

# COMP 3311

## Database Management Systems

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### Lab 8

Accessing Oracle Database  
Via A Web Application

# Lab Topics

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- ❑ **Programmatically** connecting to **Oracle Database** from a web application.
- ❑ **Retrieving** data from **Oracle Database** tables and displaying them in a web browser.
- ❑ **Updating** **Oracle Database** tables via a web browser.

# Accessing Visual Studio

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- ❑ You have the following options for accessing Visual Studio.
- 1. Use the ITSC **Programming Software** virtual desktop (see [Accessing the Virtual Desktop](#) in these lab notes).
- 2. If you have a Windows PC, you can install the free version of Visual Studio (see [Installing Visual Studio in Windows](#) in these lab notes).
- 3. If you have a Mac PC, you can use Bootcamp to install Windows 10 in a Windows partition on your Mac and then install the free version of Visual Studio. As a HKUST student, you should be able to get a free copy of Windows 10 from ITSC.

# Prepare The Database

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- ❑ **Download to the Desktop** the file **Lab8Exercise.zip** from the **Accessing Oracle Database Via A Web Application** entry of the **Lab Schedule** course web page and unzip it.
- ❑ Execute the **Lab8DB.sql** script file inside the **Lab8Exercise** folder in **SQL Developer**.

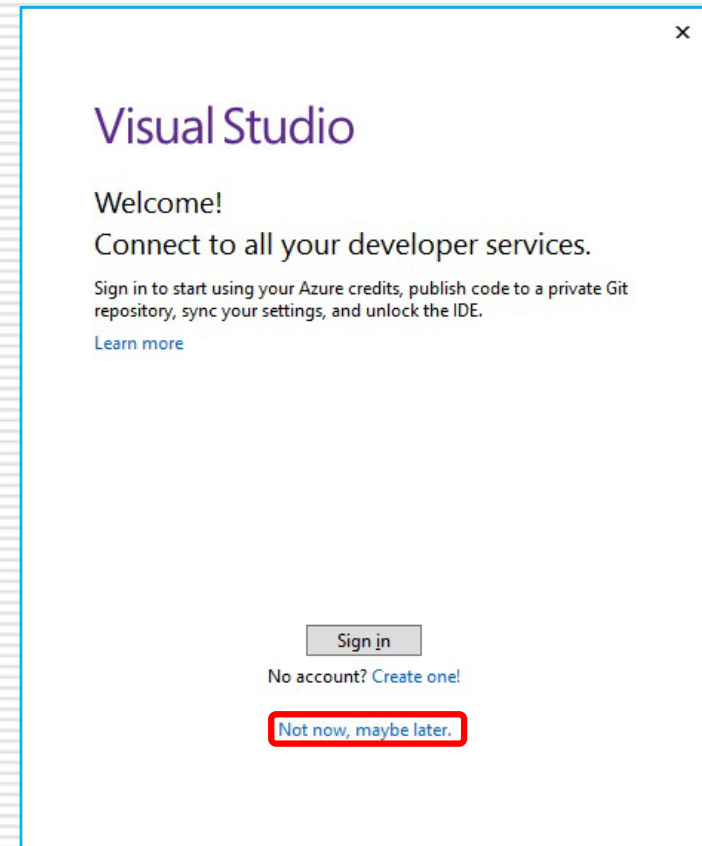
# Start Visual Studio

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- ❑ From the Start menu, find the **Visual Studio 2019** app or search for it and double-click it.

**DO NOT USE**  
**Visual Studio 2015 or 2017!**

- ❑ In the **Welcome** dialog, click the **Not now, maybe later.** link at the bottom of the dialog (**highlighted in red on the right**).

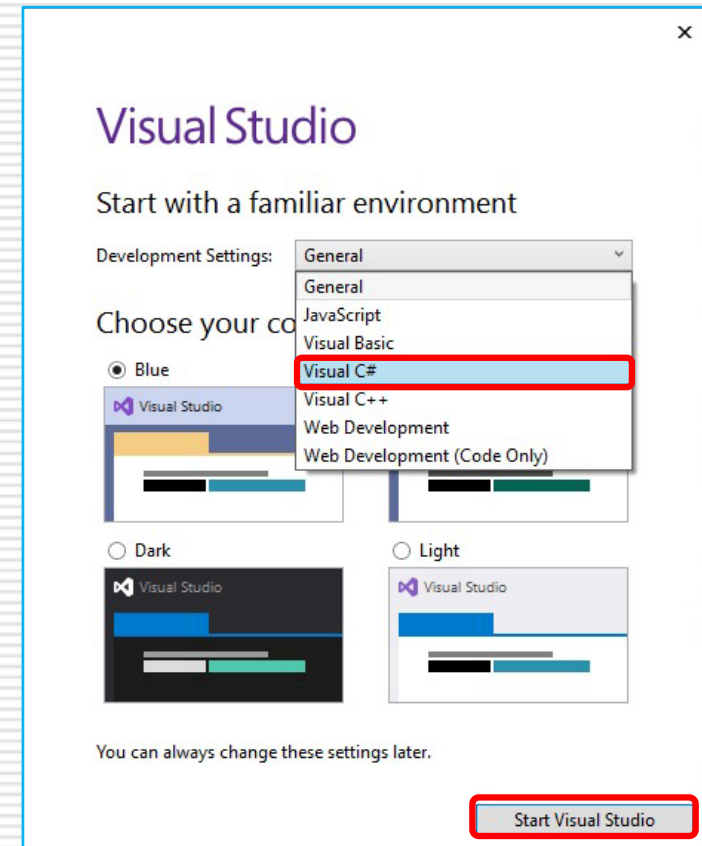


# Select the Environment

- When prompted,
  - select **Visual C#** as the development setting (highlighted in red on the right).

**DO NOT SELECT C++ or any other development setting!**

- click the **Start Visual Studio** button (highlighted in red on the right).



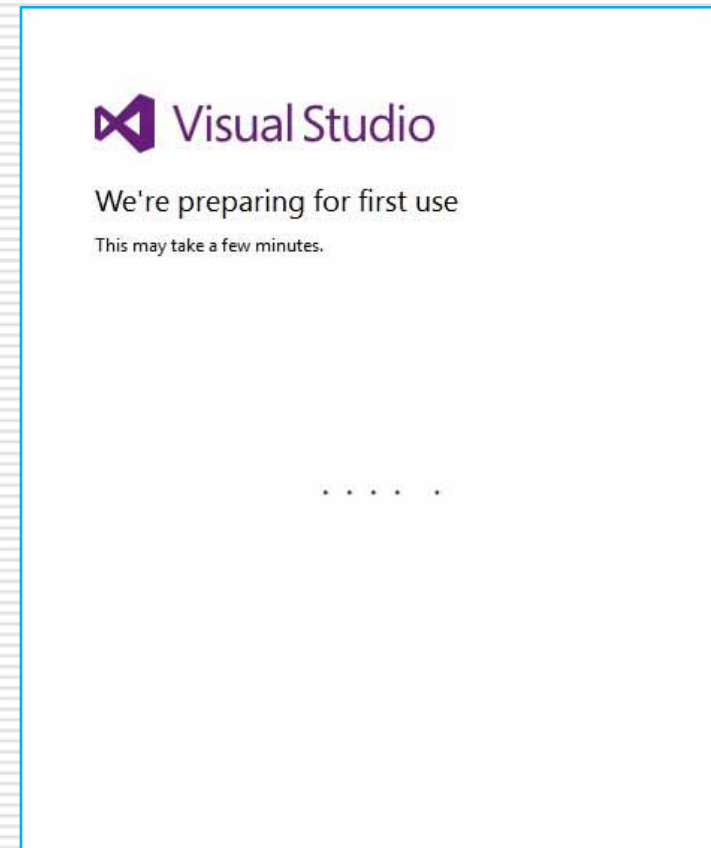
# Be Patient

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- It may take several minutes for **Visual Studio** to start up. We know it might be hard, but

**BE VERY  
PATIENT!**

- Eventually, the dialog shown on the next page appears.



