**Module Welcome and Advice**

As we get to know each other, it will be clear that my goal is to make things as clear as possible for you, making it as simple as possible without simplifying the content you need to know. In return I expect you make an effort to work at this topic, it might not be your favourite topic, but you still need to work on it. Sometimes people tell themselves that because they don’t enjoy a particular topic then they “*don’t feel like studying it*”, I understand that, but I don’t think you should necessarily let your feelings always dictate your actions.

# Some Advice

1. **Learn to type**. If you don’t know how to touch type already, it would be a good idea to learn to type if you intend to spend your working career in a computer role using a keyboard for several hours a day, five days a week. It will make your life so much easier if you can touch type, so consider taking a course in it.
2. **Get a book on how to study**. Your job at the moment is to be a student, so my advice is to treat it like a job, don’t let it take over your life, but definitely do a few hours a day, five days a week on the study of your modules, this is apart from the time you spend on assignments and labs. As part of your job there are a few key skills you need to have; good note taking, good study skills, good revision technique, and good exam technique. I’m sure you have talents in each of these areas already, but there are always a few more tricks to be learned, so please consider getting a book on how to study that will give you some extra skills in those areas.
3. **Have faith in what you are being taught.** Sometimes you will encounter a topic or a module that you will wonder “*Why are we doing this?*” The answer is simple, over thirty computer scientists got together and designed the programme that you are undertaking. Our combined experience is over two hundred years of working in the computer industry and over two hundred years of academic research, so sometimes even if it isn’t obvious to you why you are doing something, there definitely is a reason for it. More than once I’ve met a student who has graduated from DIT, and has been working for a while, and they will say, “*O.K., now I understand why we studied*” a particular topic, and they tell me how useful it is for their job or career. It is also worth noting that you are undertaking an academic course of study, not a training course, so there are going to be academic elements to the course that doesn’t relate directly to your future work life but will help develop a broad set of skills that are useful for all aspects of your life. If the academic elements of the programme aren’t something you want to do, you should consider doing a professional training course instead.
4. **Keep a notebook on hand.** Sometimes when I realise I have something to look up on Google; I get my laptop, boot it up, log in, open the browser, [check e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter], and then realise that I’ve forgotten what I was going to look up … I should have written it down. Having a notebook with you at all times can be really useful; to write down when you want to search for something, to compile lists, to record your thoughts, to note down the names of books and academic papers that might be useful to you in your studies, etc. One of the key academic skills you are going to have to develop is the ability to write in an academic style, so the more practice you get writing (and reading your own writing), the better you will be at it. The notebook can also help you develop your ability to reflect on different things; to reflect on the topics you are learning, to reflect on the skills you have and the skills you need to develop, to reflect your feelings and attitudes.
5. **The library is your friend.** The library is an incredible resource available to you, not only as a place to find books or a quiet spot to study, but also as a gateway to a vast array of electronic resources including journals, e-Books and reports. Talk to the librarians as well, they may not be experts in your subject, but they know how to search and retrieve all kinds of information.
6. **Change your relationship with exams**. A lot of students have a very poor relationship with exams; they study for hours and hours before the exam, cramming everything in, then they do the exam, pouring everything they have learned back into the exam answers, and then they go home exhausted, frustrated, and with an overriding sense of dread about exams. I think because there is usually such a long period of time between doing the exam and getting the result, a lot of students just feel a sense of emptiness after the exams with no sense of closure. It can be very simple to change your feelings about exams, all you have to do is decide before you start studying for your exams what reward you are going to give to yourself once you have completed the exams. It doesn’t have to be anything expensive, it could be that you are going to download a piece of music you like listening to, it could be that you are going to go for a walk in the park or in the botanic gardens, it could be to buy a one-day bus pass and go somewhere new. It can be anything, as long as it is something you enjoy, and it is something that you don’t regularly do already (otherwise there’s no novelty to it). If you do this, and do it consistently, you will soon be associating doing exams with the fun reward that you will be getting afterwards, and the exams will get a proper sense of closure. Please note, this also applies to large assignments and to studying in general; decide on a reward, do what you have to get done, get your reward.
7. **Explore the history of computers**. Computers have a long and fascinating history, and is full of eccentric characters and fortunes made and lost. Starting with Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage, moving onto Alan Turing, from there to Grace Hopper’s development of COBOL, to the fortunes created by Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. There are so many good books on this history, including *Hackers* by Steven Levy, *The Cuckoo's Egg* by Cliff Stoll, *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* by Sydney Padu, *Where Wizards Stay Up Late* by Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon, and *Accidental Empires* by Robert X. Cringely.
8. **Technology is fun**. As well as the topics you cover in class, there is a wide range of other resources available to learn more, there are lots of free courses (<https://www.coursera.org>), and YouTube channels (<https://www.youtube.com/user/derekbanas>) that can help. There are also sites (like <https://stackoverflow.com/questions>) that has really great information, but don’t forget to acknowledge them if you use it. Learn to use <https://github.com>, and always backup everything, using Google Drive or DropBox. There lots of groups you can join as well:

