



DEPARTMENT OF
**COMPUTER
SCIENCE**

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE HANDBOOK

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

For students starting in 2022/23

Computer Science
Computer Science & Philosophy
Mathematics & Computer Science

2022

Version 1.1

Welcome

This is a supplement to the [Computer Science Handbook](#). It is designed to give you all the course-specific information you will need in your first year, complete with all important deadlines.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the academic admin staff at academic.administrator@cs.ox.ac.uk if you have any questions.

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Disclaimer

This handbook supplement applies to students starting an undergraduate degree in Computer Science, Mathematics & Computer Science or Computer Science & Philosophy in Michaelmas Term 2022. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at

[Preliminary Examination in Computer Science](#)

[Preliminary Examination in Mathematics and Computer Science](#)

[Preliminary Examination in Computer Science and Philosophy](#)

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the academic admin team at academic.administrator@cs.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at October 2022. It may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges webpage. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook, together with a list of the changes, and you will be informed.

Version	Action	Date
Version 1.0	Published start of MT22	
Version 1.1	Links and Recommended Patterns of Teaching updated	Week 0, MT22

1 Courses

1.1 Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science offers the following degrees in Computer Science at undergraduate level:

- BA – Computer Science, 3-year
- MCompSci – Computer Science, 4-year

You will initially be entered for the 4-year degree, and will need to decide by early in your third year whether you wish to carry on into the fourth year or leave at the end of the third year with a BA. To proceed into the fourth year (Part C), you will need to have an average of 2:1 or higher in Parts A and B together.

Course Aims

- To provide a course of the highest academic quality in Computer Science in a challenging and supportive learning environment that attracts the very best students from the UK and elsewhere.
- To provide students with a broad, balanced knowledge of core areas and advanced topics in Computer Science, as defined by the relevant QAA Benchmark Statement.
- To develop in students the ability to evaluate primary evidence critically and the conceptual understanding to marshal and present arguments and solutions based on primary data, relevant theory and the application of sound reasoning.
- To develop transferable skills relating to problem solving and spoken and written communication.
- To bring students to a position on graduation where they can choose confidently from a wide range of careers, both within the Information Technology sector and outside it.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- the general theoretical and practical principles of Computer Science.
- a broad range of topics in theoretical Computer Science and the architecture and implementation of information systems.
- relevant mathematical theories and techniques and their application to practical design problems.
- methods of software development.

The course is in line with the criteria set out in the [QAA benchmark statement for Computing](#). That benchmark statement recognizes the need for diversity of provision in Computing, and the Oxford course remains firmly established at the theoretical end of the spectrum of degree courses.

1.1.1 First year

In the first year of the Computer Science degree, you will take ten lecture courses - nine taught in the Department of Computer Science and one taught in conjunction with Mathematics (with lectures organised by the Mathematical Institute). You will also attend the course [Ethics and Responsible Innovation](#).

Computer Science

- [Functional Programming](#)
- [Design & Analysis of Algorithms](#)
- [Imperative Programming Parts 1 and 2](#)
- [Imperative Programming Part 3](#)
- [Discrete Mathematics](#)
- [Linear Algebra](#)
- [Digital Systems](#)
- [Continuous Mathematics](#)
- [Introduction to Formal Proof](#)

Mathematics

- [Probability](#)

Tutorials in Computer Science and Mathematics

Tutorials are your main opportunity for developing a deep understanding of a subject – and for sorting out misunderstandings. On average undergraduates can expect to have two or three tutorials or classes per week. Each tutor has particular methods and particular ways of organising tutorials, and will adapt your tutorials to give you the best opportunities for learning. Many tutors will base their tutorials around problem sheets issued by lecturers to accompany their lectures. Your tutor should be the first person you ask for advice on how to study, and later on how to choose optional subjects.

1.2 Mathematics & Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science offers the following joint degrees with the Department of Mathematics:

- BA – Mathematics and Computer Science, 3-year
- MMathCompSci – Mathematics and Computer Science, 4-year

You will initially be entered for the 4-year degree, and will need to decide by early in your third year whether you wish to carry on into the fourth year or leave at the end of the third year with a BA. To proceed into the fourth year (Part C), you will need to have an average of 2:1 or higher in Parts A and B together.