# Visual Studio Get Started Dialog

## Visual Studio 2019





### Open recent

As you use Visual Studio, any projects, folders, or files that you open will show up here for quick access.

You can pin anything that you open frequently so that it's always at the top of the list.

- ❑ In the **Get started** section, select **Open a project or solution** (highlighted in red on the right).
- ❑ In the **Open Project/Solution** dialog:
  - Navigate to the **University** folder inside the **Lab8Exercise** folder on the desktop.
  - Select **University.sln** inside the **University** folder.
  - Click the **Open** button.

### Get started

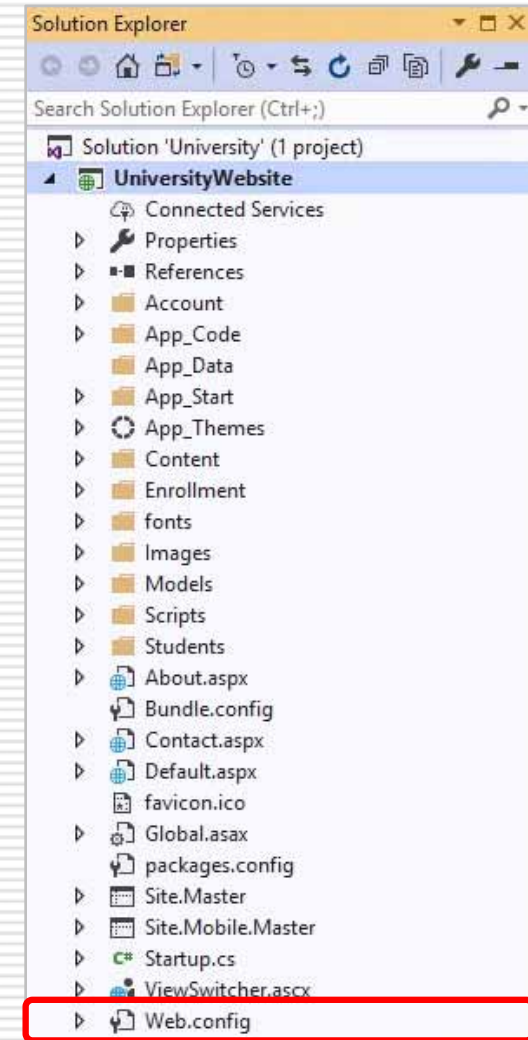
-  **Clone or check out code**  
Get code from an online repository like GitHub or Azure DevOps
-  **Open a project or solution**  
Open a local Visual Studio project or .sln file
-  **Open a local folder**  
Navigate and edit code within any folder
-  **Create a new project**  
Choose a project template with code scaffolding to get started

[Continue without code →](#)



# Solution Explorer – Connect To Oracle

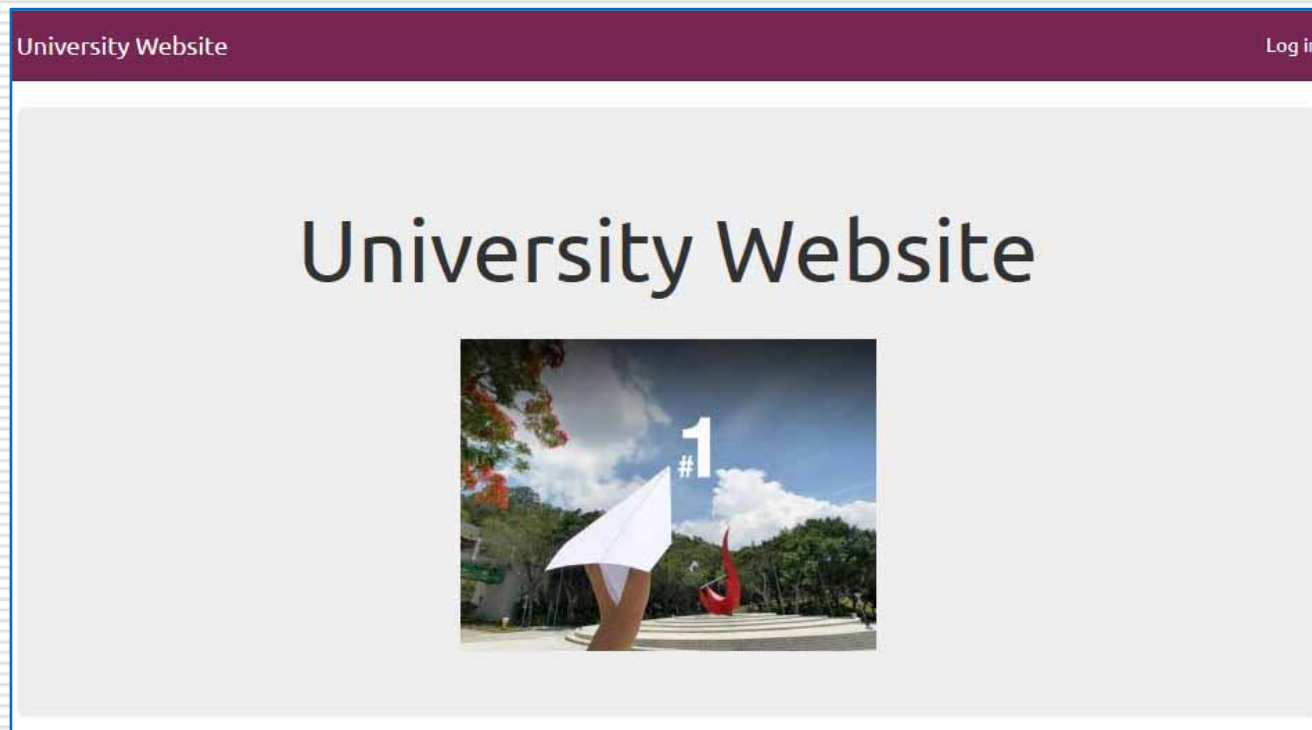
- ❑ The Solution Explorer allows file and resource management for a project.
- ❑ In the Solution Explorer, double-click on the Web.config file (highlighted in red on the right).
- ❑ Find the line  
`<add name="UniversityConnectionString" ...`
- ❑ On this line, find the following:  
`ID=comp3311stuXXX;Password=XXXXXXXXXX`  
and replace  
`comp3311stuXXX` with your Oracle user name  
`XXXXXXXXXX` with your Oracle password
- ❑ Save and close the Web.config file.