* Dublin Open Source Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/dublin-oss/>
* Dublin MongoDB User Group: <https://www.meetup.com/DublinMUG/>
* Dublin Java User Group: <http://www.dubjug.org>
* Drupal Group: <https://groups.drupal.org/ireland>
* Tog – Dublin Hacker Space: <https://www.tog.ie>

1. **Don’t just read your notes.** As a lecturer I provide PowerPoint slides to you to help remind you what we did in class, I don’t really see those slides as the lecture notes, I think the information you write down in class, combined with my slides, combined with other reading you do as your lecture notes. If possible each night after class, take a quick look at the notes, use a marker to highlight key words and phrases. And write a summary of the key points you covered that day. Look at previous weeks’ summaries as well. Consider using Cornell Note Taking.
2. **Your classmates are great**. Get to know people in your class, always take opportunities to go for a cup of tea, or just have a chat with people. If you class has a facebook group or a WhatsApp group, make sure you are a member, and don’t be afraid to contribute. DIT also has a large number of student societies, join some, get to know people doing other programmes and develop a wide range of interests. Form a study group, you don’t have to study every time you meet up, you can just go for pizza, but it’s so much easier to study and do assignments when there is a group of people around you. Ask for advice from them as well.
3. **Manage your stress**. Look for ways to manage your stress, you mind not feel like you are under stress, but that doesn’t mean you are not. Exercise is really good for this, go for a walk in St. Stephen’s Green, join the gym or pool in DIT. Consider trying some relaxation techniques like: meditation, mindfulness or *Tai Chi*. One easy way to reduce stress is to avoid leaving things to the last minute, so create a template assignment document with you name, student number, programme code and name, etc. on the cover, and headings inside, including: Introduction, Design/Diagrams, Development, Discussion, Conclusions, References.
4. **Get help when you need it.** I’ve saved the most important piece of advice for last, get help when you need it, every now and then everyone needs help, so please don’t be shy about asking for help, there are a range of people dedicated to helping you in DIT. Each semester between 20 and 30 students come to me with a wide variety of problems; they might be academic problems, or financial problems, or medical problems, or personal problems. Whatever the issue is, your lecturer will be happy to talk to you about it, if they can’t help, they will pass it onto your Year Mentor or Course Co-ordinator. If don’t want to talk to academics, then talk to the Students’ Union. Part of the fees you pay goes towards your membership of the Students’ Union, so you are entitled to go to them to ask for help, and my experience of the Students’ Union is that they are tremendously helpful and caring, they can help you with financial and housing issues, they can advise you on medical and personal issues. The is also the Maths Learning Centre, and other resources. DIT also provides excellent Counselling Services and Chaplaincy Services who are always happy to help, advice and support. Here’s a booking and intake form for the Counselling Services: <https://form.jotformeu.com/DITCounselling/IntakeForm>

# Appendix A: Moving to the Passive Voice

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| **To get rid of "I” statements:** |
| I will explore several technologies  Several technologies will be explored |
| I will research academic papers  Academic papers will be researched |
| There will be many benefits to my system.  There will be many benefits to the system. |
| There will be many benefits to the system I will create.  There will be many benefits to the system. |
| To achieve these goals I will be implementing a series of technologies  To achieve these goals a series of technologies will be implemented |
| As I will discuss later in Section 4.5  As will be discussed later in Section 4.5 |
| In this project I will be using java to develop the front-end  In this project java will be used to develop the front-end |

# Appendix B: How to Cite

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| **To cite in text** |
| Cite the name of the author and the date published or last revised:  (International Narcotics Control Board, 2017) |

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| **To cite a website:** |
| **In the References**  Author/Article title, Year, Publisher, Date of Publication, <Retrieved from URL>  International Narcotics Control Board 2017, United Nations, accessed 1 October 2017, <http://www.incb.org> |

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| **To cite a book:** |
| **In the References**  Last, First, Year, *Title*. City: Publisher.  Smith, Henry, 2017, *The Ambassadors*. Rockville: Serenity. |

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| **To cite a research paper:** |
| **In the References**  Last name, First initial, Year published, Title of Paper or Proceedings, *Title of Conference or Journal*, Location, Place of publication: Publisher.  Cloyd, A.M., 2017, “Surveying Students: A Look at Citation Habits of College Students”, *EasyBib Info Lit Conference*, New York City, 2014. New York, NY: EasyBib Publishing. |