



# Undergraduate Student Handbook 2013-14

## Department of Computer Science

### Reading this handbook

Some important changes to regulations have taken place since summer 2012. This handbook is mainly for students who entered Part 1 from 2012 onwards and Part 2 from 2013 onwards.

Other students should consult the handbooks they were given when they joined the University and/or <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/>

*Current copies of this handbook can be found at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/>*

*Many of the resources pointed to in this document can be found at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/>*

*For final authority on any of the issues discussed in this handbook, consult the academic regulations on the web <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/> and/or email the undergraduate academic office [ugfstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:ugfstaff@aber.ac.uk)*

**Undergraduate Student Handbook 2013-2014: Department of Computer Science**  
Edited by Lynda Thomas

Date: August 1, 2013  
Version: 13.0

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## Preface

This handbook is intended for all students taking modules in the Department of Computer Science. It has been prepared to help you understand how the teaching in the department is organised and, in accordance with the requirements of the University, to bring relevant rules and regulations to your attention.

It is structured as two parts. *General Information*, which is relevant to all students, and a series of *Appendices* that describe assessment criteria for different kinds of assessments.

Students following the Diploma/MSc in Computer Science in Aberystwyth should receive and read the handbook for that scheme.

If you are following degrees with the Department, note that if you are taking modules offered by other departments they may organise their teaching differently and may have different rules about, for example, handing in assignments. Make sure you know what their rules and conventions are.

The contents of this booklet are available on the department's web pages  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook>

A detailed description of every module offered at Aberystwyth is available on the University's web  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/modules>.

You should ensure that you read the descriptions of all the modules that you take.

Descriptions of schemes offered at Aberystwyth are available on the University's web  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/schemes>.

The Department's programme specifications are at  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/prog-specs/CompSci.shtml>

Note that this material is in addition to:

- Academic regulations on the web <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/>
- Course notes or handouts provided by the lecturers (accessible directly from the Department's web site or Blackboard.)

# 1. Communication with Students

In the department we use **electronic mail** as the first means of communication with our students. **You should therefore log into the system every day and read your e-mail.** If you make any arrangements (such as forwarding), which mean that your e-mail service may become unreliable, that is not an excuse for failure to respond.

In certain cases messages for students will be left in the **pigeon holes** at the bottom of the stairs outside room B53. Messages for students of other departments will be sent to their department. Letters may also be posted to your local or home address. **Important information, such as exam results and advice letters are sent to your 'exam' address, so you must inform the University of changes. You can do this by visiting your on-line personal file <https://studentrecord.aber.ac.uk/en/login.php>**

You should look regularly at the information displayed on the **notice-boards** around the department on the ground floor corridor. They are used to display details of practical groups, assignment results, examination timetables, vacancies for industrial placements, *etc.*

# 2. Changes of Registration

It is very important that you are registered for the correct degree scheme and for the correct modules. The lecture timetable, examination timetable and monitoring of attendance all use information collected by the Academic Office about which modules each student is taking.

If you want to change the modules you are taking, you must speak to one of the Departmental advising team (see Section 10) and fill in a Change of Registration Form. Usually the main office has these available, or you should be able to find one on your student record page, or follow the link for 'Change of Registration Form' at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/registration/changing/>

You will need to obtain a signature from the department whose module you are leaving, and from the department whose module you are moving to, and from the Department Advisor (or his/her deputy) who will help you check that your choice is consistent with your degree scheme. Students taking electives in Computer Science should seek advice from their own department.

There is a similar procedure if you want to change the degree scheme for which you are registered. It should be done by approaching an advisor from the department responsible for the scheme you want to change to. You must then fill in a Change of Registration form and get it signed by both departments. It is difficult after the first few weeks to change department, but in the Department of Computer Science we try to maintain flexibility and allow students to change their scheme within the department. The rules for changing schemes and for being allowed to progress on your current scheme within the department are in Section 6.

**It is your responsibility to liaise with your funding body/bodies. Changes of schemes almost always have implications for funding. This can be a simple process if it is done at the correct time.**

## 3. Teaching Methods

Students should note that each 10 credits should correspond to approximately 100 hours of effort. This includes lectures, tutorials, practicals, assignments and outside study and review.

### 3.1. Formal lectures

Lectures are used to describe and explain the topics covered by the course. Lecturers will frequently use visual aids to illustrate their lectures and copies of the displayed material, or other handouts, may be made available on the web – often on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.aber.ac.uk>) or in the Department's web space (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/CourseNotes/current>) At best, the displayed material is only an outline of the lecture content and you are *strongly* advised to make your own detailed notes to supplement any material that is made available. You should follow up on each lecture by reading your notes, reading relevant sections of appropriate textbooks, and then amplifying your notes. If there are still points that you don't understand, you should make a note of them, for discussion in workshops, or with the lecturer concerned. **It is not possible to obtain high marks simply by reading lecture handouts or slides.**

### 3.2. Tutorials

The aim of the first year tutorials, which are associated with the modules CS18010 or CC18010, is to promote an understanding of the course you are studying as a whole, that is, to bring together the material studied in the individual modules. These tutorials are sometimes based on articles from the professional and academic literature. Tutorials are also intended to provide the opportunity to develop personal skills that will help you in your studies and in getting a job.