# Test the Website (1)

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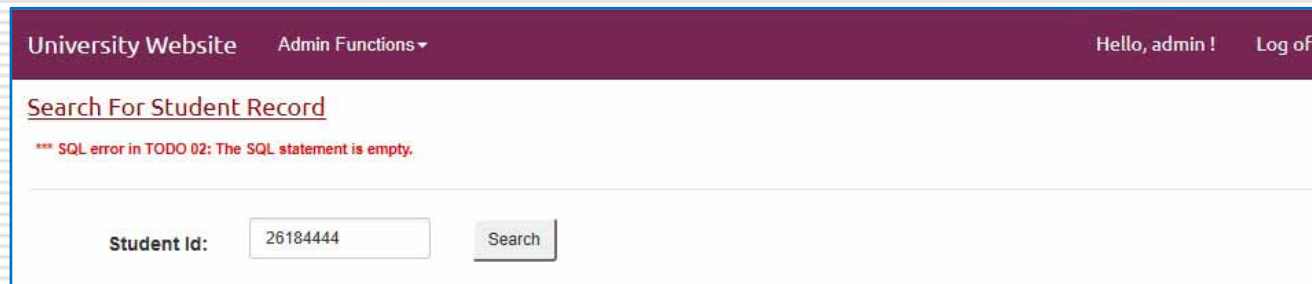
- ❑ Select **Start Debugging** in the **Debug** menu or press the **F5 function key** to view the website.
- ❑ The homepage of the website, shown below, is displayed.



# Test the Website (2)

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- ❑ To use the website, you need to login; login as "admin".
- ❑ In the navigation bar, select **Admin Functions** → **Search For Student Record** and enter a student id in the textbox (e.g., 26184444).
- ❑ You will get an error message as shown below, indicating that there is no SQL statement defined for **TODO 02**.
  - The required SQL statement needs to be constructed as explained shortly.
  - Close the browser window.



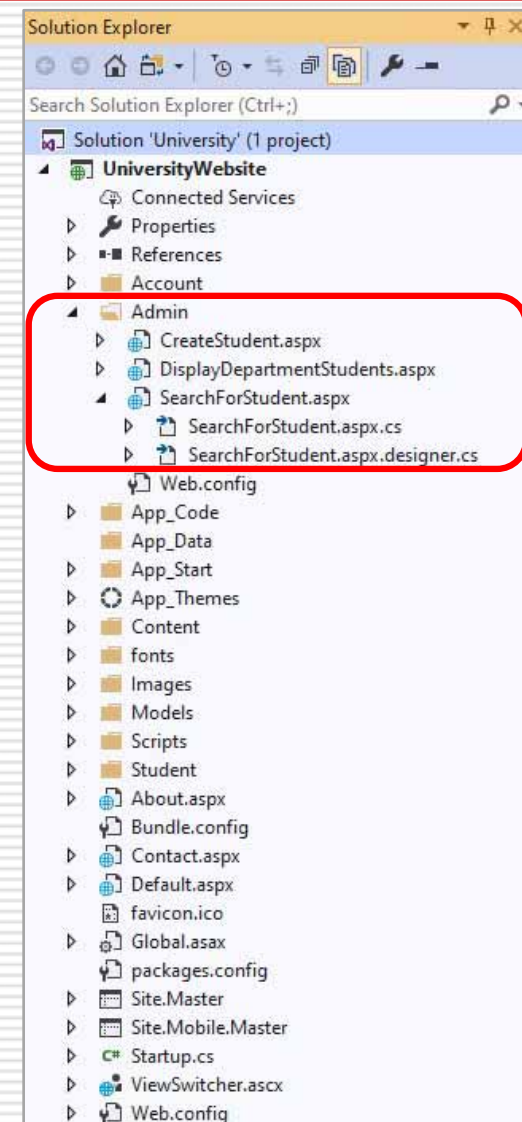
# Web Forms (1)

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- ❑ A web form, which is rendered as a web page, provides the **user interface (UI)** of a website.
- ❑ Visual Studio lets you create web pages by dragging and dropping **server controls**, such as text boxes and buttons, onto a web form to construct a web page.
- ❑ **Properties**, **methods** and **events** for server controls or for the web page can be set in order to define the web page's behavior, look and feel.
- ❑ Web forms are constructed using a combination of **HTML**, **server controls** and **server code**.

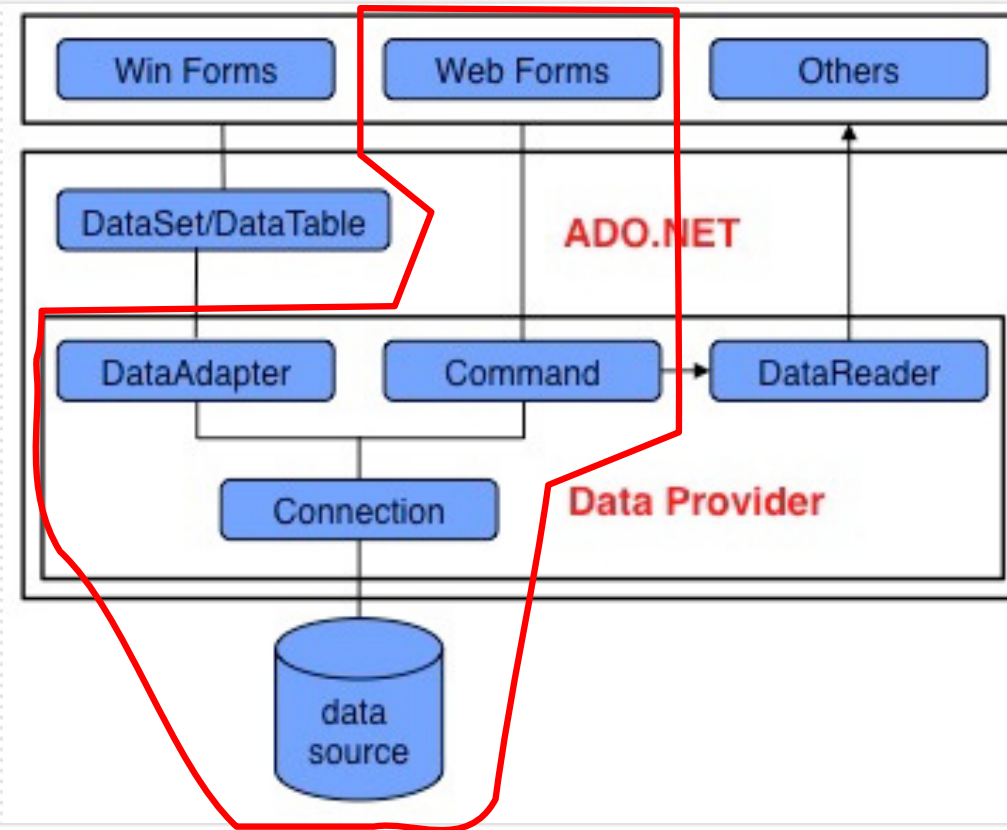
# Web Forms (2)

- ❑ A website's web forms (with extension `aspx`) can be found in the **Solution Explorer** (shown on the right).
- ❑ Each web form also has a C# **code-behind file** (with extension `aspx.cs`) that contains the code that processes the web form (more on this later).
- ❑ The web form and code-behind file for the web page that searches for a student record can be found inside the **Admin** folder in the **Solution Explorer** as highlighted in red on the right.



