



Dublin City University
School of Electronic Engineering

Second Year Students Frequently Asked Questions

Second Year Tutor
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Research and Engineering Building, DCU



General Information

Why does this document look familiar?

There is an FAQ for each year of your degree programme, so you will have seen one at the beginning of first year. Some issues are common to all years, and hence, are addressed in all the year FAQs. Other issues are specific to certain years and only appear once. All of the FAQs are updated at the beginning of each academic year.

So what is new this year?

Well, obviously you have a whole new set of modules. This year the modules are no longer shared across all engineering programmes. In addition, we will expect that you have now fully made the transition between school-goer and university student. Primarily, we expect you to have taken on board the difference between the role of a teacher (in imparting information by whatever means necessary!) and a lecturer, whose role is to guide you in *your* acquisition of material. We expect you to assume responsibility for your own actions such as attending lectures and labs, keeping up with material, etc.

Where does my course fit in to the DCU structure?

At the end of your first year you were given the opportunity to choose what programme to pursue. You are studying on the Second Year of one of the following programmes:

- B.Eng. in Digital Media Engineering
- B.Eng. in Electronic Engineering
- B.Eng. in Information and Communication Engineering
- European B.Eng/M.Eng. in Electronic Systems

The School of Electronic Engineering, which is part of the **Faculty of Engineering and Computing** at DCU, teaches all of the above courses. The School has a lecturing staff of 20, with a technician team of 7. More information about them is available on the web at the following address:

http://www.dcu.ie/electronic_engineering/staff/academic.shtml

Who is the Head of Faculty/School?

Mr. Jim Dowling is the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. His office is located in room L118 on the first floor of the Computing Building.

Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Computing	Mr. Jim Dowling		e-mail: jim.dowling@dcu.ie
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Dr. Noel Murphy is the Head of the School of Electronic Engineering. His office is located in room S347 on the third floor of the Research and Engineering Building.

Head of School of Electronic Engineering	Dr. Noel Murphy		e-mail: Noel.Murphy@dcu.ie
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What is the year tutor?

You were assigned a personal tutor/mentor in first year and this person remains your tutor for all your years of study. Each year also has a year tutor to deal with issues specific to that year. The second year tutor is **Dr. Jennifer McManis**, whose office is on the third floor in room S330. If you have any problems impacting on your experience here, you can contact your Personal Tutor and/or the Second Year Tutor.

Second Year Tutor	Dr. Jennifer McManis		e-mail: mcmanisj@eeng.dcu.ie
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Who is in charge of my Degree Programme?

There is a programme chairperson in charge of each of the programmes as follows:

Digital Media Engineering	Dr. Robert Sadleir		e-mail: robert.sadleir@dcu.ie
Electronic Engineering	Dr. Conor Brennan		e-mail: brennanc@eeng.dcu.ie
Information and communications Engineering			
Mechatronic Engineering			

Academic Structure

What modules will I take this year?

The following chart summarises information about the modules taken by each programme. With the exception of EM203, these modules are no longer shared across all programmes. There is still a good deal of overlap amongst the three electronic engineering programmes, as can be seen in the table below. Full module descriptors are available from the registry at http://www.dcu.ie/registry/module_contents.php (or from the links below).

Code	Title	Sem	Credits	CA%	Exam%	EE	ICE	DME
EM203	Mathematics II	Year long	10	50	50	X	X	X
EE214	Circuits and Systems	Year long	10	30	70	X		X
EE203	Circuits	1	5	30	70		X	
EF318	New Enterprise Development	1	5	100	0	X	X	X
EE215	Solid State Electronics	1	5	20	80	X		
EE219	Object Oriented Programming	1	5	25	75	X	X	X
EE223	Digital and Analogue Electronics	1	5	30	70	X	X	X
EE224	Data Communications and Networks 1	1	5	0	100		X	X
CA216	Operating Systems	2	5	30	70	X	X	X
EE201	Digital Circuits and Systems	2	5	25	75	X	X	X
EE202	Embedded Systems	2	5	25	75	X	X	X
PS202	Electromagnetism 1	2	5	30	70	X	X	
CA218	Introduction to Databases	2	5	25	75		X	X

How do I find out what I should be doing?