Course Aims

- To provide a course of the highest academic quality in Mathematics and Computer Science in a challenging and supportive learning environment that attracts the very best students from the UK and elsewhere.
- To provide students with a broad, balanced knowledge of the two subjects of Mathematics and Computer Science, as defined by the [relevant QAA Benchmark Statements](#).
- To develop in students the ability to evaluate primary evidence critically, and the conceptual understanding to marshal and present arguments and solutions based on primary data, relevant theory and the application of sound reasoning.
- To develop transferable skills relating to problem solving and spoken and written communication.
- To bring students to a position on graduation where they can choose confidently from a wide range of careers, both within the Information Technology sector and outside it.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- core areas of Mathematics, including the principal areas of Mathematics needed in applications;
- the general theoretical and practical principles of Computer Science;
- the basic ideas of mathematical modelling, particularly as applied to design problems in Computer Science;
- a broad range of topics in theoretical Computer Science and the architecture and implementation of information systems;

- the basic ideas of a variety of areas of specialisation in Pure and Applied Mathematics and in Computer Science.

The course combines elements from the programmes in Mathematical Sciences and in Computer Science, each of which is in line with the criteria set out in the respective [QAA benchmark statements](#).

1.2.1 First year

In the first year of the Mathematics & Computer Science degree, you will take 11 lecture courses; five in Computer Science and six taught in conjunction with Mathematics (with lectures organised by the Mathematical Institute). You will also attend the course [Ethics and Responsible Innovation](#).

Computer Science

- [Functional Programming](#)
- [Design & Analysis of Algorithms](#)
- [Imperative Programming Parts 1 and 2](#)
- [Imperative Programming Part 3](#)
- [Continuous Mathematics](#)

Mathematics

- [Introduction to University Mathematics](#)
- [Introduction to Complex Numbers](#)
- [Linear Algebra I](#) and [Linear Algebra II](#)
- [Analysis I – Sequences and Series](#); [Analysis II – Continuity and Differentiability](#) and [Analysis III – Integration](#)
- [Probability](#)
- [Groups and Group Actions](#)

Tutorials in Computer Science and Mathematics

Tutorials are your main opportunity for developing a deep understanding of a subject – and for sorting out misunderstandings. On average undergraduates can expect to have two or three tutorials or classes per week. Each tutor has particular methods and particular ways of organising tutorials, and will adapt your tutorials to give you the best opportunities for learning. Many tutors will base their tutorials around problem sheets issued by lecturers to accompany their lectures. Your tutor should be the first person you ask for advice on how to study, and later on how to choose optional subjects.

1.3 Computer Science and Philosophy

The Department of Computer Science offers the following joint degrees with the Faculty of Philosophy:

- BA – Computer Science and Philosophy, 3-year
- MCompPhil. – Computer Science and Philosophy, 4-year

You are initially entered for the 4-year degree, and need to decide by early in your third year whether you wish to carry on into the fourth year or leave at the end of the third year with a BA. To proceed into the fourth year (Part C), you will need to have an average of 2:1 or higher in Parts A and B together.

Course Aims

- To provide a course of the highest academic quality in Computer Science and Philosophy in a challenging and supportive learning environment that attracts the very best students from the UK and elsewhere.
- To provide students with a broad, balanced knowledge of core areas and advanced topics in Computer Science, as defined by the relevant [QAA Benchmark Statement](#), including logic as a natural bridge with Philosophy.
- To enable students to appreciate the interest and importance of philosophical questions on a variety of topics, including links with Computer Science, and to contribute to the discussions of these questions.
- To enhance the understanding of both Computer Science and Philosophy by parallel study of these related disciplines with particular emphasis on the interdisciplinary subjects of logic and philosophy of science.
- To develop in students the ability to evaluate primary evidence critically and the conceptual understanding to marshal and present arguments and solutions based on primary data, relevant theory and the application of sound reasoning.
- To provide a learning environment which draws on the wide-ranging talents and expertise of staff in both Computer Science and Philosophy, and challenges and encourages students, with their differing needs, interests and aspirations, to reach the full potential, personally and academically.
- To develop transferable skills relating to problem solving, as well as promoting the ability to think independently, to develop powers of critical analysis, of sustained argumentation and of clear and effective communication both orally and in writing.