# ASP.NET Data Access Architecture

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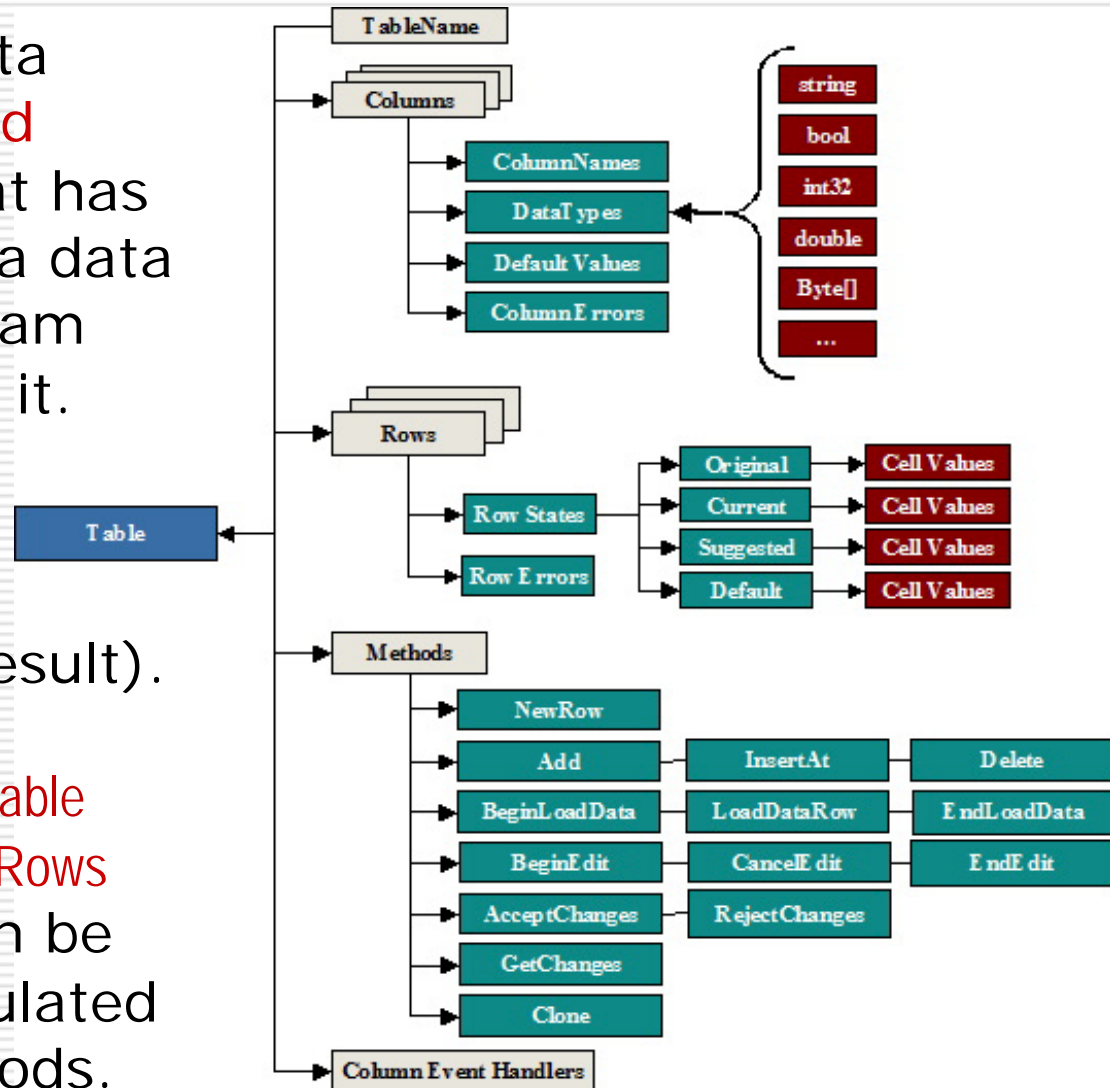


**Note:** The code that actually accesses Oracle Database is in the class `OracleDBAccess.cs` inside the `App_Code` folder.  
**DO NOT MODIFY THE CODE IN THIS CLASS!**

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# DataTable

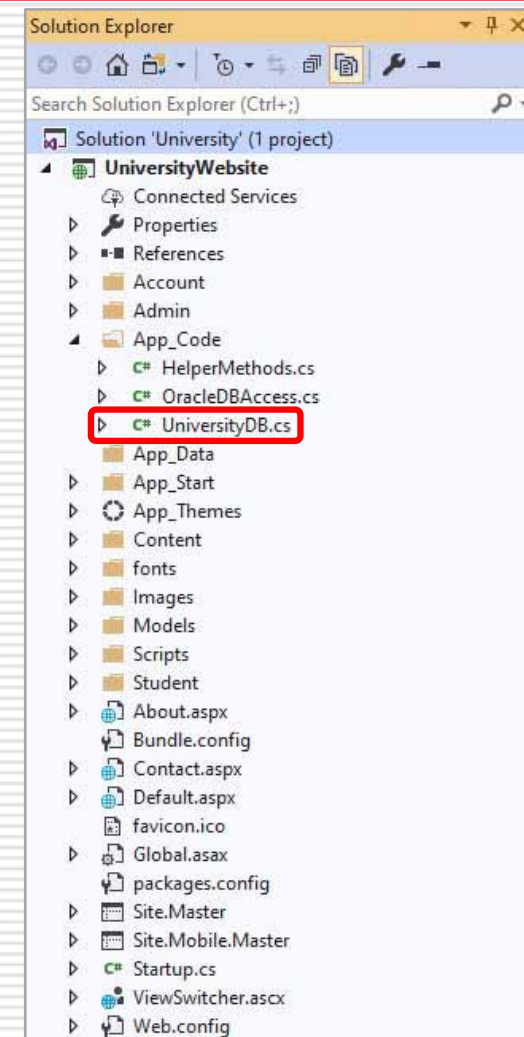
- ❑ A **DataTable** is a C# data structure used to **hold data in memory**—that has been retrieved from a data source—where program code can manipulate it.
- ❑ A **DataTable** can hold *at most one table* (i.e., a query result).
- ❑ A table within a **DataTable** contains **Columns** and **Rows** collections, which can be accessed and manipulated using standard methods.





# UniversityDB.cs Code File (1)

- ❑ The code that constructs the required SQL statements to access the database is contained in a C# code file named **UniversityDB.cs**, which is located in the **App\_Code** folder in the **Solution Explorer**.
- ❑ In the **Solution Explorer**, expand the **App\_Code** folder.
- ❑ Double click on the file **UniversityDB.cs**.





# UniversityDB.cs Code File (2)

- ❑ In the code file, to retrieve the record of a student, identified by his/her student id, an SQL statement is constructed, as a string named `sql`, in which the value of the `studentId` parameter is used (1 and 2).
- ❑ Then, the string `sql` is passed to the procedure `myOracleDBAccess.GetData`, which contains the code required to access the Oracle database and the result is assigned to a `DataTable` (3), which is returned to the calling method.

```
public class UniversityDB
{
    private readonly OracleDBAccess myOracleDBAccess = new OracleDBAccess();
    private string sql;

    #region SQL statements for admin
    1reference
    public DataTable GetStudentRecord(string studentId)(1)
    {
        //*****
        // TODO 01: Used in Admin/SearchForStudent.aspx.cs
        // Construct the SELECT statement to find the record (i.e., to return *
        // all the attributes) of a student identified by his/her student id. *
        //*****
        (2) sql = "select * " +
                "from Student " +
                "where studentId='" + studentId + "'";
        (3) return myOracleDBAccess.GetData(sql);
    }

    1reference
    public decimal StudentRecordExists(string studentId)[]

    1reference
    public DataTable GetDepartmentStudentRecords(string departmentId)[]

    1reference
    public DataTable GetDepartments()[]

    1reference
    public bool CreateStudentRecord(string studentId, string firstName,
        string lastName, string email, string phoneNo, string cga,
        string departmentId, string admissionYear)[]

    #endregion SQL statements for admin

    SQL statements for students

    *** DO NOT CHANGE THE METHODS BELOW THIS LINE. THEY ARE NOT TODOS!!! ***
}
```