You can find your class timetable on the DCU website at the following address: <http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/search.shtml> . Other timetables are available on the DCU website at the following address: <http://www.dcu.ie/timetables> . Lecturers in the School of Electronic Engineering regularly use e-mail for communication with students and with each other. Lecturers will assume you are using your DCU e-mail account and may send meeting requests, important notices etc., to your address. Even if you are using another e-mail account please check your DCU account regularly. If you set up e-mail forwarding from your DCU email account to another one, make sure you check that it works. Keep your mailbox below quota limits – if a lecturer sends an e-mail to a class list, they will not be notified if the system cannot deliver it to any individual students on the list.

How much time do I need to spend studying? I have a part-time job. Is that a problem?

This is a full-time degree. It is designed assuming that students will spend a full working week at DCU (5 days, 9 to 6). It is very important to make sure that you keep up with what is happening in lectures, tutorials and laboratories. If you cannot do the tutorial problems for a particular subject, then you are not doing enough work for that module!

Formally, the estimate of the amount of work a student must do is based on ECTS credits. Marks and Standards (<http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/standards.shtml>). states:

“ECTS credits are based on the workload a typical student needs to complete in order to achieve expected learning outcomes.”

“60 ECTS credits are typically attached to the workload of two full-time semester periods of formal learning and the associated learning outcomes. Therefore student workload whereby one ECTS credit corresponds to 25 hours of work equals 1,500 hours per 60 ECTS credits.”

You are all engineers, so you can work out the expected commitment per week. This does not mean that any individual must spend exactly that much time on each module, but overall, it is likely you will end up spending at least that much time if you wish to do well.

Many students **have** to work substantial hours every week just to pay rent and feed themselves. Many others work to pay for their social life and a car. Remember that a degree course lasts just 4 years, and that your summers are your own. If you don't have to sacrifice study time to work outside DCU, don't!

What do I do if I fall behind?

Go through the lecture notes and prepare a set of most significant questions. Go to the tutorials and ask those questions. Go to the library and borrow books advised by the lecturers and read them. Write notes, as they will help you understand better in the first place and review principles later on. Discuss issues with demonstrators during practicals and with tutors during tutorials. Talk to your lecturers. Form study groups with your friends. One of the best ways to learn is to discuss concepts and problems with others taking the class. Both having someone to discuss things you are having difficulty with and explaining what you understand to others are beneficial. Note: in the case where assignments are to be completed individually, it is best not to discuss specific details of the assignment until after it is turned in to avoid suspicion of plagiarism.

Do I have to go to the Library? Why?

You will receive a list of textbooks usually during the first lectures of each module, books that are recommended by the lecturers. It is strongly recommended to go to the library and borrow some of those books and read the sections related to the material presented in the lectures. In general, only brief information on certain subjects is presented during the lectures and textbooks need to be referred to for more detailed information.

I failed some exams. Will I have to repeat the year?

Not necessarily. For any module, it may be possible to resit the exam, the continuous assessment, or both. The resit options for a module are described in the module descriptor (http://www.dcu.ie/registry/module_contents.php) or from the links in the module table. If you are in any doubt as to your resit options, please contact the lecturer.

Additionally, it may not be necessary to avail of resits if you have done well in other subjects. We allow some compensation of marks between subjects, but we only decide that in June, when we have seen your results for both Semesters. The compensation rules are described in Marks and Standards (<http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/standards.shtml>).

Safety Information

What has Safety got to do with me?

Safety of staff, students and visitors is of paramount importance in the School of Electronic Engineering, and relies on the cooperation of all students. It is very essential that you heed all safety instructions, particularly when working in the laboratories and project areas.

If you have a concern about safety, please bring it to the attention of technical staff, or a lecturer.

What do I do if the Fire Alarm rings?

Leave the building immediately via the nearest fire exit!

- On hearing the alarm leave the building IMMEDIATELY
- Leave by the nearest EMERGENCY EXIT
- Do not stop to retrieve belongings
- Do not run/use lift
- Comply with instructions of Fire Wardens/Security
- On exiting the building head to the nearest assembly point
- Do not re-enter until given the all clear by Security/Fire Wardens

Please note that it is intended that every student occupied building on campus will have a Fire Drill during the first two weeks of the new academic year.

Health Information

I have a health problem? What do I do?

You can visit the DCU Health Centre situated on the Ground Floor of the Henry Grattan Building, room - CG13. The service is private and confidential. Nurses can be seen on a walk-in basis, while doctor appointments are scheduled as required. Call 700-5143 and make an appointment with Paula. Students with any medical conditions in need of on-going care are advised to register with the Student Health Service at the beginning of term. You can get more information at the following web address: <http://www.dcu.ie/students/health/index.shtml>

I have a Special need. Who can help me?