Tutorials in other years are associated with specific modules (CS22120, CS39440, CHM5640, etc.) but also still serve the purpose of a place where you can ask your tutor for advice with any of your modules.

Your personal tutor is the person leading your tutorial, unless you are told otherwise.

### 3.3. Workshops

Workshops may be associated with individual modules, and provide an opportunity for students to seek clarification on aspects of their work. In most cases exercises will be set by the lecturer(s) to provide a focus. The purpose of a workshop is to reinforce what has been taught in lectures.

### 3.4. Practical Work and Advisory

Most of the early Part I modules have specific practical classes, to which students are assigned. Apart from this, practicals are normally not timetabled for individual modules, except for those with special equipment or other requirements. You will be informed of such an exception in the lectures associated with the module.

The advisory service is offered in B57 and C56 through the skilled demonstrators on duty. Students are encouraged to use this facility as the primary mechanism for solving both practical and technical problems that they cannot solve alone. In addition to supporting practical work, the demonstrators on duty will also assist with any queries from the course as a whole, including revision for examinations. The skills of the demonstrators on duty are clearly advertised and advisors can also be reached at [cs-advisory@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cs-advisory@aber.ac.uk)

Students who leave their work to the last minute are likely to find a shortage of machines and/or skills. Please plan your work carefully.

### 3.5. Seminars and Invited Talks

We invite speakers from other research institutions and from the business community to give talks on their field. Attendance at such talks is not compulsory, but they can provide an interesting background to your studies, or a deeper insight into a particular field. You should note that a knowledge of relevant material presented in seminars and invited talks may help you to answer examination questions well in level 3 and M modules.

## 4. Attendance

Studying at University is a full-time job. You are expected to work on average 40 hours a week, and sometimes more. Lectures, practicals, workshops etc. are compulsory, and attending them is why you are here.

### 4.1. Timetables

You should receive an individual timetable weekly on-line. **It may not include all your commitments – please pay attention to emails and other announcements about this.**

In addition, the timetable for all departmental lectures is posted on the ground floor in the department at the start of each semester. It is sometimes necessary to make changes to the timetable and any changes will be posted on the relevant notice board. Because of the range of subjects that students study along with Computer Science, arranging the timetable to avoid clashes with other subjects is difficult. Students who find that they have a clash should immediately inform the timetable officer in the department who will try to resolve it.

### 4.2. Attendance Requirements

Attendance at lectures, tutorials, practicals and workshops is **compulsory**, as is attendance at meetings with your final year project supervisor and at meetings in connection with your group project. Tutorials will be arranged at the start of the module in such a way as to try to take account of students' other academic commitments.

You should note that the attendance requirements apply to the whole of the teaching period in each semester, as well as to examination periods. In particular, students from overseas should note that difficulties in obtaining travel reservations are not an acceptable excuse for missing classes. If you have a good reason for being unable to attend classes, you should inform the department *in advance*.

It is our experience that students who miss a significant number of their lectures fail. Copying someone else's lecture notes or obtaining a copy of the slides (if any) is a very poor substitute for attending a lecture and absorbing its content. It is difficult to recover lost ground because lectures build upon one another.

If illness prevents you from attending classes for more than a week, University regulations require you to present a medical certificate. Copies of this should be submitted to the department office along with a Special Circumstances form – please read the advice.

If, without good reason, you regularly miss lectures or other compulsory classes, or repeatedly fail to hand in assessed work, the department will initiate disciplinary action, in accordance with the Academic Regulation on Academic Progress. This disciplinary process can lead to your being excluded from the University:

- If your overall attendance is less than 90%, then you will normally be required to meet with your year coordinator.
- If no improvement is seen then you will normally be sent to see the Head of Department
- If attendance still fails to improve we will start proceedings to exclude you from University.

**Students with unjustified absences may be permanently excluded.**

### 4.3. Absence from Examinations

**If, without good reason, you fail to attend an examination** for which you are registered, penalties apply.

**If you have good reason for missing an examination**, it is essential that you supply the Department Examination Board (through the department office) with documentary evidence of the reason. This should be done before the examination if at all possible. If your absence from the examination is condoned, you will be allowed to take the examination at the next opportunity. The only reasons for missing examinations that are normally condoned are your own illness or the death of, or sudden serious illness or injury to, a close relative. Examining Boards are required to take into account any medical or personal problems that may have affected a student's performance during the course or in the examination. Again, this can only be done if the appropriate evidence is supplied, with a **Special Circumstances form**, to the Examining Board before its meeting.

**If you are taken ill or suffer an accident** during, or before, the examination, you may be faced with the choice of taking an examination in circumstances in which you cannot do as well as normal or of not taking the examination at that time. If this is the case you should consult a member of staff – ideally your tutor, or an examination officer (see Section 10).

**In any event, if you miss an examination, get in touch with [cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk)**

## 5. Practical Work

**You will be formally assessed by a variety of means during and at the end of each module.**

The precise form of assessment will vary according to the nature of the module, and are explained to you in detail at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/>

If in any doubt, ask your module coordinator, who will be happy to clarify anything you are unsure about.