# Web Form Code-behind File

- ❑ The methods in the code file **UniversityDB.cs** are called from the code-behind files of the web forms as shown in the figure on the right for the code-behind file for the **SearchForStudent** web form.
- ❑ The code-behind files have comments that cross-reference the methods which they call in the **UniversityDB.cs** code file.

```
public partial class SearchForStudent : Page
{
    //*****
    // Uses TODO 01, 02 *
    //*****

    private readonly UniversityDB myUniversityDB = new UniversityDB();
    private readonly HelperMethods myHelperMethods = new HelperMethods();

    /*----- Private Methods -----*/
    //reference
    private bool StudentIdIsValid(string studentId) {...}

    /*----- Protected Methods -----*/

    References
    protected void BtnFindStudent_Click(object sender, EventArgs e)
    {
        // Hide previous results.
        lblResultMessage.Visible = false;
        pnlStudentRecord.Visible = false;

        string studentId = myHelperMethods.CleanInput(txtStudentId.Text);

        if (IsValid && StudentIdIsValid(studentId))
        {
            //*****
            // Uses TODO 01 *
            //*****
            DataTable dtStudentRecord = myUniversityDB.GetStudentRecord(studentId);

            // Attributes expected to be returned by the query result.
            var attributelist = new List<string> { "STUDENTID", "FIRSTNAME", "LASTNAME", "EMAIL",
            "PHONENO", "CGA", "DEPARTMENTID", "ADMISSIONYEAR" };

            // Display the query result if it is valid.
            if (myHelperMethods.IsQueryResultValid("TODO 01", dtStudentRecord, attributelist, lblResultMessage))
            {
                // Display a no result message if nothing was retrieved from the database.
                if (dtStudentRecord.Rows.Count != 0)
                {
                    gvStudentRecord.DataSource = dtStudentRecord;
                    gvStudentRecord.DataBind();
                    pnlStudentRecord.Visible = true;
                }
                else // Display a no result message.
                {
                    myHelperMethods.DisplayMessage(lblResultMessage, "No record for the student was found.");
                }
            }
        }
    }
}
```

# Complete UniversityDB.cs Code File (1)

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- ❑ Most of the SQL statements that you need to construct require values that are passed as parameters of a method that is called from the code-behind file of a web form.
- ❑ Consider, as an example, the code on slide 17 which retrieves the record of a student with a specified student id.
- ❑ The student id value required to construct the `select` statement is obtained from a `TextBox` control on the web form, named `txtStudentId`, and passed to the method `GetStudentRecord` in the `studentId` parameter.

# Complete UniversityDB.cs Code File (2)

---

- In the `UniversityDB.cs` code file, the SQL statement to retrieve the student record is then constructed and assigned to the variable `sql` as follows:

```
sql = "select * from Student where studentId='" + studentId + "'";
```

1. Since the type of the `studentId` attribute is `char`, it is necessary to put single quotes around the value of the `studentId` parameter so that the SQL statement will look like

```
select * from Student where studentId='26184444'
```

if the value of the `studentId` parameter is `26184444`.

2. Note that the C# string concatenation operator is `+`.

**Note:** You should only put single quotes around values for attributes that are strings. It is not recommended to put single quotes around values for attribute that are numbers. Moreover, you should never put single quotes around the value `null`.

# Complete UniversityDB.cs Code File (3)

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- ❑ The method parameters have been assigned names that should make it obvious what values they hold.
- ❑ You will need to use the method parameters to construct most of the SQL statements, which are marked by **TODO** comments.
- ❑ There are **eight additional TODOs** (i.e., eight SQL statements to construct) in the **UniversityDB.cs** code file.
- ❑ As an example, we will construct the SQL statement for **TODO 02**, which determines whether a record exists for the student id input into the web page that searches for a student.

# Complete UniversityDB.cs Code File (4)

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- ❑ As explained in the comments for **TODO 02** in the **UniversityDB.cs** code file, a student record exists if the SQL statement returns a value of 1 for a given student id; otherwise, it does not exist.
- ❑ What is the SQL statement that would return such a result given a student id?

```
public decimal StudentRecordExists(string studentId)
{
    //*****
    // TODO 02: Used in Admin/SearchForStudent.aspx.cs *
    // Construct the SELECT statement to determine if a record exists *
    // in the database for a student identified by his/her student id. *
    // The SELECT statement should return: *
    //    0 - if the student record does not exist; *
    //    1 - if the student record exists. *
    //*****
    sql = "";
    return myOracleDBAccess.GetAggregateValue(sql);
}
```



# Complete UniversityDB.cs Code File (5)

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- ❑ After you correctly complete **TODO 02**, then when you search for the student record with student id **26184444**, you should find the record shown below.

University WebsiteAdmin Functions▼Hello, admin !Log off

[Search For Student Record](#)

Student Id:

Search

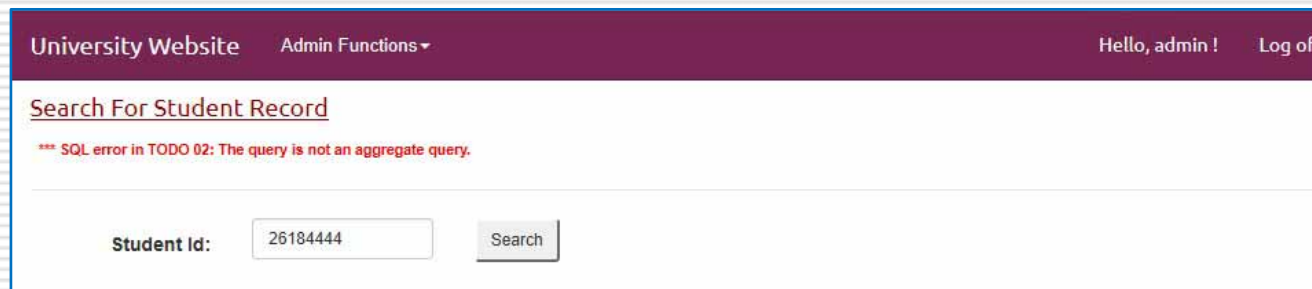
Search Result

STUDENTID	FIRSTNAME	LASTNAME	EMAIL	PHONENO	CGA	DEPARTMENTID	ADMISSIONYEAR
26184444	Donald	Trump	bstrump	28255057	1.49	BUS	2018

# Debugging Your SQL Statements (1)

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- ❑ If your SQL statement has an error in it, then when you execute it, you will get an error message indicating the type of error that occurred as shown below.



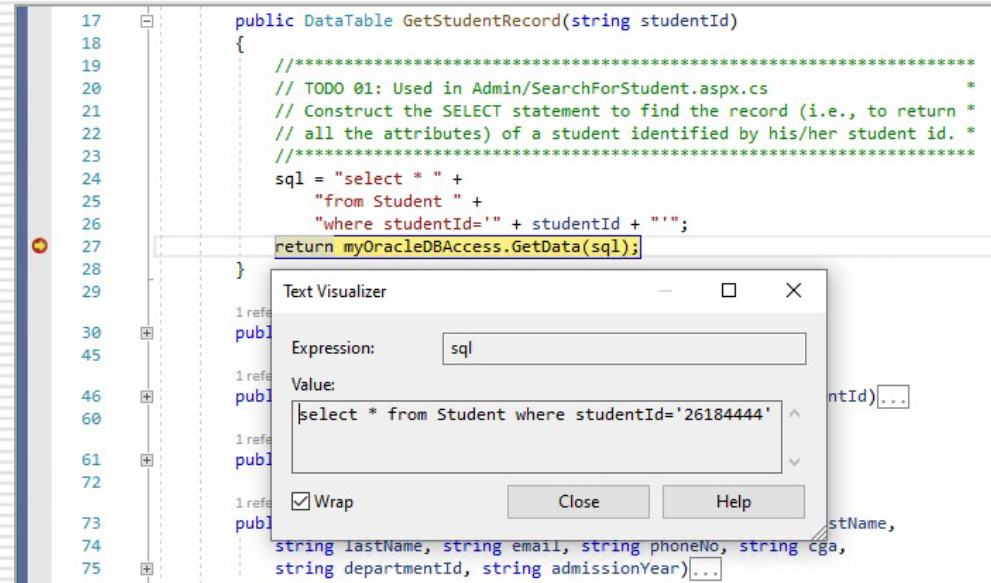
- ❑ Since the message will not indicate where in your SQL statement the error occurred, debugging is very difficult.
- ❑ Therefore, before executing an SQL statement in Visual Studio, **it is highly recommended** that you first “debug” it in **SQL Developer** using appropriate values for any variables.
- ❑ You can also set breakpoints in **Visual Studio** for debugging.