The University has a unit dedicated to facilitating people with all forms of Special needs. More information relating to Special needs can be found at the following address: <http://www.dcu.ie/students/disability/index.shtml>.

If I get sick and miss a Lab, what should I do?

Talk to the lecturer. S/he will discuss the matter with you. You may be asked to provide some documentation of your illness.

I have been sick for a significant portion of the term and/or around exam time?

If you have on-going health issues, or have been sick at a time that might affect your exam performance (or make you absent from an exam) you must obtain medical evidence, fill out an Extenuating Circumstances for R30 (<http://www.dcu.ie/registry/forms/pdfs/R30.pdf>) and submit both to the Registry. You should also notify the lecturer(S) concerned, the Programme Chair and your Personal Tutor. For further information about examinations see <http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations> and/or <http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/regulations.shtml> . If you miss multiple continuous assessments due to your illness, you should also discuss this with your lecturer.

I am completely stressed out, what do I do?

It is not unusual for students to experience stress during their studies, due to course related and/or external factors. If you are feeling enough stress that it is affecting your work and/or your quality of life, you should seek help. Counselling services are available on campus (see <http://www.dcu.ie/students/counselling/index.shtml>). As with illness, it is vital that you document your condition and inform someone (personal tutor, programme chair, etc.) of your condition in order for us to take account of it in assessing your performance and progress through the programme.

I think I may have human swine flu A (H1N1). What should I do?

Do not come to DCU for any reason or attend your GP. Call the free phone Flu Information Line (1800 941100) available 24 hrs a day. Listen to the symptoms of flu and the advice on home care. If you have severe symptoms or are in a high risk group (have diabetes, chronic respiratory, heart, liver, or neurological disease, are immuno-suppressed, aged 65 years or older, are on medication for asthma, severely obese or pregnant) then contact your GP for advice. If you have symptoms of A (H1N1) flu then record your absence from college through the facility on your portal page or contact the School Secretary (phone 7005104) or programme chair. If you phone and need to leave a message, then remember to give your name, student number, and whether or not you are living in campus accommodation. For more details see <http://www.dcu.ie/influenza/index.shtml> and <http://www.dcu.ie/students/health/h1n1.shtml>

I have been in contact with someone who has A (H1N1) flu or suspected A (H1N1) flu or I know someone in college who has it. What should I do?

The advice given (<http://www.dcu.ie/students/health/h1n1.shtml>) is to come to college as normal. If you are in a high-risk group then first contact your GP for advice.

What can I do to help stop the spread of A (H1N1) flu?

Please follow the guidelines regarding the washing of hands, etc., clearly posted around the campus.

DCU Plagiarism Policy

When is it acceptable to work together with other students?

Unless specified (as in group projects or assignments), it is expected that work submitted for assessment is solely the work of an individual (yourself). The new DCU Plagiarism Policy was approved by Academic Council on 10th June 2009 and states:

“Dublin City University defines plagiarism as follows: it is the deliberate act of taking and using another person’s work as your own. It includes absent references, reproducing the work (even with small changes) of another, taken from books, journals, articles, TV programmes, the internet, lecture notes and so on. It also includes self plagiarism, i.e. submitting own work for more than one assessment, copying another person’s work, with or without his/her consent. Also included is collusion where a group of people collaborate or collude to present an assessment or a substantial part thereof, when the examiner required individual research and outcome.”

All assessments must be submitted with a signed copy of the University’s Declaration on Plagiarism [see *Appendix A of the university policy on plagiarism*]. Where online or electronic submission is required, the University’s Declaration on Plagiarism will be published on the assignment submission page.

You can find the university policy at the following URL:

<http://www.dcu.ie/info/regulations/plagiarism.shtml>

But what about study groups?

Discussing course material with your friends is an excellent way to study course material. There is a great benefit in pooling resources either in having someone explain something that is confusing you, or in having to explain something to someone else so they can also understand it. We strongly support the formation of these groups. But...assignments are to assess **your** grasp of the material, not the group’s, so all of the above applies. So, **please do** discuss the concepts pertaining to the assignments, but try to **avoid** sitting around in a group doing the assignment at the same time, as this will potentially lead to worryingly similar looking assignments.