It's important to note that at University, assessment is not only about demonstrating the range and depth of your knowledge. It is also an essential part of the learning process that actively helps you develop and enhance your skills in addressing problems, formulating arguments and communicating often complex ideas clearly and persuasively. These skills are a vital part of your degree programme, and are in great demand in all areas of the world of work.

The feedback you obtain from the markers on your assessed work will help you improve these skills as you progress through your degree programme. **Staff aim to return feedback within 3 working weeks.**

Assessment criteria may be found in the web Appendices to this handbook at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/Dept/Teaching/Handbook/>

### 5.1. Assignments and Projects

'Project' is a term reserved for larger pieces of work, specifically: the group project undertaken in the second year; the final year projects for undergraduates; and the MSc project typically undertaken during the summer following the taught part of that scheme.

'Assignments' are smaller pieces of work.

Assignments and projects are a very important part of many modules offered by the Department. They contribute to your learning and they provide some element of assessment.

The description of each individual module tells you exactly what proportion of the assessment comes from coursework. It is important to realise that, if you don't submit the coursework, you will get no marks for it; this will have a serious effect on your mark for that module as a whole. It is much better to hand in coursework that is incomplete than to hand in nothing at all.

Failure to submit coursework, just like missing an examination, may be regarded as grounds for reporting your progress as unsatisfactory, in accordance with the academic regulations on academic progress.

### 5.2. Worksheets

Worksheets are given primarily as learning and self assessment exercises. They may play a small part in module assessment. (If so, this will be explained in the module description).

There may be a mechanism for handing in completed worksheets or for having them "signed off" by demonstrators. Such mechanisms are designed to provide feedback to you on your progress and understanding and to provide encouragement to stay abreast of material.

The Department is anxious to strike an appropriate balance between assessed and un-assessed practical work. It is most important that you take seriously exercises such as worksheets, where you have an opportunity to develop skills and understanding without the pressures and restrictions of assessment. The Department takes a dim view of the attitude that only assessed work is worth doing.

### 5.3. Helping one another in coursework

You are encouraged to help one another in practicals (this does not mean doing the work for someone else), but assignments and projects are assessed on the basis that they are your own work. The department provides tutorials, workshops, practical classes, and an advisory desk to help you, in addition to members of staff. You can get help simply by asking, and will lose no marks by doing so. Conscientious students who care enough about their work to seek help often create a more favourable impression than those who stumble on in partial understanding.

We encourage students to discuss problems and ideas, but there is an important difference between students helping each other to learn and helping each other to complete their work. If you do collaborate with someone on a piece of work, it is very important that all parties involved clearly indicate in the work submitted the extent of the collaboration.

It is regrettable that some students feel the need to copy work and attempt to pass it off as their own. Such attempts are quite easy to spot, and the Department and the University take a very serious attitude to such practices (see Section 5.8).

## 5.5. Procedure for handing in coursework

Some 3,000 pieces of assessed work are handed into the department every year. This causes us considerable problems of organisation. We have also suffered from time to time from students claiming fraudulently to have handed in work when they have not done so. For both of these reasons we have had to institute strict, formal procedures for handing in coursework. See also <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/elearning/>

One of the following procedures for submission is normally used.

1. Most modules require work to be submitted via Blackboard (<http://blackboard.aber.ac.uk>). Note that Blackboard is fussy about what format your work is submitted, if you have a lot of files put them in a .zip file (not .rar, etc).
2. For some assignments you will be told to hand your work in using the 'post box' system, which is located in the Reception Area. Every piece of printed coursework **MUST** have a completed departmental cover sheet showing information about the coursework, your student reference number, name and signature. Sheets are available at:  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/intranet/staff-students-internal/teaching/resources.php>  
The secretaries use this information to check for missing submissions. If the coursework is to be marked anonymously (see below) they will fold down the corner of the cover sheet to hide your name and signature. You **MUST NOT** fold down the corner yourselves.
3. For major pieces of work you may be asked to hand work in at reception during a specified period and you will be given a receipt that will show the number of documents handed in. If you have more than one document you should put all pieces of work in a folder and compile and hand in a list of the separate documents.

If there is a good reason why you cannot hand in your work during the specified time then try to find a friend to hand it in for you. Failing this, arrange with the module coordinator, or your tutor, to hand it in to them early and obtain a receipt.

The University require us, as far as possible, to mark assessed coursework and examinations anonymously. Of course, there are some things that cannot be marked anonymously so there are exemptions from the **anonymous marking requirement** that have been agreed by the University.

1. Coursework associated with tutorial modules, since much of the assessment in tutorial modules is done by the tutor this cannot be anonymised.
2. Coursework involving computer code, since we insist that students submitting computer code identify the author of each code module.
3. Group projects, since adjustments may be needed to the marks of individual students based on information provided by the supervising member of staff or by the members of the group.
4. Modules involving presentations, clearly!
5. Project-based modules, where students submit a properly bound project report or dissertation.

## 5.6. Late Hand-ins

We attach great importance to handing coursework in on time; if it is handed in late, without prior permission (which is rarely given), **you will get no marks for it**. The ability to meet deadlines is something which employers value very highly; several employers have congratulated us on the fact that our graduates are better at meeting deadlines than those from many other CS departments.

If you feel you have a very good reason for handing a piece of assessed coursework in late, you must seek the permission of the **year coordinator** (see Section 10), before the deadline.