# Debugging Your SQL Statements (2)

- ❑ To set a breakpoint on a code line in the **UniversityDB.cs** file, click in the left-most margin of the code editor window.

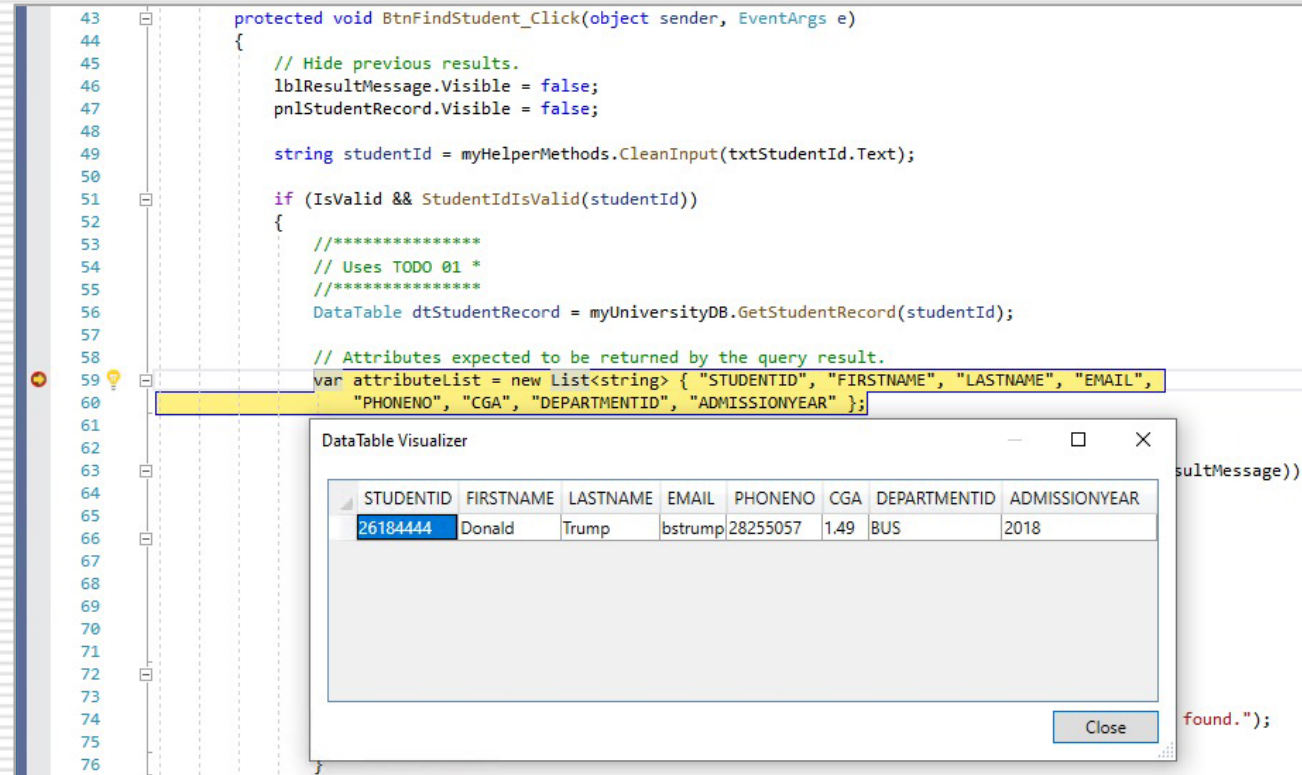
- ❑ Execution will then stop at this line (right-pointing yellow arrow inside the red circle).



- ❑ To see the value of the **sql** variable in the code line, hover the cursor over it.
- ❑ Select the magnifying glass icon in the popup to view the SQL statement in the **Text Visualizer** dialog box.

# Debugging Your SQL Statements (3)

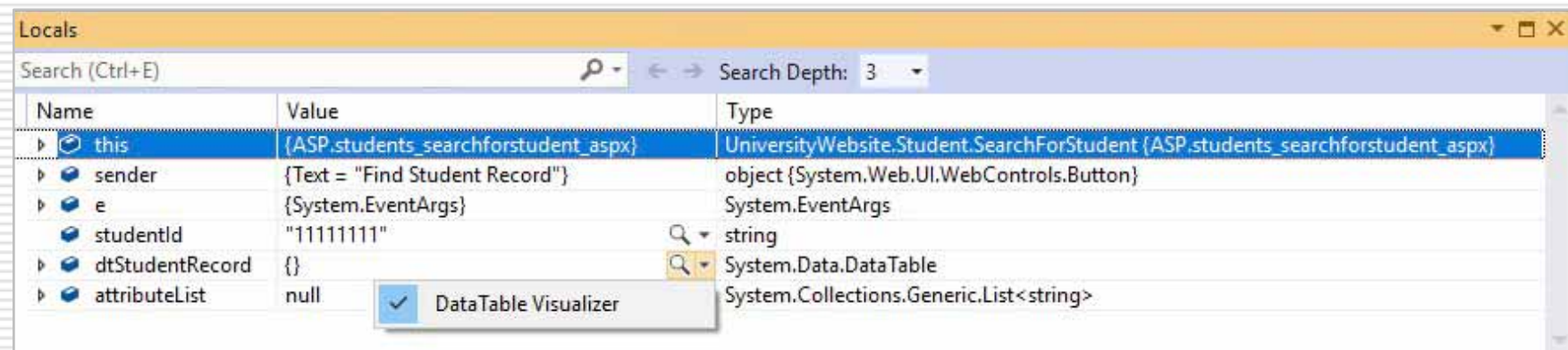
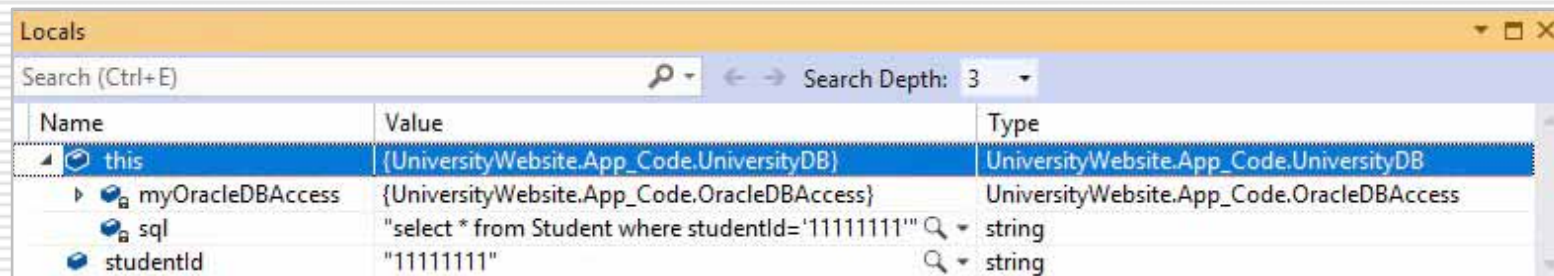
- ❑ To view the result of an SQL statement, set a breakpoint in the code-behind file where the **TODO** is used as shown in the figure.