Computer Usage Policy

When can I use the computer rooms and what can I do there?

The undergraduate computer rooms in the School of Electronic Engineering are available to students when not in use for teaching/examination purposes. There will be times when all these rooms are required for teaching at the same time and other times when there is no computer free. You should plan to finish assignments that require the use of computers well before deadlines because a computer may not be available when you want one. These activities are forbidden in all labs and subject to fines:

- Eating
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Playing Games

Do not leave litter on the desks in the computer rooms – please use the bins provided. These rules are in the interest of fairness – please stick to them:

- Never leave computers locked.
- If students are having difficulties finding computers and you are using one for non-academic purposes, be prepared to give it up.
- Do not disturb other people trying to use the computers – e.g. take your conversations outside.

Be conscious of the amount of time you are spending in the computer rooms for non-academic purposes. There are recognised addictions associated with computer usage – if computer usage is affecting your academic performance or personal life then you may have a problem. Also, the computer facilities are not, in general, for personal use – you can check your e-mails but you should only spend short periods of time doing this. Be conscious of the time you spend in the computer rooms for academic purposes:

- Note that there are ways of finding information on the web efficiently – or a trip to library may be more appropriate if searching for technical information.
- Remember that much information on the web is unreliable. Also, many technical explanations available on the web are badly written and often misleading.
- There are notes for using Word, Excel, and Visio in an efficient way on the EM107 web-site (<http://webpages.dcu.ie/~kennedal/em107.htm>) – you can save yourself a lot of time if you use these applications in the right way.
- You need to take regular breaks when using computers – look into the distance every few minutes – take breaks regularly (every 20 to 40 minutes).
- Make sure your seat back is upright and that the seat is at the correct height (your arm, when using the mouse, should be horizontal – if it's pointing a little downwards or upwards then you need to move the seat up or down). Make sure you are sitting straight in front of the computer and the keyboard. If you are switching back and forth between the computer and notes on the desk beside it then remember to move/turn your chair, not your body.

The university regulations for computer usage are available at:

<http://www.dcu.ie/info/regulations/computing.shtml>

Here are some key points from them:

- Computing resources must not be used for any illegal or unethical purposes and should not generally be used for recreational or personal use.
- It is the responsibility of the individual to be aware of the regulations and guidelines.
- Ignorance of the regulations and guidelines is not acceptable as an excuse or defence.
- Each user is responsible for the content and use of their own account. Users are responsible for all activities carried out under their account. Passwords assigned to accounts must not be divulged to others.
- Users must not interfere or attempt to interfere in any way with data belonging to another user. No user should access or make unauthorised copies of data belonging to another user.
- Users must not use the computing resources to store, create, display or transmit (other than for properly supervised and lawful research purposes) any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material, or any data capable of being distorted into obscene or indecent images or material.
- Users must not deliberately perform acts which are wasteful of computing resources or which unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others.
- Users must not put any copyrighted material (e.g. images, video, music, software etc.) on web pages without prior permission from the appropriate authority.
- Note that the University may access an individual's records such as, but not limited to, email, file and Internet records, without their consent if there is evidence that breach of the law or of university policies probably has occurred.
- Logs are kept of most activities, for example, for backup purposes, the e-mail system retains records of all e-mail messages sent and received through the University's e-mail accounts and all accesses to the Internet are automatically logged. There are daily, weekly, monthly and annual cycles of backups. It is important to note that deleting data does not necessarily remove it from the system. It may still be possible to retrieve such data and to have it reviewed.
- It is prohibited to send or forward e-mails containing offensive or disruptive content, which includes, but is not limited to, defamatory, harassing, offensive, racist, obscene or threatening remarks. If you receive an e-mail of this nature, you should inform your Head of School or your lecturer.

You are not allowed to:

- Access, create, copy, or transfer web pages or other material accessible across the Internet that is in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- Play games on computing facilities available for general access except where required formally as part of research work, course work, DCU sponsored events or other DCU approved activity.
- Use the facilities for betting and gambling type purposes.
- Display material, play music, run video material or activate other materials that interfere with or are offensive to others.
- Publish information or statements about other people which could harm their reputation.
- Use the facilities to promote personal political, ideological and/or religious beliefs.

Make sure you read the regulations fully. Just because you see other people doing something does not make it acceptable, does not mean that you won't be the one who is caught, and will not be accepted as an excuse when you are faced with punishment.