- To bring students to a position on graduation where they can choose confidently from a wide range of careers, both within the Information Technology sector and outside it.

And for students taking the 4-year MCompPhil

- To provide the foundations for graduate study at a leading university, in the UK or abroad, in either Computer Science or Philosophy.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- the general theoretical and practical principles of Computer Science;
- a broad range of topics in theoretical Computer Science and the architecture and implementation of information systems;
- relevant mathematical theories and techniques and their application to practical design problems;
- methods of software development;
- selected philosophical texts and central philosophical issues and the concepts needed to discuss those texts and issues in an effective manner;
- the elements of mathematical logic and philosophy of science.

1.3.1 First year

In the first year of the Computer Science and Philosophy degree you will take ten courses - five in Computer Science, four taught in Philosophy and one taught in conjunction with Mathematics (with lectures organised by the Mathematical Institute). You will also attend the course [Ethics and Responsible Innovation](#).

Computer Science

- [Functional Programming](#)
- [Discrete Mathematics](#)
- [Design & Analysis of Algorithms](#)
- [Imperative Programming Parts 1 and 2](#)
- [Imperative Programming Part 3](#)

Philosophy

- [General Philosophy](#)
- [Introduction to Logic](#)
- [Elements of Deductive Logic](#)
- [Turing on Computability and Intelligence](#)

Mathematics

- [Probability](#)

Tutorials in Computer Science and Mathematics

Tutorials are your main opportunity for developing a deep understanding of a subject – and for sorting out misunderstandings. On average undergraduates can expect to have two or three tutorials or classes per week. Each tutor has particular methods and particular ways of organising tutorials, and will adapt your tutorials to give you the best opportunities for learning. Many tutors will base their tutorials around problem sheets issued by lecturers to accompany their lectures. Your tutor should be the first person you ask for advice on how to study, and later on how to choose optional subjects.

Tutorials in Philosophy

For tutorials in Philosophy you will be expected to bring knowledge of the readings which have been set for it (or a variant on your own initiative if some items prove really inaccessible) and almost always an essay in which you address some aspect of the topic covered by the readings.

Work on a tutorial essay in Philosophy involves library searches, reading, thinking, and writing. It should occupy a minimum of three days. Read attentively and thoughtfully, skipping bits that obviously do not bear on your topic: one hour of that is worth many hours of 'summarising' paragraph by paragraph. As your reading progresses, think of a structure for your essay (but do not write an elaborate plan which you won't have time to execute). Expect to have to worry out your thoughts, both during and after reading. Use essays to develop an argument, not as places to store information. You can assume that your tutor knows what is in the set reading, and is not interested in a simple re-hash of that. But they will be interested in your critical appraisal of what you have read, and any arguments of your own that bear upon the topic. At the same time, it is important that the relation of what you say in your essay to what you have read can be made explicit if discussion in tutorial turns on it, and for this reason, it is important to include page references to your readings for points you criticise or make use of.

You will learn a lot if you share and discuss ideas with your fellow students, and if you chance your arm in tutorials. Be enterprising, and be prepared to be wrong, for that is how one learns. (Remember that Oxford's system is not one of continuous assessment; it is what you can do at the end that matters, and not the various mistakes that you will inevitably make on the way.) And bear in mind that tutorials are not designed as a substitute for lectures, or for accumulating information, but to develop the capacity to think on the spot and to articulate your thinking clearly in responding to issues raised about ideas in the essay you or a tutorial partner are presenting. This means that note-taking, if it occurs in a tutorial at all, should be incidental to the dialogue. Producing essays for philosophy tutorials gives excellent training in writing, and particularly in writing to a deadline. You will need to equip yourself with a writer's tools, most crucially a dictionary, such as the Concise Oxford Dictionary or the online [Oxford English Dictionary](#), also a thesaurus, and a guide to grammar such as [Fowler's Modern English Usage](#).

