

Study strategies for success

There are a number of proven strategies that will help you become an efficient and successful student on BSc Computer Science. These include

- Managing your study time effectively
- Understanding how the programme works
- Getting support from those around you
- Pausing to reflect on your learning.

As you work through the first semester, complete these short activities to maximise your learning effectiveness. The first three activities should be completed before the start of the programme, the others over the following weeks.

You can print this document or type directly into the fields and save it to your computer.

ACTIVITY # 1

When: Now

Duration: 10 minutes

Introduce yourself to your classmates

A strong peer-support network is strongly associated with academic success. Get to know your fellow students on the programme and support each other on your learning journey.

1. In the first module of the [BSc Computer Science Orientation Course](#), you will find an activity: [Introduce yourself to your classmates](#). If you haven't yet done so, take a moment to greet your fellow learners by sharing
 - Your name
 - Your occupation
 - Your location
 - Why you enrolled in the BSc Computer Science
 - A description and photo of a favourite local foodstuff from your area that others may not know. Why do you like it?
2. Read through other students' responses and respond to at least 2-3 of the messages.
3. Over the coming weeks, participate in the scheduled programme webinars and other events. Reach out and support other students in the programme Slack channels and other networks. Consider forming a study group.

ACTIVITY # 2**When:** Now**Duration:** 10 minutes**Reflecting forwards**

In the Orientation Course, we talked about how reflection powers effective learning. This is the first of four, short, reflective activities we would like you to undertake in the following weeks. Together, your responses to the questions will provide you with some insights into how you learn and the actions you can take to maximise your success.

Find ten minutes to reflect on the following questions. Record your responses below. Be objective and honest.

1. What are your thoughts and feelings going into the programme? Trepidation? Excitement? Enthusiasm? Why do you think you feel this way? Consider how previous education and life experiences might have influenced your expectations.
2. Visualise the next few weeks by playing it forwards in your head. How might your particular strengths and weaknesses influence your progress? For example, you might be great at maths but a bit of a procrastinator. Or the opposite!
3. With your responses to these questions in mind, what is one thing you can do now to prepare effectively for the start of the programme? How will you make this happen?

YOUR RESPONSE...

ACTIVITY #3

Learn how things work

When: Now

Duration: 15 minutes

Are you the kind of person who reads the instructions when you buy a new gadget? Most of us don't! But taking some time now to understand how the BSc Computer Science programme works will ensure there are no surprises later.

1. Read the [BSc Computer Science Programme Regulations 22/23](#) to find out:
 - The structure of the programme - How many modules you must take to complete the degree (p5); How many 'credits' each module will earn and how many hours you are expected to study per week, (p6)
 - How assessment is conducted - The different types of assessment and what you need to 'pass' (p10); What happens if you fail a module 'resit' (p11); What are 'mitigating circumstances' and what you should do if you think you will miss a deadline (p14)
 - Summaries of each module - The learning objectives, topics covered and assessment requirement (p39).
2. Read the [General Regulations 22/23](#) to find out:
 - University rules - Information and regulations including all aspects of assessment (p10); Referencing (p14); Plagiarism (p15); Complaints and appeals (p20).
3. Can you answer the following questions
 - What grades do I need to achieve a First Class Honours award?
 - What happens if I think I will miss a deadline?
 - How many times can I 'resit' an assessment?
 - What happens if I have a complaint?

RECORD NOTES HERE

ACTIVITY # 4

When: Week 1

Duration: 20 minutes

Discover your optimal study schedule

Combining study with work and other commitments is a challenge. This activity will help you discover your optimal study schedule.

1. Read this short blog from a UoL student on [Studying whilst working full-time](#). Could any of Dhiren's strategies work for you?
2. Take a look at the course materials for the next two weeks on all courses you are studying and make a note of
 - timetabled activities you need to attend (e.g. webinars)
 - activities with deadlines (e.g. assessments)
 - any activities which may require more focused effort (e.g. programming tasks, peer-reviews).

Record these in the **Two-week study schedule** below (or use a calendar or productivity app).

3. Think about your other responsibilities over the period, such as work or family events and record these on the schedule.
4. Acknowledging these commitments, schedule some regular study sessions over the period. Be realistic about when and how long to study. (The estimate of weekly study time for the course will help you plan how many sessions you need to include.)
5. Over the two-week period, make a note of when you had to change your plans.
6. At the end of the fortnight, take a few minutes to reflect on what worked with your study schedule and any challenges you encountered. Use these insights to schedule the next two weeks.