If an extension is granted, you should ask for confirmation. In almost all cases, however, you will be told to hand the work in in an incomplete state by the appointed deadline, with a note explaining the circumstances that made it impossible for you to complete it. If the reasons are medical, your note should refer to any special circumstances you may have submitted. For a major piece of work the Department may offer an extension after consultation and in the best interests of the student.

If you miss the deadline for handing in an assignment then you should still submit it, but along with the Declaration of Originality, you should attach a completed "Late Assignment Form" explaining why the assignment is handed in late. If this is soon after the deadline, hand in the assignment and form to the secretary dealing with the assignment submission. Failing that, hand them in to the module coordinator. Blank Late Assignment Forms are available from Computer Science reception or <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dcswww/intranet/staff-students-internal/teaching/resources.php>

If the excuse for handing in late is accepted then the work will be marked as normal. By handing in the assignment you will also receive feedback on the work.

## 5.7. Assignment and Project Classification

Unless otherwise stated, projects, assignments and worksheets will be graded according to one of the schemes shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Clearly, the fine grained scheme will not be appropriate for some small pieces of work. You will be told which scheme has been used.

**Table 1: Coarse Grained Grades**

	Percentage
A	70 - 100
B	60 - 69

Grade	Percentage
C	50 - 59
D	40 - 49

Grade	Percentage
E	35 - 39
F	0 - 34

**Table 2. Fine grained grades**

	Percentage
A++	96 - 100
A+	90 - 95
A	80 - 89
A-	70 - 79
B+	67 - 69
B	64 - 66
B-	60 - 63

Grade	Percentage
C+	57 - 59
C	54 - 56
C-	50 - 53
D+	47 - 49
D	44 - 46
D-	40 - 43

Grade	Percentage
E	35 - 39
F+	31 - 34
F	16 - 30
F-	0 - 15
<b>O</b>	<b>no assessment recorded</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>assessment incomplete for valid reasons</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>grade cancelled – assessment offence</b>

## 5.8. Plagiarism and Unfair Practice

Unfair Practice includes more than just plagiarism. We have been asked to include a link to the **University Statement on Plagiarism** available with other information about rules governing examinations and assessment: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/unfair-practice/>

As you see, it is important to indicate clearly in your own work where you have included the work of others. In Computer Science this could include reuse of designs and programs as well as copying or quoting text. Make sure you understand how to acknowledge the work of others in all your submissions. Ignorance of how to do this is not a valid defense.

The following simple guidelines are intended to help you avoid straying from legitimate and desirable co-operation into the area of plagiarism:

- append a bibliography to your work listing all the sources you have used, including electronic;
- surround all direct quotations with inverted commas, and cite the precise source (including page numbers, or the URL and the date you accessed it if the source is on the Web) either in a footnote or in parentheses directly after the quotation;
- use quotations sparingly and make sure that the bulk of the work is in your own words;
- even if you do not use direct quotations, important ideas should still be credited;
- remember that it is your own input that gives a piece of work merit. Whatever sources you have used, the structure and presentation of the argument should be your own. Including someone else's work in your own is readily detectable because the style will be different.

Keep a sense of proportion, and exercise common sense and judgement. For example, it is not necessary to attribute to a source, statements which have passed into the public domain and become commonplace. If in doubt, make sure that you properly quote and cite material in order to avoid any suspicion that you are trying to cheat, and ask for advice if you are not sure.

## 5.9. General

Methods of assessment for individual modules are described in the module description. Individual lecturers are happy to give some feedback to students on coursework. Personal tutors are able to discuss general examination performance with the intention of providing feedback on technique.

Assessment criteria are provided in appendices to this handbook (See “*Assessment Criteria*”). Specific criteria may be handed out with the assessment.

You have the right to be assessed through the medium of Welsh. Please inform the department as early as possible so that we can arrange it. If you wish to sit examinations in Welsh, notify Academic office.

## 6. Assessment and Progression

These are the new rules for progression– so please use this as your guide – not other students.

Complete details may be found at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/modular-degrees/> and <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/pdfmedia/en/Exam-Handbook-E-2012-13.pdf>

### 6.1 Progress

The first year of our schemes is formally known as Part I. The rest of the years comprise Part 2.

Students must complete Part 1 before they begin Part 2, and must be in a position to obtain a degree before they may enter the final, or subsequent, year.

Resits are discussed in Section 6.3.

#### 6.1.1 Progression from Part I to Part 2

To progress from Part 1 to Part 2 you must pass 100 of 120 credits. You may be given an opportunity to resit during the summer (the supplementary period).

Students who have passed Part I may be advised to transfer to another scheme within the department if they show some area of weakness. This is best done at the end of year 1 but may be done later under some circumstances.

#### 6.1.2. Gaining a degree and progression from Year 2 including onto an Industrial Year

In order to obtain a degree students may fail no more than 20 credits in Part 2.

For BSc students this means they must pass 220 of 240 credits. This means that students who fail more than 20 credits in year 2 cannot progress without resitting in some way, normally in the summer.

Students who fail modules in year 2 or fail to gain a degree in the final year normally have resit opportunities. See Section 6.3.