2 The Preliminary Examinations

In Preliminary Examination papers for Computer Science and for Mathematics, each question is marked out of 20. Each question will contain some parts of a straightforward nature, and some parts requiring more advanced understanding or an unseen application of techniques or theory from the syllabus. The examination paper will show the marks available for each part.

Please read the [Examination Conventions and Notices to Candidates](#) carefully.

2.1 Computer Science

In the Preliminary Examinations for Computer Science you will take the following four papers:

[A10097W1 Functional Programming and Design and Analysis of Algorithms](#)

[A10098W1 Imperative Programming](#)

[A10100W1 Discrete Mathematics, Continuous Mathematics and Probability](#)

[A10101W1 Digital Systems, Linear Algebra and Introduction to Formal Proof](#)

A10097W1 Functional Programming and Design and Analysis of Algorithms is of 3 hours' duration and contains eight questions (four on each constituent course); candidates should answer no more than five questions, with no more than three questions from either half of the paper.

A10098W1 Imperative Programming is of 3 hours' duration and contains eight questions (two on Part 1, three on each of Parts 2 and 3); candidates should answer no more than five questions, with no more than two questions from any part of the paper.

A10100W1 Discrete Mathematics, Probability, and Continuous Mathematics is of 3 hours' duration and contains nine questions (three on each constituent course); candidates should answer no more than five questions with no more than two from any section.

A10101W1 Digital Systems, Linear Algebra and Introduction to Formal Proof is of 3 hours' duration and contains eight questions (three on Digital Systems, three on Linear Algebra and two on Introduction to Formal Proof); candidates should answer no more than five questions with no more than two from any section.

Please see also the course description [above](#) and the [Examination Regulations here](#).

2.2 Mathematics & Computer Science

Mathematics & Computer Science candidates take **five** papers; **Functional Programming and Design and Analysis of Algorithms**, and **Imperative Programming**, as described above, and also

[A10138W1 Mathematics I](#)

[A10139W1 Mathematics II](#)

[A10149W1 Continuous Mathematics and Probability](#)

A10138W1 Mathematics I is of 2.5 hours' duration and contains seven questions (four on Part A and three on Part B); you should submit answers to no more than five questions. You should submit answers to no more than three questions from Section A and no more than two questions from Section B.

A10139W1 Mathematics II is of 2.5 hours' duration and contains seven questions (three on Part A, three on Part B and one on Part C); you should submit answers to no more than five questions. You should submit answers to no more than two questions from Section A and to no more than two questions from Section B.

A10149W1 Continuous Mathematics and Probability is of 2.5 hours' duration and contain six questions (3 on each constituent course); candidates should answer no more than four questions.

Please also see the course description [above](#) and the [Examination Regulations here](#).

2.3 Computer Science and Philosophy

Computer Science and Philosophy candidates take five papers; **Functional Programming and Design and Analysis of Algorithms** and **Imperative Programming** as described above, and also:

[A10102W1 Discrete Mathematics and Probability](#)

[A10103W1 Introduction to Philosophy](#)

[A10134W1 Elements of Deductive Logic](#)

A10102W1 Discrete Mathematics and Probability is of 2.5 hours' duration and contains six questions (3 on each constituent course); candidates should answer no more than four questions.

A10103W1 Introduction to Philosophy is of 3 hours' duration and contains around fourteen questions (eight in Part A, General Philosophy, and around six in Part B, on Turing on Computability and Intelligence); candidates should answer four questions, including at least one from each section.

A10134W1 Elements of Deductive Logic is of 3 hours' duration and contains typically seven or eight questions; candidates should answer four questions. If you answer more than four questions, your overall mark will be determined by your four best answers.

Please also see the course description [above](#) and the [Examination Regulations here](#).

3 Important Dates

3.1 Dates of term 2022-23:

Michaelmas term: Sunday 9th October 2022 – Saturday 3rd December 2022

Hilary term: Sunday 15th January 2023 – Saturday 11th March 2023

Trinity term: Sunday 23rd April 2023 – Saturday 17th June 2023

Dates of Full Term for future years are available [on the University's website](#).