- ❑ Place the cursor over the `DataTable` variable `dtStudentRecord`.
- ❑ Select the magnifying glass icon in the popup to view the `DataTable` contents in the **Text Visualizer** dialog box.

# Debugging Your SQL Statements (4)

- ❑ You can also inspect the values of the variables in the **Locals** tab (usually found at the bottom of the **Visual Studio** window) as shown in the figures below.



# Lab Exercise

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**Ask for help if you need it!**

## **IMPORTANT NOTE**

You cannot access Oracle Database from the M drive using Visual Studio.

Your website folder must be on the local computer.

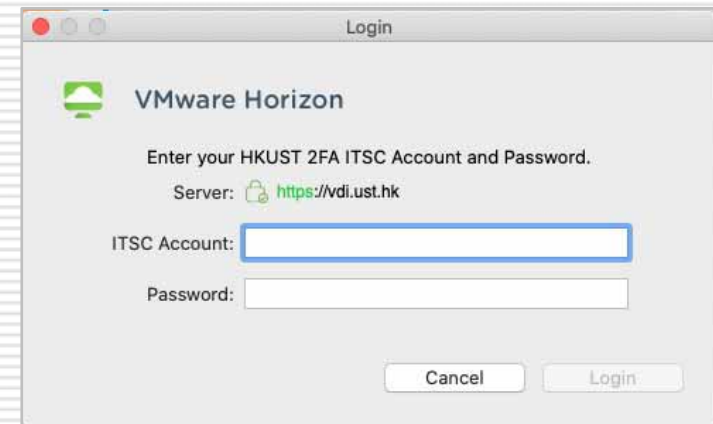
**DO NOT** modify any of the other code in the UniversityDB.cs code file or in any other files! In particular, do not modify the web forms. We cannot help you if you have changed these files. In this case the best thing to do is to start over by deleting the University folder and downloading it again.

# Accessing the Virtual Desktop

1. Login via VMWare Horizon Client.  
(Get the software [here](#).)
2. Select the two-factor login method you want to use.
3. Select the Programming Software virtual desktop as shown below.



4. Search for Visual Studio 2019 and launch it.



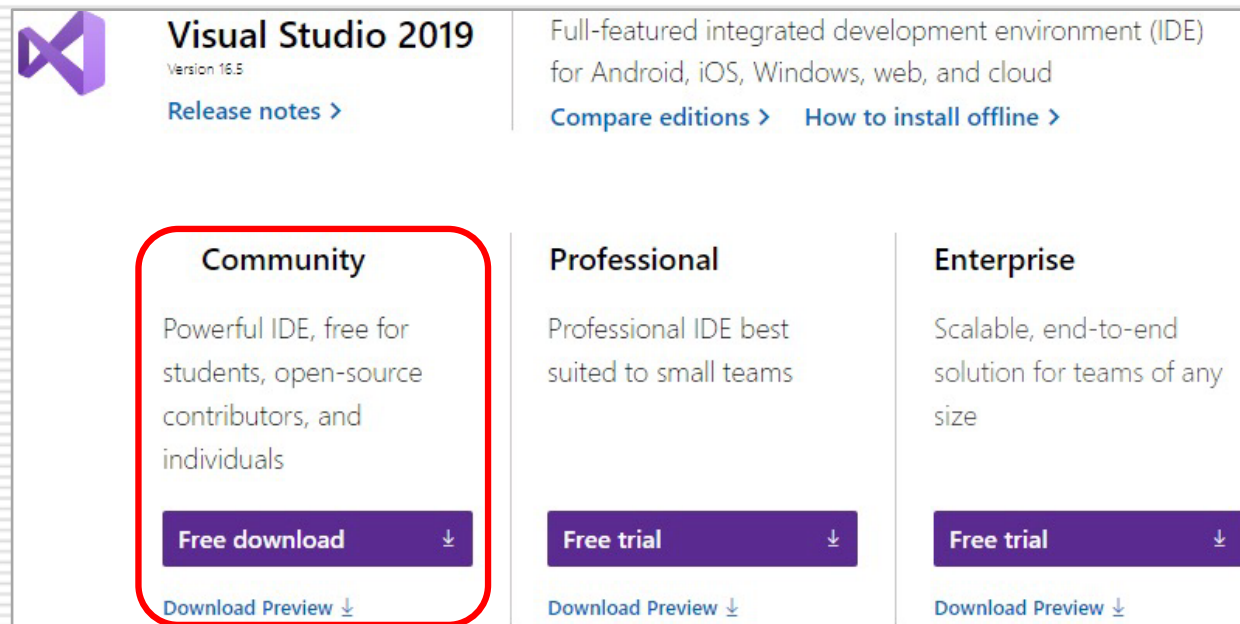
# Installing Visual Studio in Windows (1)

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- ❑ Download the free version of **Visual Studio 2019** called, **Community**, from

<https://visualstudio.microsoft.com/downloads/>

(Note that the Mac version of Visual Studio 2019 is not compatible with the Visual Studio Windows projects used in this course. If you have a Mac, you may consider using Bootcamp to install Windows on your Mac and then install Visual Studio 2019 Community in the Bootcamp partition. Windows 10 is free to download from ITSC for HKUST students.)



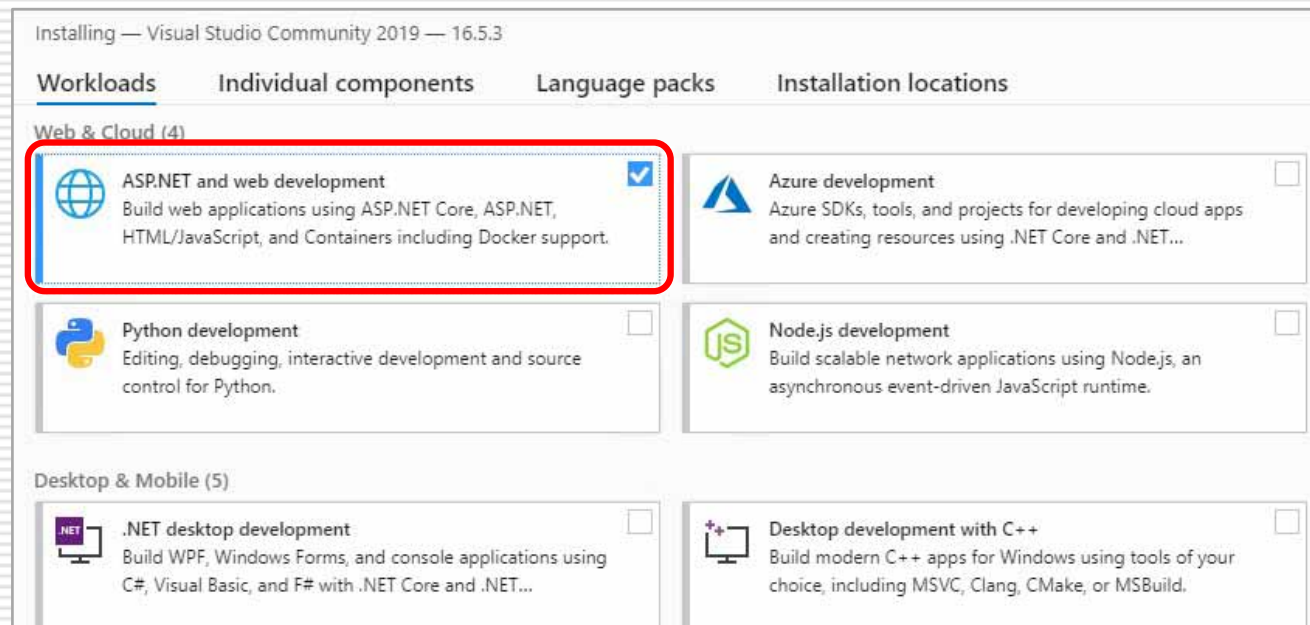
The screenshot shows the Visual Studio 2019 download page. At the top, it says 'Visual Studio 2019 Version 16.8' with a link to 'Release notes >'. Below this, there are three columns for different editions: 'Community', 'Professional', and 'Enterprise'. The 'Community' column is highlighted with a red box. It describes the 'Community' edition as a 'Powerful IDE, free for students, open-source contributors, and individuals' and has a 'Free download' button with a download icon. Below the button is a link to 'Download Preview'. The 'Professional' column describes it as a 'Professional IDE best suited to small teams' and has a 'Free trial' button with a download icon, followed by a 'Download Preview' link. The 'Enterprise' column describes it as a 'Scalable, end-to-end solution for teams of any size' and has a 'Free trial' button with a download icon, followed by a 'Download Preview' link. At the top right, there are links for 'Compare editions >' and 'How to install offline >'.