RECORD NOTES HERE

ACTIVITY # 4

Two-week study schedule
WEEK 1

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	OTHER COMMITMENTS	DAY/ PLANNED STUDY SESSION TIMES

RECORD NOTES HERE

ACTIVITY # 4

Two-week study schedule WEEK 2

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	OTHER COMMITMENTS	DAY/ PLANNED STUDY SESSION TIMES

Over the next two weeks...

- Note which sessions you actually studied and when you had to change your plans.
- At the end of the period, take a few minutes to reflect on when your study schedule worked as well as any challenges you encountered. Which days or times worked better for you?
- Schedule the next two weeks using these insights.

ACTIVITY # 5**When:** Week 4**Duration:** 10 minutes**Reflecting on your early progress**

In this short activity, we'd like you to spend a little time reflecting on your experiences in the first few weeks of the programme.

Consider the following questions and make notes below.

1. How do the first weeks of the programme compare to your initial expectations? You might find it helpful to refer back to your response to Activity 2: Reflecting forwards. What has changed?
2. What aspect of the programme are you enjoying most? What has enabled you to thrive in this activity?
3. What is the biggest challenge have you faced? This could be academic, e.g. assessments, logistical issues such as making time to study or feelings such as anxiety.
4. With these reflections in mind, what can you do now to ensure your progress in the following weeks?

YOUR RESPONSE...

ACTIVITY # 6

When: Week 8

Duration: 20 minutes

Prepare for assessment

By now, you will be nearing your mid-term assessment. Depending on the courses you are taking, this could include graded quizzes, programming and other assignments, some of which you may already have completed.

Assessments are a stressful time, especially for new students, so it's worth trying to remove some of the anxiety by getting organised now.

1. If you haven't done so recently, take some time to review the assessment requirements for each of the courses you are currently studying. You can find the detailed Course Syllabus at the start of the course. The [BSc Computer Science Programme Regulations 22/23](#) provides a summary of how assessment is conducted in the programme (p10) and an overview of each course (p39 onwards). Carefully read the instructions provided. What do you have to do? When do you have to submit? Make note of any specific requirements as well as observing rules around plagiarism, word-count limits, etc.
2. Plan how and when you will undertake the work required. Work backwards from key dates and ringfence time in your diary. If there is a specific deadline, aim to submit a minimum of 48 hours in advance so that you have time to address any last-minute issues.
3. Now is a really good time to use a productivity tool such as the Pomodoro technique to get work done. 25 minutes of focused activity is better than hours of staring into space and worrying.
4. If you are feeling anxious, try not to let these feelings take control. [This video](#) provides some great insight into test anxiety and how to combat it. Think about how far you have come already. Remind yourself of your past successes, especially achievements in examinations and assessments. Reach out to family, friends or your fellow students to discuss your concerns. Be open to their suggestions. Exercise, sleep and generally looking after yourself will increase your wellbeing and help you stay calm. The [Wellbeing section of the Student Portal](#) contains advice and sources of help in the University.
5. If you do think you might miss the deadline, then follow the procedure as outlined in the [Student Portal](#). Requests due to mitigating circumstances have to be submitted within a specific timeframe.

Further resources

[Your guide to handling revision and exam stress](#) | Student Room website
[Wellbeing section](#) | Student Portal

ACTIVITY # 7**When:** Week 15**Duration:** 10 minutes**Well done for making it so far!**

In this short activity, we'd like you to spend a little time reflecting on your experiences in the programme now that you are halfway through your first course(s).

Consider the following questions and make notes below.

1. Can you list three 'successes' you have had to date in your studies? These could include new skills or knowledge you have gained, learning activities you enjoyed or more generally, the times you persisted when things got tough. Take a moment to acknowledge your achievements and reflect on what went well.
2. What is the biggest challenge you continue to face? What strategies have you tried to improve the situation? What other approaches could you try?
3. With these reflections in mind, what can you do now to ensure your progress in the final weeks of the semester?

YOUR RESPONSE...

ACTIVITY # 8**When:** Post-course**Duration:** 10 minutes**Reflecting on success**

Well done, you have completed the first courses in the programme. In this final reflective activity, we'd like you to look back at your experiences across the previous weeks and think about how you will build on your successes for future study.

Consider the following questions and make notes.

1. What was the most significant moment of your learning so far? This could be a concept or skill you developed or your own personal development. Why was it important to you?
2. How has your perspective or understanding of computer science been changed or challenged as a result of this experience?
3. What have you learned about yourself?
4. How will you take your experiences and apply them to your next course of study?

YOUR RESPONSE...