not 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 (e.g. 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 differ.

TIMOTHY WILEY

CSE Societies and Events

The Road To Your Future

CSESoc's First Year Camp Beckons!

In the mystical and magical universe of University there exists many realms; and within these realms, factions. You, as a newcomer in this land have arrived in the realm of UNSW, joined with the faction of CSE. University is but a passage-way through to many other vast lands. As you travel onward to your chosen destiny, there are many sights to see and experiences to be had; some ignore the beauty and excitement and power through to their future, but the more adventurous, those who seek to make the most of their time in this wondrous world, seize every opportunity to explore their realm. This is a frightening and arduous task and is rarely attempted by a lone adventurer. Allies must be made.

Thus the leading group in the faction of CSE, CSESoc, brings to you the glorious:

First Year Camp

This Camp is a joyous journey into the outer lands of this universe where participants shall stay in quaint huts with bedding. They shall gather in the Great Main Hall for

gluttonous feasts and great trials of the mind and body. The many tasks asked of you and your brethren will spark a bond between all camp goers that will last longer than just your journey through this world. The weekend culminates in a fantastical night of donning your themed garments and flailing your limbs in time with our minstrels' music.

This expedition shall leave you changed for eternity with a Fresh outlook on the unknown, yet awe-inspiring world of University and a band of new companions ready to help you tackle it.

Link: https://www.csesoc.unsw.edu.au/camp/

Date: 21 March - 23 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 (7th March 11:59pm) and camp registration closes during week 2 (12th March 11:59pm).

Location: Wombaroo Adventure Centre.

Transport: By Coach, leaving from UNSW.

Camp Theme: Fantasy

We look forward to seeing you there!

CSESoc Social Heads

CSE Society & 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 second 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.

You must register to participate: http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/db/do/mentee/

CSE Development Office
-Brad Hall

CSE Societies and Events
CSE Revue
Sketch comedy, Dance, Music, Tech, and a whole lot of fun

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 for

Upcoming Events

O-Week Revue
24th Feb 2:30pm-3pm, Main Stage

Movie Night
24th Feb 6pm-8pm, K17 Seminar Room

Theatre Sports
25th Feb 11am-12pm, QUAD1001

Frozen T-shirt Competition
25th Feb 3:30pm-4pm, Main Stage

Scripts Block
25th Feb 6pm-8pm, K17 Seminar Room

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 a part of CSE Revue is like.

CSE Revue Producers

Bookmarks

Recommended Bookmarks

The Beta Team lists the bookmarks that every CSE student should have

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

RuneScape

https://www.runescape.com

No.

The Beta Team

This Edition of Beta is Sponsored By...