Community	Professional	Enterprise
Powerful IDE, free for students, open-source contributors, and individuals	Professional IDE best suited to small teams	Scalable, end-to-end solution for teams of any size
<b>Free download</b> ↓	<b>Free trial</b> ↓	<b>Free trial</b> ↓
<a href="#">Download Preview</a> ↓	<a href="#">Download Preview</a> ↓	<a href="#">Download Preview</a> ↓



# Installing Visual Studio in Windows (2)

- ❑ When prompted by the **Visual Studio installer**, select **ASP.NET and web development** in the **Web & Cloud** section as shown in the figure below.



# Installing Visual Studio in Windows (3)

- ❑ To access **Oracle Database** from within a **Visual Studio** project, you also need to download and install **Oracle Data Access Components (ODAC)** from <https://www.oracle.com/database/technologies/dotnet-odacdev-downloads.html>


- Download **ODAC 18.3** as highlighted in the figure below.


(You will be required to login using an Oracle account to download. The account is free to create.)


### ODAC Developer Downloads - Oracle Universal Installer

ODAC with Oracle Developer Tools for Visual Studio

 ODAC 18.3 ( 561,909,827 bytes)

 ODAC 12.2.0.1 ( 431,571,252 bytes)

 ODAC 12.1.0.2.4 (319,813,071 bytes)

 ODAC 11.2.0.3.20 (234,498,458 bytes)

Experienced Oracle .NET developers may want to use ODAC with Oracle Developer Tools for Visual Studio (Oracle Universal Installer). This version allows you to develop with managed and unmanaged ODP.NET, plus install on multiple Visual Studio versions from the same download.

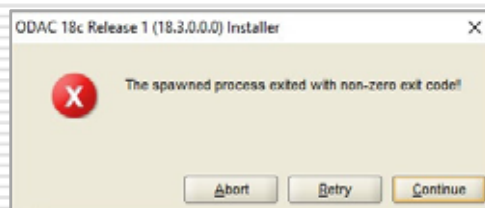
Installation Instructions and Setup:

- ODAC 18.3
- ODAC 12.2
- ODAC 12.1
- ODAC 11.2



# Installing Visual Studio in Windows (4)

- ❑ Start the **ODAC 18.3 Installer**, select the **Next >** button in each step and, when prompted, complete the **DB Connection Configuration** dialog exactly as shown in the figure.
- ❑ Select the **Continue** button at the dialog shown below.



ODAC 18c Release 1 (18.3.0.0.0) Installer - Step 6 of 10

**DB Connection Configuration**

**18<sup>c</sup> ORACLE<sup>®</sup> Database**

Select Product Languages  
Oracle Home User Selection  
Specify Installation Location  
Available Product Components  
Oracle Developer Tools for Visual Studio  
**DB Connection Configuration**  
Perform Prerequisite Checks  
Summary  
Install Product  
Finish

In order to be able to connect to an Oracle Database, a connection alias should be created within C:\app\client1\product\18.0.0\client\_1\Network\Admin\TNSNAMES.ORA.

This dialog will assist you in creating this TNSNAMES.ORA file.

Please enter your database connection information in the fields below. If any field is left blank, the TNSNAMES.ORA file will not be created. Most databases use port 1521. The Service Name for Oracle Database Express Edition defaults to "XE".

Connection Alias (eg. MyDB)	comp3311.cse.ust.hk
Port Number	1521
Database Host Name	dbsvr1.cse.ust.hk
Database Service Name (eg. ORCL)	comp3311.cse.ust.hk

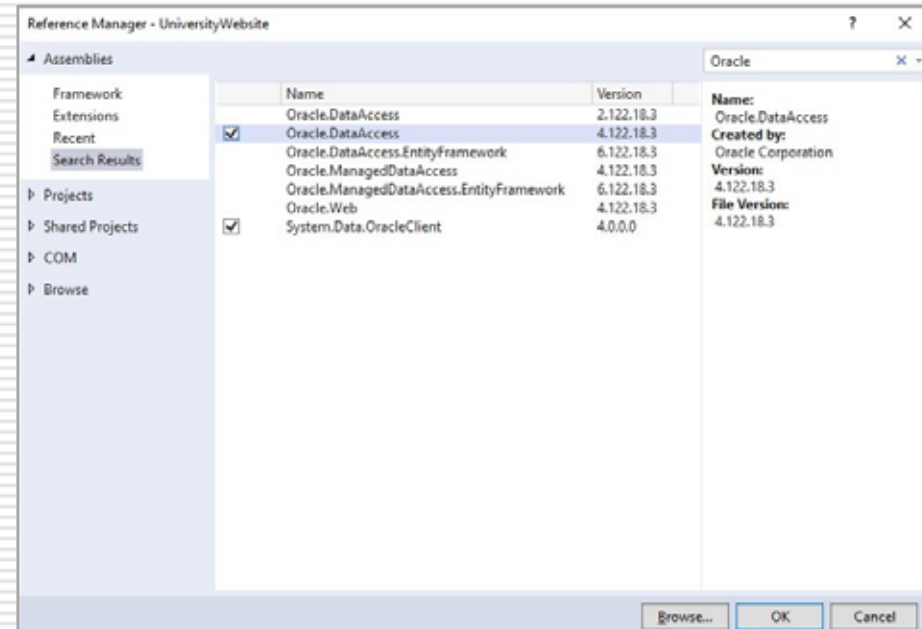
< Back **Next >** Install Cancel

Help

# Installing Visual Studio in Windows (5)

- ❑ Start **Visual Studio** and add a reference to the **Oracle Data Access Components** as follows.

- Right-click on the **References** node in the **Solution Explorer**.
- Select **Add reference...** from the popup menu.
- Search for **Oracle**.
- Select the highest version of **Oracle.DataAccess** as shown in the figure.
- select the **OK** button.



- ❑ The **Oracle Database** server can only be accessed within the HKUST network. To access it from outside the HKUST network, you need to use the UST VPN.

<http://itsc.ust.hk/apps/vpn/>