First Year First Day Guide 2023-24
Computer Science (Hons, MEng), Software Engineering (Hons)

1. First Year CIS Adviser

Isla Ross
Email: **isla.ross@strath.ac.uk**
The year adviser is the first person you should contact if you have any questions regarding your course, especially regarding elective changes, timetable problems, laboratory allocation and absences.

2. Timetable

https://local.cis.strath.ac.uk/wp/teaching/undergraduate/timetable/
This is subject to change.
You will be emailed a copy of what to attend in semester 1 week 1 and then a later copy for later weeks.
Personal timetable on the app may not contain all lectures, labs, tutorials etc#

3. MyPlace

Each class has a MyPlace page which is the main place to look for information about the class including assessments details, announcements and much teaching material.

4. Pegasus

This is where you see your curriculum, receive exam results, submit personal circumstances and more.
http://pegasus.strath.ac.uk/

5. Key Dates

https://www.strath.ac.uk/keydates/2023-24/

6. Student Support and Wellbeing

(Disability and Wellbeing, Funding and Financial support, International Student Support, Chaplaincy Centre, Study Skills)

https://www.strath.ac.uk/sees/studentsupportwellbeing/

7. Registration

You should all register online using Pegasus if you have not already. Overseas students may have different arrangements whereby they need to register in person.
http://pegasus.strath.ac.uk/
Most of you have already done this.
You all need to add an elective to your curriculum. You do this through Pegasus as well, probably as follows:

a) Log on to Pegasus
b) Select the 'Curriculum' tab at the top
c) Select 'Curriculum Verification/Request Amendment' down in the Registration section at the bottom
d) Select 'Amend Curriculum' up at the top right
e) Select the 'Add Class' button down in middle of screen

f) Enter the module code for your chosen elective

Choosing your elective – it isn't a free choice of any class. You will be emailed a list of possible electives tomorrow. Please don't select on Pegasus until after that.

8. Students Union
StrathUnion

https://www.strathunion.com/welcome/

9. Computer Access
To login to these machines you use your University username and password.
There is a code for the doors to the CIS LT 11th/12th/13th floor labs – you'll be emailed the code by our Systems Support Staff

10. Software
Information on free software as a student can be found at
https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/it/use/softwareandhardware/
Individual classes may also require you to install specific software.

11. Booklist
Recommend don't buy any books just yet.
Lecturers will let you know which books are necessary for each of your classes.

12. Accommodation Office
Information on University flats/halls of residence (on and off campus), tenancy agreements, private and rented sector. See: www.strath.ac.uk/accommodation/

13. Strathclyde Sport –£31m SPORTS CENTRE
Huge sports centre on Cathedral Street. Huge range of facilities and classes.
https://www.strath.ac.uk/strathclydesport/

14. Careers Service
www.strath.ac.uk/careers

Stephen Smith is the Careers and Employability Consultant for the Faculty of Science. You will get to know him through Careers talks during the year in the Department and through events, and activities, in the Careers Service that we encourage you to attend from 1st year.

15. Disability and Wellbeing Service
The Disability & Wellbeing Service has a range of advisers with specialist expertise in disability, health, mental health and counselling. We offer a broad range of support to students with any disability, mental health and wellbeing related needs.
https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/disabilityandwellbeing/
Note: all students should also register with a GP.

16. Personal Development Adviser (PDA)
You are all allocated a Personal Development Adviser (PDA) within the CIS department. **You will meet them on Wednesday 20th September** in groups between 11am and 1pm. Hopefully, you'll get to know your PDA and they will be somebody who you will feel comfortable discussing any difficulties that arise during your time at university. They can be good people to use for job references.

17. Study Expectations
A 20-credit class has around 200 hours of work associated with it. This includes all formal contact (lectures, tutorials, labs etc.) and the additional time you spend working on the class throughout the semesters. So, for a 20-credit class that runs for two semesters and has 4 hours formal contact each week (2 lectures and

a lab session, say), you should expect to put in around 4 hours additional work for the class every week (assuming you devote around 20 hours to revising for and sitting the exam if there is one).

This is particularly true of computer science classes, **where the cumulative nature of the subject means understanding the material as the class progresses is essential.**

18. <mark>At</mark>tendance and Absence
It is expected that you will attend all lectures and tutorials/labs associated with a class. If you are absent from any important event, such as an examination, class test or weekly assessment, then you should provide medical or similar documentary evidence. Medical evidence is submitted via Pegasus: http://pegasus.strath.ac.uk/
or through Student Business in the McCance Building

If in doubt, ask the First Year Adviser or your PDA.

The department takes attendance very seriously, and monitors attendance at lectures, labs and tutorials throughout first year. Computer Science is a practical subject therefore you are expected to attend all of these.

If you do not attend / participate then you may be asked to leave the course.

19. Lab / tutorial allocation
You will be allocated to labs/ tutorials for CIS year 1 modules and MS113 tutorials during weeks 1 or 2 and then informed of the outcome. Allocation will be done by software and will depend on modules being taken. The exception is for CS101 where you will receive your allocation on Wednesday week 1.

20. Coursework
Computer Science is a very practical subject by nature and coursework in all modules provides the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the material and nurture essential practical skills. This deeper understanding you develop will make it much easier to pass the exam if there is one. Also, the work will typically contribute substantially to your mark for the module, which again takes the pressure off the examination if one is held for the module.

So, make sure you understand the coursework requirements for each class – if you are unsure check out the module MyPlace page or ask the lecturer.

