

**UCD School of Computer Science**  
**MSc Programme Delivery 2020/2021**  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2020

The UCD School of Computer Science (CS) has always been at the forefront of graduate taught programme innovation thanks to our extremely popular MSc Computer Science by Negotiated Learning (NL) and MSc Computer Science (Conversion) courses. The restrictions arising from COVID-19 present new challenges to which our programmes must evolve and adapt.

For the 2020/2021 academic year, we plan to deliver a Modern Computer Science Learning Experience that blends on-campus and at-distance teaching and learning. Our plans for on-campus delivery will be guided by the public health guidelines in Ireland. This approach will enable us to provide our students with high quality academic experiences coupled with flexibility in regard to physical presence. This re-imagining of our programmes draws on 10-years of experience in teaching law enforcement officers from around the world on our online MSc in Forensic Computing and Cybercrime Investigation course.

Our Modern Computer Science Learning Experience allows for on-campus and at-distance students. For students that can be present on campus, the facilities offered by UCD will be available subject to whatever COVID-19 restrictions that are in place. In addition, we aim to provide an element of face-to-face teaching. These classes will be complemented by at-distance delivery of other learning components. For students that cannot be present on campus, it will be possible to study all Trimester 1 modules at-distance. Students are offered full flexibility regarding whether they join us on-campus for all, part or none of Trimester 1.

All CS programmes, and almost all CS modules, will run in the coming academic year. Modules will adhere to the UCD timetable. Lectures will be delivered in one of three ways – presented on-campus with an at-distance alternative such as streaming available, streamed live, or pre-recorded. Recordings of streamed lectures will be provided after class. On-campus classes will be subject to the physical distancing and room capacity regulations in-force at the time. Lectures may be supplemented by preparatory reading of texts. Practical classes incorporating group work and demonstrator support will take place live with an on-campus class and/or online. Where possible and when demand justifies it, there will be practical offerings in other time zones. Induction sessions will introduce students to the educational and technology platforms that will be employed to ensure that every student is in a position to fully participate in all programme activities. Assessment will be offered at-distance, in the form of assignments, tests and examinations. The “drop-in” Computer Science Support Centre will continue to run online, providing flexible support to all students.

Social connection is all the more important when learning at-distance. A series of specific events and activities will be organised to foster team working and to allow students to get to know one another. This will be supplemented by provision of technology support for student peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration.

Even with the shift to alternative modalities, many aspects of the UCD CS learning experience will not change. UCD School of Computer Science module coordinators are world class experts

in their fields. Teaching assistants and demonstrators are drawn from the School's international pool of PhD students. UCD educational technology is up-to-date and technical support is responsive. Teaching is exclusively in the English language. UCD qualifications are internationally recognized and the University is a high ranking educational institution.

As in previous years, NL students will complete their Student Needs Assessments in a personal, but on this occasion remote, meeting with a member of faculty so that they can tailor their programme to meet their requirements. The NL programme draws from very many modules across the University. Most of these modules, and certainly all of the most popular CS ones will run, ensuring that students have a selection of modules available and appropriate for the negotiated learning model.

Many students on the NL programme obtained industry internships in the summer of 2020. We expect this success to continue next year. International students who take our NL and Conversion programmes on-campus are entitled to enter the Irish government's Third Level Graduate Scheme for work visas. On a once-off basis, students who were due to start their studies in an Irish Institution in September, but because of COVID-19 have to complete the first semester online and then complete their studies in Ireland, can also avail of the programme.

We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 restrictions in the coming period. At present, we expect that on-campus delivery will be limited in Trimester 1. However, we plan to offer full on-campus learning in Trimesters 2 and 3. If that is not possible, we will continue to facilitate at-distance learning.

Computer Science graduates - more than graduates in any other sector - will be expected to be in a position to work remotely and be familiar with a broad range of communication and collaboration technologies. Now is the time to engage in a Modern Computer Science Learning Experience.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at the address below if you have *any* questions.

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MSc Computer Science (Conversion): Gráinne Ní Nualláin ([grainne.ninuallain@ucd.ie](mailto:grainne.ninuallain@ucd.ie))

We look forward to welcoming you to these programmes. Your Programme Manager will be in contact with you shortly regarding programme induction.

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*The information contained in this document is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of the date above. Due to the dynamic nature of the COVID19 response, planning for the academic year is necessarily subject to change.*