3.2 Hand-In Dates – Practicals Reports

Practicals reports, including for the Ethics course:

By noon on Friday of week 5, Trinity term, on Inspera.

4 Recommended Pattern of Teaching

Please compare the [list of courses on the Departmental Website](#). If in doubt, please refer to the website.

4.1 Computer Science

Paper	Term	Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
Discrete Mathematics (CS3)	MT	16		4		
Ethics and Responsible Innovation	MT/HT	4				This course also has practicals
Functional Programming (CS1)	MT	16		4		This course also has practicals.
Linear Algebra (CS4)	MT	20		4		
Probability (CS3)	MT	16		4		Taught by the Maths Institute.
Continuous Mathematics (CS3)	HT	16		4		
Design & Analysis of Algorithms (CS1)	HT	16		4		This course also has practicals.
Digital Systems (CS4)	HT	16		4		This course also has practicals.
	TT	8		2		
Imperative Programming 1&2 (CS2)	HT	20		4		This course also has practicals.
Imperative Programming 3 (CS2)	TT	12		4		This course also has practicals.
Introduction to Formal Proof (CS4)	TT	10		2		

Notes:

- All first year courses are accompanied by tutorials organised by colleges.
- Practicals will start in week 2 of Michaelmas term in your first year. You will usually have an introduction to practicals in week 1.
- There will usually be a number of exercises that you will need to complete for each course. For example, a course with two practical exercises might have a practical timetable as follows:
 - Weeks 2, 4 Classes for first practical exercise
 - Weeks 6, 8 Classes for second practical exercise

4.2 Mathematics and Computer Science

Paper	Term	Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
Analysis	MT	15		4		Taught by the Maths Institute.
	HT	16		4		
	TT	8		2		
Ethics and Responsible Innovation	MT/HT	4				This course also has practicals
Functional Programming (CS1)	MT	16		4		This course also has practicals.
Introduction to University-Level Mathematics	MT					Taught by the Maths Institute
Introduction to Complex Numbers	MT	2				Taught by the Maths Institute
Linear Algebra	MT	14		4		Taught by the Maths Institute.
	HT	8		2		
Probability (CS3)	MT	16		4		Taught by the Maths Institute.
Continuous Mathematics (CS3)	HT	16		4		
Design & Analysis of Algorithms (CS1)	HT	16		4		This course also has practicals.
Groups and Group Action	HT	8		2		Taught by the Maths Institute.
	TT	8		2		
Imperative Programming Parts 1 and 2 (CS2)	HT	20		4		This course also has practicals.
Imperative Programming Part 3 (CS2)	TT	12		4		This course also has practicals.

Notes:

- All first year courses are accompanied by tutorials organised by colleges.
- Practicals will start in week 2 of Michaelmas term in your first year. You will usually have an introduction to practicals in week 1.
- There will usually be a number of exercises that you will need to complete for each course. For example, a course with two practical exercises might have a practical timetable as follows:
 - Weeks 2, 4 Classes for first practical exercise
 - Weeks 6, 8 Classes for second practical exercise

4.3 Computer Science and Philosophy

Paper	Term	Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
Discrete Mathematics (CS3)	MT	16		4		
Ethics and Responsible Innovation	MT/HT	4				This course also has practicals
Functional Programming (CS1)	MT	16		4		This course also has practicals
General Philosophy	MT	8				
Introduction to Logic	MT	8				
Probability (CS3)	MT	16				Taught by the Mathematical Institute
Design & Analysis of Algorithms (CS1)	HT	16		4		This course also has practicals
Elements of Deductive Logic	HT	8				
Imperative Programming 1&2 (CS2)	HT	20		4		This course also has practicals
Imperative Programming 3 (CS2)	TT	12		4		This course also has practicals.
Turing on Computability and Intelligence	TT	8				

Notes:

- All first year courses are accompanied by tutorials organised by colleges.
- Practicals will start in week 2 of Michaelmas term in your first year. You will usually have an introduction to practicals in week 1.
- • There will usually be a number of exercises that you will need to complete for each course. For example, a course with two practical exercises might have a practical timetable as follows:
 - Weeks 2, 4 Classes for first practical exercise
 - Weeks 6, 8 Classes for second practical exercise