Year 2 / Student Support Workshop #1

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This is a short handout for students entering year 2. The idea is to fit onto two sides as much useful information as possible. We start by discussing the academic side of things.

1 Academic matters

Year 2 Harder than year 1; lots of coursework; deadlines tend to be close together; you need to manage workload.

Study skills: actually turning up to lectures You skip a few lectures and before you know it you are behind and cannot catch up; you tell yourself you can watch the lectures online, but this is fooling youself (you won't watch the lectures, and probably deep down you know this). Conclusion: even if you find them boring, *you should turn up to lectures* (and other sessions).

The importance of programming Computer science is similar to other sciences in that the subject builds up in layers or levels. You need to understand the previous levels in order to attempt the next level. Not all computer science is programming; but most topics require programming as a pre-requisite. If you do not know programming, you will likely get poor marks in many other modules and really hate your degree. If you know programming even averagely well, you will be able to do well in the later modules. Conclusion: **if your programming skills are poor, improving them even a little bit now will pay off over and over again in many other modules.**

Study skills: managing deadlines and workload Put the deadline in your calendar; *also put an entry covering the week before* (or more) which is the time you can concentrate on the work for the deadline (don't just do it the night before). Start the work early so you have some slack if things take longer than expected.

Study skills: how to get a 1st The best advice I have is: attend lectures; complete coursework (don't cheat); be organized (take notes; set deadlines in your calendar etc); be honest with yourself when you don't get something (such as programming), and then make sure you come back to the material repeatedly until you do; make sure you don't fall behind; seek out help when you are struggling (ask questions in class, or ask the convenor after class); learn skills to help you manage your work; accept that many things are boring but you have to do them anyway; if you fall behind, ask the convenor for advice; if you are motivated, things are a lot easier than if you are not motivated.

The two most important things are: attend lectures, and keep up to date with the material.

Year 2, year 3, and your degree classification Roughly, year 2 counts for 40% of your final degree grade, and year 3 counts for 60%; individual modules are weighted by the number of credits they have in order to determine an overall year average; a 1st class degree corresponds to an overall average of 70% or more; 2:1 is 60 to 69.4%; 2:2 is 50 to 59.4% etc. There are additional rules which mean that, for example, if you score an average of 69% or 68%, you may well get a 1st. You need to understand *weighted assessment* before you can calculate your overall degree classification. Weighted assessment has been discussed many times before.

2 Getting help: the Department and the University

In order to understand how to get help and access all the services on offer, you need to understand a little bit about the structure of the University.

The department The department handles the delivery of the modules themselves, i.e., the department is responsible for the lecturer, the delivery of the assessment, the delivery of feedback etc. *Almost everything else is handled by the University*. Within the department there are several layers of responsibility: the module convenor, the head of year (me), the director of teaching (Richard Craggs) and the HoD (Reiko currently). If you have problems you can escalate them through these layers.

The University   The "University" here means "everything outside the department". The University is responsible for everything that is not handled by the department. This includes timetabling, support services etc. Although the department has personal tutors, most of the pastoral support is provided by the University. An important part of the University are the *admin teams* or *professional services teams*. These are the people who manage everything and handle administration, forms etc. If you want to change module, or change course, you are usually dealing with the admin team.

The departmental admin team   This team is located in College House (behind the department). They are usually the first place to go to for enquiries. They have experts on things like: mitigating circumstances; attendance; progression; timetabling etc.

3   Getting help: Departmental support

Student handbook   At the departmental level, the main source of information is the *Student handbook* which is available on the student webpages. This gives basic information on a wide range of topics. You should definitely read the table of contents and any sections that are relevant to you.

Module convenors   Individual module convenors can often provide useful advice e.g. if you have fallen behind.

Personal tutors   Can provide lots of advice on many topics, including wellbeing as well as academic advice.

Others   Head of year (me), Director of teaching and learning (Richard Craggs), Head of department (Reiko), Welfare tutor (Fer-Jan de Vries).

4   Getting help: University and SU support services

A large part of your tuition fees goes to fund support services. It is vital that you take full advantage of these services if you want to get "value for money". These services cover things like health and wellbeing, as well as providing training for employability, further skills etc.

University support services   There are so many services that it can be difficult to find what you need. There is a reasonably complete list of all services here: `https://www2.le.ac.uk/indexes/services` If you search for "student" you will find most of the services for students, such as: AccessAbility; Counselling; Fees and finance; Health and wellbeing; Mental wellbeing; Student and academic services (registry); Student learning development etc.

In addition, the following are worth looking at: Career development service and "Succeed in your studies". Literally thousands of pounds worth of training is available to you if you choose to access it. The University will not force you to access these services (for one thing, there are not enough resources to support every student), instead you have to *actively engage* at an individual level.

Student Union support services   In addition to the University services, the Student Union also provides many excellent support services. See `https://www.leicesterunion.com/`

Some particular services of interest:

> **Career development service, and the Leicester award**   This service supports your future employability; the Leicester award is one way of demonstrating to employers that you take your employability seriously.
>
> **Wellbeing support: stress, anxiety, mental health etc.**   Many many students access the wellbeing services each year. **You should not feel any stigma** about reaching out to these services. In fact, it is vital that you reach out as soon as possible, in order to prevent small problems becoming large problems. The University provides counselling, mental wellbeing support, health and wellbeing support, disabled/dyslexic suport, general support, welfare support etc. *There is a lot of support!* Many of these services provide one-on-one support. The Student Union also provides lots of excellent wellbeing support: an advice service; "Leicester talks"; peer mentoring etc.