**BCS accreditation will be given to honours students who pass the project (CS39440 or CC39440) at the FIRST attempt.**

#### 6.1.3. Degrees with a year in Industry

If a student fails their sandwich placement, then they must change scheme to one for which they have appropriate core modules and which does not require a sandwich placement.

#### 6.1.4. MEng Progression rules

To progress to Part 2 of MEng in Software Engineering (G601) students are expected to achieve an average of at least 60% in first year Computer Science modules.

To progress from Year 2, an MEng student must achieve an overall mark of at least 55%. Students who achieve this mark but have poor performance in some areas (e.g., a bad mark in CS21120) may be advised to change from MEng to BEng or BSc.

**Students on other schemes with the right module choices may normally transfer to MEng**, after year 1 if they have obtained a 70% average in their Computer Science modules; and after year 2 if they have obtained a 60% average in their Computer Science modules.

Students may leave the MEng programme at the end of year 4 and take a BEng degree if they are qualified. However, students wishing to do this must formally change scheme and let the academic office know in good time for graduation.

## 6.2 Degree Classification

For general information on class of degree etc. see:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/exam-assess/conventions/>

Degrees are classified as I – called a ‘first’, II(1), II(2), III and Pass.

All marks in Part 2 count towards your degree, but results are calculated using an algorithm called ‘the Cascade’ which puts more emphasis on higher level modules than on lower level modules.

A ‘cascade calculator’ will appear on your Student Record in the last semester of your studies. The nature of the cascade means that this would have little validity until that point, but we present the calculations here for illustration.

Module marks are placed in bands:

<b>Band 3</b>	Best 80 level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
<b>Band 2</b>	Next best 80 level 3 and level 2 credits, with a weighting of 2 (Note that level 2 modules cannot go in a higher band than level 3 modules)
<b>Band 1</b>	Remainder of level 3, 2 and 1 credits, with a weighting of 1

### 6.2.1 An Example

Suppose you are in G400 and received marks on your level 3 modules of:  
70,70,70,70,70,70,70,70,60,60,60,60  
(perhaps you received 70 on your CS39440 project, in which case we have counted it 4 times)

On your level 2 modules you received marks of:  
60,60,60,60,50,50,50,50,50,50,50,50

Then you would calculate your final mark as:

$$\frac{((70*80) * 3 + (60*80)*2 + (50*80)*1)}{(80*3+80*2+80*1)}$$

Band 1 (top 80 level 3s)      Band 2 (bottom 40 level 3s +top 40 level 2s)      Band 3 (bottom 80 level 2s)      to obtain weighted avg

Your final average would be 63% which is a II(1)

### 6.2.2 Three year + 1 schemes

Some degree schemes include an obligatory, assessed year in industry. This is called a sandwich year. Degree classification for schemes which include a sandwich year involve a variant of the standard method - marks are arranged in the standard cascade but an additional *Band S* comprising 120 credits from the sandwich year assessment is weighted at 0.25. To summarise:

- Band 3** Best 80 level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
- Band 2** Next best 80 level 3 and 2 credits, with a weighting of 2
- Band 1** Remainder of level 3, 2 and 1 credits, with a weighting of 1
- Band S** 120 credits with a weighting of 0.25.

For example, suppose that you are a G401 student with the module marks as in the example above and an Industrial Year mark of 75%. Then your overall mark would be:

$$(70*80*3 + 60*80*2 + 50*80*1 + 75*120*0.25) / (80*3 + 80*2 + 80*1 + 120*0.25) = 64\%$$

As a rule of thumb, you can think of your industrial year as being 'worth' one good level 3 module.

### 6.2.3 Four year + 1 schemes (MEng)

For schemes involving 4 taught years plus a sandwich year, marks are arranged in a 4-band cascade (each band containing 90 credits) with a *Band S* comprising 120 credits from the sandwich year assessment weighted at 0.25. To summarise:

- Band 4** Best 90 level M credits, with a weighting of 4
- Band 3** Next best 90 level M and level 3 credits, with a weighting of 3
- Band 2** Next best 90 level 3 and 2 credits, with a weighting of 2
- Band 1** Remainder of level 3, 2 and level 1 credits, with a weighting of 1
- Band S** 120 credits with a weighting of 0.25

For example, suppose that you are a G601 student with level M module marks of:

75, 75, 75, 75, 75, 75, 75, 75, 70, 70, 70

level 3 module marks of: 70, 70, 70, 70, 70, 70, 65, 65, 65, 65, 65, 65

level 2 module marks of: 65, 65, 65, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60

and an Industrial year mark of 80%. Then your overall mark would be:

$$(75*90*4 + 70*90*3 + 65*90*2 + 60*90*1 + 80*120*0.25) / (90*4 + 90*3 + 90*2 + 90*1 + 120*0.25) = 70\%$$

## 6.3. Supplementary and Resit Examination Policy

The following provides a very simplified view of this topic. Students should consult the University's policies, which may be found at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/modular-degrees/>

There are several flags that may accompany a failed mark. The main ones are

- 'F' failed – may be resat for a maximum of 40%
- 'H' may be resat for full marks – there may be no fee charged **if completed during the summer or externally** – check with the fees office.

