School of Computer Science

Learning in the School of Computer Science

All students and staff at the University of Auckland are expected to follow the Code of Conduct in all interactions with other members of our University community.

https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/life-on-campus/code-of-conduct.html

We aim to support students in achieving their goals, and ensure that our graduates have the capabilities described in the graduate profile.

https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/science/study-with-us/graduate-profile.html

This document explains our philosophy of learning and teaching in the School of Computer Science and outlines our expectations for student engagement. To develop your learning skills, Libraries and Learning Services provides a lot of excellent information.

https://learningessentials.auckland.ac.nz/

1. We provide opportunities to learn

Our role is to provide a structured environment for students to engage in learning. Our graduates will work autonomously with self-discipline and develop independent understanding (Graduate Capability 5). Through the lectures, tutorials, laboratories and other structured learning activities, we will provide you with a starting point for your learning of the subject. You are expected to go beyond the introduction provided in lectures and make extensive use of recommended texts and other online resources to learn the subject matter.

Students are expected to engage in study for 150 hours in each Science course. This is approximately 10 hours per week for each course over a 15 week period (i.e., including the mid-semester break and exam study period). This typically involves 3 hours of lectures, 2-3 hours of practical work (assignments, or other practice activities) and approximately 5 hours of independent study, which may involve writing notes, using mind maps to organize material, reading additional resource material, etc.

It is critically important that you focus on identifying what you are expected to know at the end of the course, what you currently know, and what you need to do to close that gap. Try to find the answers to your question in the learning resources and approach the tutors or lecturers with specific questions that you need additional help with. Practice solving problems and working through exercises independently to help you identify areas that need improvement.

2. Communicating with teaching staff

The School of Computer Science policy expects student queries to be acknowledged within *two business days* and an answer will be provided within *ten business days*. For more immediate queries, attending office hours is recommended. Staff are not expected to respond to student enquiries outside of normal business hours (9am-5pm weekdays), so plan accordingly.

If you email your teaching staff, please indicate which course you are taking, and use your University of Auckland student email address (UPI@aucklanduni.ac.nz). Emailing your teachers is a formal method of communication and you are expected to be professional and courteous (Graduate Capability 4).

- Use a polite or formal salutation
- Use an informative subject line that includes the course code
- Be Clear, Polite, and Succinct
- It is common courtesy to thank someone for their time and help. End your email with a “thank you” or “best” and your full name and student login or ID.

Email is the primary means of communication with students. Ensure that you read your University of Auckland email regularly. All teaching staff are expected to have office hours. Please make sure you are aware of the availability of teaching staff and make use of the opportunity to discuss any issues in person. When you attend office hours, come prepared with specific questions and/or examples that you need help with.

Note that teaching staff are not expected to debug your programs or to solve assignment problems. Instead, we aim to help you to develop the capability to solve your problems and learn independently.

3. Communicating with teachers and peers using forums

Computing professionals make effective use of online forums to find answers to questions. The discussion forums are a community resource, which is monitored by teaching staff, but is primarily a student-driven resource for discussion. Note that forums are *not* anonymous. You should engage in discussion in digital media (such as forums and email) in the same way that you would conduct them face-to-face.

- don't post personal information about yourself or someone else
- don't spam (i.e., repeat the same information many times)
- search the forums for similar questions before posting -- duplicate questions may not be answered
- keep it constructive
- stay on topic
- posting in ALL CAPS is considered shouting and should be avoided
- check your post for correct spelling and grammar before posting
- don't insult others
- avoid misquoting anyone (essentially when you quote someone wrong)
- treat others how you want to be treated

4. Assessment and Feedback

The School of Computer Science policy expects all assessments to include the learning outcomes that will be assessed, and the criteria against which the performance will be measured.

You are encouraged to use this information to focus your learning. Many assessed tasks will take significant time and you are expected to plan appropriately. If you have any questions about assessment tasks then seek clarity well before the task is due.

Academic Integrity

You are encouraged to discuss problems with one another and to work together while you are learning, but assessed work is expected to be your own work. All coursework is there to enhance learning, so if you submit work that you did not complete yourself, you are cheating yourself of a learning opportunity. Acceptable forms of collaboration are:

- getting help in understanding from staff and tutors;
- discussing assignments and methods of solution with other students.

Unacceptable forms of collaboration ('cheating') are:

- copying all or part of another student's assignment, or allowing someone else to do all or part of your assignment for you;
- copying information from the Internet without acknowledging the information source;
- allowing another student to copy all or part of your assignment, or doing all or part of an assignment for somebody else.

If you are unsure about whether your collaboration is OK please discuss it with your lecturer. If you think that your collaboration will be viewed as cheating, you are probably correct. We are more than happy to help clarify edge cases.

Marking

Grading hundreds of student submissions takes time. We aim to give responses back as soon as possible, but that often takes up to 10 business days. You are expected to read the feedback and encouraged to use the information to reflect on your progress, plan actions to take, and engage in learning to improve your outcomes. Any request for remarking should include sufficient supporting evidence and be framed in a professional manner. Such requests are expected to be handled within 10 business days of receiving the request.

5. Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about a course, then we expect you to contact the teacher directly and work to resolve the issue as professionals. If you are unable to resolve the situation, then contact the course director. If you are still unable to resolve the issue, then you should approach the Head of School. If, at any stage, you do not feel comfortable contacting the staff directly, then you should work through the class representative. In all aspects of this process we expect students and staff to conduct themselves professionally and work to resolve issues through discussion.