Welcome to Informatics

Johanna Moore – Head of School
Colin Stirling – Informatics Director of Teaching
Informatics is the study of the structure, behaviour, and interactions of natural and engineered computational systems.

These can be at many scales:

- A wireless pressure sensor in a car tyre
- A factory-sized “data smelter” for Amazon’s Elastic Cloud

They might be hardware, software, or wetware:

- A robot grasshopper
- An online travel booking system
- The chemical clock in a bacterium
Informatics unifies the computational aspects of all these, and the opportunities offered by new enabling technologies.

At Edinburgh the study of Informatics spans four degree disciplines:

- Computer Science
- Artificial Intelligence
- Software Engineering
- Cognitive Science

Students choose their own combination of specialist courses, and can transfer between degrees during their time at Edinburgh.
Informatics at Edinburgh

Edinburgh is the largest and best-rated\(^\text{REF 2014}\) computer science department in the UK and has been a research leader in the fields comprising Informatics for over fifty years.

**Today:** 650 undergraduates, 150 MSc students, 250 PhD students, 95 academic teaching staff.

Our scale and research standing means that:

- Teaching is by international research leaders
- Courses tackle recent advances in the field
- Students can join in contributing to original research

http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching
International Staff 2014

UK - 86

USA - 22
Germany - 13
Greece - 10
People's Republic of China - 9

India - 8
Italy - 8
Netherlands - 8

Russia - 5
Canada - 4
France - 4
Japan - 4
Spain - 3

Argentina - 2
Republic of Ireland - 2
Austria - 1
Colombia - 1
Hungary - 1

Indonesia - 1
Mauritius - 1
New Zealand - 1
Ukraine - 1
Romania - 1
Serbia - 1

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The Informatics Teaching Organisation (ITO) and their Student Support Team are the first point of contact for all student enquiries.

Plenty of other support mechanisms exist:

• Course lecturers, tutors, demonstrators
• Class representatives
• Personal Tutors
• EUSA, International Office, …
• The Advice Place, Disability Service, …
When Things Go Wrong

You may well encounter problems at some time that disrupt your study.

We do not expect you to work on regardless. If any problem arises:

• Tell your Personal Tutor - by email or arrange a meeting in person.
• If it is urgent and you cannot get in touch with your PT, ask the Student Support Team in the ITO.

Please, let us know.

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Feedback

• You have a right to get feedback on your learning, and a responsibility to give us feedback about our teaching

• Feedback should be timely, clear, informative, constructive, and useful

• If you are unhappy about anything, speak to your Lecturers, Student Reps, Year Organiser (Paul Jackson), the Director of Teaching (me)

• If you want to raise issues relating directly to feedback, talk to our Feedback Officer (Ian Stark)
Temporary Relocation to Forrest Hill Premises

• The majority of teaching activity for the School of Informatics usually takes place within Appleton Tower.

• In June 2015, work began to replace the cladding on the building so most of Informatics teaching activity will take place in Forrest Hill for a temporary period.
Temporary Relocation to Forrest Hill Premises

- Students will have access to comparable facilities over the duration of the improvement activities.
- No disruption to studies
- Expected to be for one academic year, possibly two.

The space in Forrest Hill includes:

- An increase in the number of available computers for student use
- Kitchen facilities and breakout space for student use
- A dedicated Robotics Lab
- A dedicated System Design Project Lab and breakout space
- Informatics Student Services office
Temporary Relocation to Forrest Hill Premises

Appleton Tower Pre Re-Cladding Work

http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching
Temporary Relocation to Forrest Hill Premises

Appleton Tower Post Re-Cladding Work

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Temporary Relocation to Forrest Hill Premises

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Appleton Tower Post
Re-Cladding Work

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Computer Laboratories

• The School runs **DICE**, the Distributed Informatics Computing Environment.
• This is a standard Unix desktop based on Scientific Linux.
• There are over 270 machines available for student use in Forrest Hill machine rooms.
• There is an introductory session this afternoon.
ITO and student support

Also in Forrest Hill
The School offers MSc programmes in:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Cognitive Science
- Computer Science
- Data Science
- Informatics

These cover ten specialist areas with over 50 individual courses.
What Do You Do?

• Study taught courses over two semesters totalling 120 credit points
• Research project and dissertation over the summer for 60 credit points
• Courses can involve lectures, tutorials, labs, exercises, reading, coursework, etc
• Examinations for some courses are in December, with the rest in May
Time Management

• In a semester you take 60 points of courses.
• In a full week this amounts to around 6 hours of work for each 10-point course.
• Lectures, possibly lab or tutorial = 2-3 contact hours.
• This leaves up to four hours for reading, lecture review, exercises, coursework.
• That is not long: use this time, and use it well.
Enjoy your MSc

• Congratulations for having made it here – it will be a great experience
• A one-year MSc is a very intense, demanding undertaking – keep calm and work hard
• Watch your work-life balance: study hard, but make sure you get some decent food, exercise, a social life, and sunlight!
• We will support you where we can – but it’s your responsibility to take this offer, and be proactive