**When results are released and if you have failed a module, the department will send you a letter or email containing our advice to help you progress (see Section 6.1). If you do not get such a letter within a few days of your results please get in touch (and make sure that your contact addresses are up to date).**

**If you are in any doubt about what you need to do to retake an assessment, or progress with your degree, you should consult: [cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk)**

### 6.3.1. Supplementary resits

Resits may take place over the summer (supplementary) or in the following academic year. Students are not allowed to complete more than 60 credits of supplementary resits. Students with more than 60 credits of fail must resit during the following academic year.

Part 1 students resitting over the summer are normally expected to resit all assessments. Part 2 students are normally expected to resit assessments by “resitting failed examination and/or resubmission of failed/non-submitted coursework components or ones of equivalent value.” Usually that means that they need only resit the failed pieces of assessment. The department will tell you of exceptions.

### 6.3.2. Resits during the academic year

Resits during the academic year may be ‘**external**’ meaning students do the assessments only, while living anywhere; or ‘**internal**’ meaning they attend lectures etc. in the normal way. Students who resit internally can sometimes substitute modules and change degree schemes.

It is possible, for students in year 3 to put off resits, and hence resit up to 20 credits of year 2 modules while doing their third year. Such students must be very careful not to let ‘fixing year 2’ affect year 3.

### 6.3.3. ‘H’ resits

University regulations do not allow you to retake the examination for a module that you have passed. It may therefore be better to postpone taking the examination, but you should **always discuss this with the department first**. Where appropriate, special examining arrangements can be made, such as extra time or separate seating, to alleviate the effects of medical problems.

In Part I, it is usually better to take the examination if at all possible. Part I marks do not contribute to your final degree result, so nothing is lost by trying the examination, even if you do badly. If, however, you decide not to take the examination, you will need to take it again in the August/September examination period, which may very well be inconvenient for you.

All Part 2 marks contribute to your final degree classification. The Examining Board will try to make allowance for your illness in one of three ways:

- Recommending an H resit (ie. for full marks) that may be taken in the summer, or
- By returning ‘39H’ which allows you to resit for full marks, even if you have passed with a low mark due to your illness. The department will contact you before recommending this mark, or
- By carrying forward the circumstances to be considered at your final exam board. These will then be considered if you are borderline between two classes of degree.

## 6.4. Prizes

The Glyn Emery Prize, named in honour of the founder and first head of the Computer Science Department, is awarded every year to the best first year computing student. The prize is £100.

The group that produces the best group project in the second year is awarded a prize.

A British Computer Society (BCS) prize of £150 plus a year's free BCS membership will be offered for the best project by a student in CS39440 or CC39440.

The PortalTech Bursary of £1000 is awarded to a final year MEng student for the best performance during their penultimate year.

The Best Progress prize of £50 is awarded to a student at graduation.

A number of other bodies, such as the BCS and Microsoft, offer prizes for student projects. Students have done well in these competitions in the past. Notices about the prizes will be displayed in the department and information about them circulated by e-mail.

## 7. Computer Resources

The department believes that the computing facilities available to our students are more than sufficient. Furthermore, the University Information Services facilities, which are closely integrated with those of the department, are available to all students. Even so, availability is not unlimited and there may be occasions when difficulties arise. Students are asked to be understanding in such cases and to comply with any requests the department may make over the use of resources. The Computer Science Department takes no responsibility for the correct functioning of any equipment or software, nor for the security or integrity of any stored program or data except as required by the Data Protection Act.

**Do not leave assignments until the last minute. Computer problems are not an excuse for handing in an assignment late.**

### 7.1. Use of Personal Computers

If you own a personal computer, you will enjoy considerable advantages of flexibility and convenience. You must, however, be careful not to let these advantages turn into a disadvantage.

After the first year, some of the practical work set by the department requires, explicitly or implicitly, the use of UNIX; unless you become thoroughly familiar with UNIX, you may have difficulty with the practical work. If you are sensible, you can gain a lot of advantage by becoming familiar with UNIX. Not only will this make you attractive to potential employers, but it will also give you a deeper understanding of a lot of the issues in software engineering.

A second danger that can arise from using your own computer is that you become isolated. You can learn a lot from working in the company of other students and discussing your work with them. If you always sit in your room working at your PC, you will lose the opportunity for doing this.

Finally, departmental facilities are maintained and backed up by support staff. If you depend on your own private machine, your work may suffer if it malfunctions. **It is your responsibility to make sure that you take adequate precautions to back up your important work.**

**You may use a laptop in lectures subject to the department's policy:**

Students can find it very helpful to be able to use laptops during lectures. Some students take lecture notes directly on their laptops, and laptops can be used to find information from the Internet in support of the lecture. However, using a laptop can be very distracting for the other students who are sitting near or behind the laptop user, and for the member of staff giving the lecture. Therefore, it is not acceptable to use a laptop for anything not directly in support of the lecture. Please be considerate when using a laptop in lectures and do not disturb others.

### 7.2. Printing

Information Services provides printers for students to use. You will find that, to print all the teaching materials and project and assignment work you want, you will need to budget a substantial amount for printing, especially at certain times in the semester. When you are issued with an assignment make sure you know what is to be handed in and, if that includes printed copies, in what quality.

For some assignments, you may find it cheaper to learn how to use the various facilities available for fitting more than one document page on a single side of paper ('multipaging').