All computer science teaching materials should be accessible via the VLE called **MyPlace**: http://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/

21. Assessment
The assessment for a module will be explained by the module lecturer and be on the MyPlace web page. Many modules involve a combination of coursework and examination and your final mark is a combination of your performance in both these components. Most degree examinations take place in April/May (for semester 2 modules, or modules which run over both semesters), with only a few modules examined in December (semester 1 only classes). The pass mark for modules is 40%. The formal Faculty Examination Board in June operates a compensation scheme which in first year may grant a compensatory pass in one module failed with a mark between 30% and 39% (inclusive), if your average is 45% or above - **this means it is in your interests to do as well as possible in *all* examinations**.

22. <mark>CI</mark>S Web Pages, Handbook and noticeboards

Almost everything you need to know about your CS/SE degree and its organisation can be found through links from here:
https://local.cis.strath.ac.uk/wp/teaching/undergraduate/
The page includes a link to the degree handbook and to noticeboards for year groups.
Some pages will be updated for 2023-24 in the coming weeks

23. Finding Your Way Around – Best to use web pages listed below
Maps:
http://www.strath.ac.uk/maps/

Building Codes:
https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/estates/roombooking/buildingcodes/

24. Plagiarism

The nature of some practical work in Computer Science makes plagiarism (copying) feasible and, under the pressure of deadlines, potentially tempting. This is, of course, cheating, and it is not tolerated. By all means seek help from staff, and collaboration with your fellow students is encouraged provided this takes the form of general discussions of problems and possible solutions. Ultimately, all work must be completed independently (unless it is group work) and it is essential that you understand completely any work you submit. Plagiarism is not taken lightly – even in minor cases a mark of 0 is awarded to *all* concerned (including those supplying any solution). Major cases, such as projects or repeat offences, may result in a Senate Disciplinary Hearing and the requirement for the student to withdraw from their course and the University. Some students may appear to get away with plagiarism but, because much of the work in Computer Science is **cumulative**, *it will always catch up with them*.

Do not be tempted to plagiarise: there are plenty of legitimate places you can go for help if you are finding the work difficult – please use them.

25. Your First Year Modules

Here's a short summary of the compulsory first year computing modules that you will be taking. All below are 20 credits except for MS113(10 credits).

CS101 Topics in Computing 1
To help the student to develop a broader perspective of computer science and to develop problem solving, team working, presentational skills, as well as personal and professional development skills.

CS103 Machines, Languages and Computation
To help students to achieve a broad knowledge of the essence of computation and computational systems, as embodied by the notions of computable functions, formal languages and recursion, logic and computability and abstract machines.

CS104 Information and Information Systems
To help students understand a broad knowledge of information systems and how information is created, used and disseminated within an information society.

CS105 Programming Foundations
Programming Foundations looks at the key areas of Java and object-oriented program design and provides you with the skills to be able to design and build small systems by yourself by the end of the class. The first step on the road to developing a sound and comprehensive knowledge of programming.

CS106 Computer Systems and Organisation
To enable the student to develop an understanding and appreciation of a computer system's functional components – both hardware and software, their characteristics, their interactions, and their fundamental role in the manipulation of data.

MS113 Introduction To Business Analysis And Technology – Sem 1
This module will introduce a variety of analytical methods that form the basis of understanding, analysing and seeking to resolve any business problem as well as providing students with an overview of technological change and how it affects all aspects of an organisation.

In addition you will take a 10 (or 20) credit elective class.

It is compulsory to pass CS105 Programming Foundations, without compensation, as part of the progress rules to enter year 2.

Ten Tips for Surviving First Year

1. Attend as much as you can.
Missing the one lecture or lab now and again is not a massive problem, but if you're missing a lot of your classes, you'll fall behind and won't know what's going on. Don't rely on MyPlace for getting notes and assignments: sometimes these are handed out only in lectures. Our statistics show that those students who attend all their classes get the best marks. Conversely, students who don't attend are the ones who fall behind and then eventually drop out.

2. Try to pass every class.
Most of you are taking 120 credits this year and we expect you to finish the year with a full 120 credits in the bag. If you fail a class, you have to take the class again in 2nd year, which on top of a hefty 2nd year is very bad news. CS105 must be passed (without compensation) to progress to year 2.

3. Know how the compensation scheme works
If your credit weighted average mark over all the classes you are taking in year 1 is >= 45% you can be compensated in one 20 credit class if the mark is between 30% and 39% inclusive.

4. Every mark counts.
Since you need an average of >= 45%, and every mark you get counts towards this, it follows that you should try to accumulate as many marks you can in everything. High marks are really worth getting, as they can help compensate for lower marks in other classes. Make sure you attend all your class tests and hand in something for every assignment.

5. Don't Miss Your Class Tests.
In our first year, you'll have weekly classwork to do, either in our labs or in your own time. Your understanding of this work is in some cases assessed by means of class tests. All of these class tests count towards your final mark. Make sure you don't miss the class tests!

6. Programming Foundations is REALLY important.
Put a good lot of effort into CS105 Programming Foundations. This class is the most vital one to understand properly to survive 2nd year. It is the first class in a sequence of classes which will teach you how to design and implement serious pieces of software in Java.

7. Know who's who.
The important people to know are the CIS Director of Undergraduate Teaching (Martin Goodfellow), the First Year Adviser of Studies (Isla Ross) and your Personal Development Adviser. If things go wrong, let us know as soon as possible.

8. Talk to us.
CIS at Strathclyde prides itself on having approachable and friendly academic staff. Unlike in other universities, you are students in our department from your first year onwards, and we'll soon get to know you. Come and ask us things if you need help.

9. Don't Copy.
Copying someone else's work is called plagiarism and we don't tolerate it. You can discuss assigned work with each other, but the work that you hand in must be yours and yours alone.

10. Every good student deserves a transfer.
If you want to transfer from BSc (Hons) to MEng CS then impress us. To get onto the MEng, you need >= 70% average and >=70% in Programming.