**If there is a queue in B23 look at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/computers/rooms/> to find other printers. A queue at the last minute is NOT an excuse for late hand-in.**

### 7.3. Regulations for the Use of Equipment

All students are required to abide by the rules laid out by Information Services at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/contents/student/regulations/regulations-5/>

In addition, students are expected to abide by such further conditions concerning the use of the resources as the Department may impose.

If, in the opinion of the Head of the Computer Science Department, a user's use of the resources contravenes any University rules, or is in breach of any rules promulgated by the Department, access to the resources may be summarily withdrawn from that user.

## 8. Supporting Students

See under Section 10 for the list of staff currently responsible for each major role mentioned below.

### 8.1. Student Support

Located in buildings both on Penglais Campus and opposite the campus on Penglais Hill, Student Support provides a range of services to support your academic success.

For information and full details of the range of support services available please visit the Student Support web pages <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support>

### 8.2. PDP

The university operates a Personal Development Planning (PDP) scheme

[http://careers.aber.ac.uk/cas\\_web/interface/view\\_content.php?structure\\_id=905](http://careers.aber.ac.uk/cas_web/interface/view_content.php?structure_id=905). This is a tool that helps you create the best possibilities for further study and/or your future career.

### 8.3 Arranging to see a member of staff

Most members of staff in the department do not restrict the times they are available to see students to a few hours a week, but neither can they be available all the time. If you need to speak to a member of staff, the best way to arrange an appointment is to e-mail them a day or two in advance suggesting a few times which would be convenient for you. Members of staff will typically advertise, on their office door, times when they are available. Computer Science Reception will normally be able to tell you if a member of staff is expected to be away for more than a day. Do not expect an answer during unsocial hours.

### 8.4. Personal Tutors

Each student taking a degree involving the Department of Computer Science is assigned a member of staff as a personal tutor. Part I students have group tutorials. In Part 2 you normally have a project module with small groups led by your tutor. The main role of the personal tutor is to help with non-academic problems, such as difficulties arising through illness, personal problems, financial worries, accommodation problems, difficulty with organising academic work etc. Such problems often require specialised help and your personal tutor will be able to put you in touch with specialised counsellors.

There may be occasions on which you would prefer to deal with someone other than your personal tutor. If this happens, you should feel free to approach any member of staff.

Students with disabilities should make these known to the Disabilities Officer.

If you are unhappy with your personal tutor you should contact the Director of Teaching.

### 8.5. Mature Students' Tutor

We welcome the enthusiasm and commitment that mature students bring to the Department, but are aware of the particular problems they may face in returning to education. Apart from their personal tutors, mature students may wish to speak to the Mature Students' Tutor.

### 8.6. Overseas Students' Tutor

The Overseas Students' Tutor is available to help any student not normally resident in the United Kingdom with any problems relating to the difficulties encountered when living and studying in a foreign country.

### 8.7. Welsh Students' Tutor / Tiwtor Cymraeg

Os hoffech chi gael tiwtorial trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, mae angen i chi gysylltu â Wayne Aubrey ([waa2@aber.ac.uk](mailto:waa2@aber.ac.uk)). Bydd y tiwtor yn cynnal un tiwtorial yr wythnos drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg I fyfyrwyr y flwyddyn gyntaf. Gellir addasu'r tiwtorial i gwrdd â gofynion y myfyrwyr, ac wrth drafod pynciau technegol, gellir ei gynnal yn ddwyieithog. Yn Rhan 2 bydd myfyrwyr yn cael tiwtor personol sy'n medru'r Gymraeg.

### 8.8. Year and Course Coordinators

There is a year coordinator for level one modules, level two modules, the industrial year, level three modules, for the Diploma/MSc courses and for fourth year MEng students. They coordinate teaching and administration within their area of responsibility. The year coordinators are listed at the end of this booklet.

### 8.9. Industrial and Sandwich Years

Undergraduate students are strongly encouraged to spend a year with an appropriate industrial company and we help students find suitable places. This year comes between the second and the third (taught) years of the course. Students spend the year with companies that vary from small software houses to multi-national engineering and manufacturing companies, in some cases abroad.

Applications for industrial year placement are normally made early in the second year of the undergraduate course, although late applications can sometimes be accommodated.

Such a year is compulsory for some schemes, it is then known as a *Sandwich Year*. Most schemes have a version with, and a version without, a Sandwich Year.

Each student on a year out is allocated to a member of staff of the department. Sandwich year students will normally be visited once or twice during the placement. We do our best to visit optional industrial year (sometimes called YES placement) students.

## 8.10. Study Abroad

The university maintains links with other universities throughout the world. Detail may be found at the study abroad web site (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/international/study-abroad/>). Students who wish to take up this opportunity normally do so for their second year. The application process is in first year, so if you are interested you should contact the study abroad office fairly soon in the year.

## 8.11. Learner Support

Learner Support is available to support your studies. If you have special needs, wish to be evaluated, or just find out more about their services, it is a good idea to make an appointment with them. They are situated in the Student Support centre and information can be found at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/assessmentcentre/>

## 8.12. Other Services

Your general handbook gives you information about the facilities provided by the Student Union, the Student Support Office, the Careers service etc.. Students who get the most out of University life are usually also those who put in the most. If you have any problems, remember that staff in the Department care about you. Come and talk to us and we'll do our best to help.

## 8.13. The University Complaint Procedure

The Department always tries to do its best to resolve any problems that students may experience, but if you feel that you have been treated unfairly in any way, you have the right to complain.

The University Complaint Procedure is described in an Appendix to the Rules and Regulations for students, and is available on the Web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/>).

One of the general principles of that procedure is: *“Disputes should be resolved at the lowest level possible in the procedure. In the interests of harmonious relationships informal procedures should, so far as is reasonably practicable, be exhausted prior to entering the formal procedure.”*

If you do not understand why you received particular treatment, you should first seek clarification from the member of staff involved or the module coordinator. We hope that any problem can be resolved at this point, but if you still feel that you have been treated unfairly, you should contact your year coordinator. If the situation is still not resolved, put your complaint into writing and follow the official complaints procedure through the Head of the Department.

If any of these members of staff is in any way involved in your complaint you may pursue your complaint directly to the next level. You can expect to receive a written response to your written complaint.

# 9. Student Feedback

The department tries hard to keep the quality of its courses as high as possible. In order to do this it looks for input from employers, professional institutions, colleagues in other universities and, most importantly, from its students. Our courses, in their current form, have benefited from student input over the years; please play your part in making them better for future generations of students. Remember, however, that we often get conflicting comments - employers, professional institutions and students do not always agree with each other. We also need your help if problems arise with equipment or timetables. If we know about a problem, there is a good chance that we can solve it quickly; if we don't, there's nothing we can do.

## 9.1. Staff/Student Committees and Questionnaires

Groups of students will be invited at the start of each academic year to elect representatives to these committees. Those students must make themselves known to and available to their constituents. The committees meet once a semester, and provide a platform for discussion between staff and students about any relevant matters. Staff are normally represented by the Director of Teaching, Head of Support, and each of the year coordinators. Formal minutes of the meetings are taken and posted on the departmental notice board and the web, and details of any actions taken as a result of the meetings are posted.

You will also be invited to complete a questionnaire providing feedback on each module that you study within the department. These questionnaires provide both quantitative and qualitative data. Anonymous questionnaires are given exactly the same consideration as ones with names on them.

In the final year you will have the opportunity to complete the National Student Survey (NSS) - a national survey, which has been conducted by Ipsos MORI annually since 2005.

## 10. Administrative Responsibilities

Administrative responsibilities are distributed among various members of the department. Ones relevant to students are noted below.

From a telephone on the campus network, you need only dial the 4-figure extension number; such calls are free. All these extensions can be dialled directly from outside the campus by dialling 62 before the extension number, for example 01970 62 2424 is the number for the Department Secretary.

[cs-office@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cs-office@aber.ac.uk) will give you the main office and [cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cs-exam-advice@aber.ac.uk) will give you advice.

Responsibility		Room	e-mail	Ext.
Head of Institute	Prof. Qiang Shen	B48	qqs	2424
Head of Department	Prof. Qiang Shen	B48	qqs	2424
Director of Teaching	Prof. Chris Price	E48	cjp	2444
Director of Research	Prof. Reyer Zwiggelaar	B61	rrz	8691
Director of Infrastructure	Mr. Dave Price	B45	dap	2428
Year 1 Coordinator	Mr. Richard Shipman	B52	res	2450
Year 2 Coordinator	Mr. Nigel Hardy	C53	nwh	2434
Year 3 and 4 Coordinator	Mr. Neil Taylor	C47	nst	1528
MEng (Year 5) Coordinator	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
Dip/MSc Coordinator	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
PhD Tutor	Dr. Bernie Tiddeman	Phys 115	bpt	1777
Tiwtor Cymraeg	Dr. Wayne Aubrey	C54	waa2	2421
Mature Students' Tutor	Dr. Edel Sherratt	Phys 117	eds	2448
Overseas Students' Tutor	Dr. Elio Tuci	C51	elt7	2537
PhD. Administrator	Mrs. Bridget Bewick	B53	brb	2232
MSc. Secretary	Mrs. Lorraine Langford	B50	lal	2540
Department Secretary	Mrs. Margaret Walker	B50	zzy	2424
Departmental Advisor	Dr. Lynda Thomas	B62	ltt	2452
Staff/Student Committee	Dr. Hannah Dee	E44	hmd1	1577
Disabilities Officer	Mr. David Smith	B46	dhs	2446
Timetable Officer	Mrs. Meinir Davies	B53	met	2424
IS and Library Representative	Dr. Amanda Clare	E37	afc	2429
Industrial Year Administrator	Mrs. Lorraine Langford	B50	lal	2540
Industrial Placement Coordinator	Dr. Adrian Shaw	B44	ais	2215
Careers Liaison Officer	Dr. Adrian Shaw	B44	ais	2215
Schools Liaison Officer	Mrs. Meinir Davies	B53	met	2439
Support	Mr. Sandy Spence	B59A	axs	2430
Health and Safety	Mr. Peter Hoskins	B59A	peh	2430
Examination Board Chair	Prof. David Barnes	E49	dpb	1561
Examination Officers: David Smith, Janet Hardy, Meinir Davies, Bridget Bewick				