
User interface design and evaluation M873

Presentation pattern *May to October*
November to April

Programme information

The postgraduate computing programme consists of a number of 15-point taught modules, and a research project and dissertation, which can be combined to gain first a general postgraduate certificate in computing, and then one of the following routes to an MSc:

- a specialist diploma and MSc in Software Development
- a specialist diploma and MSc in Networks and Distributed Systems
- a specialist diploma and MSc in Management of Software Projects
- a broader diploma and MSc in Computing for Commerce and Industry (CCI).

All the routes to an MSc consist of two parts. The first is successful completion of the taught modules that lead to a postgraduate diploma. Successful completion of the research project and a 10,000–15,000-word dissertation, then leads to the award of an MSc.

In all the diplomas except Software Development, students also have the option of including some postgraduate technology modules or modules from the OU Business School.

All modules are designed for practising professionals and managers in the fields of computing, manufacturing and engineering, in related service industries and the public sector, and in educational organisations. Students are expected to have some experience of software development before they start any of these modules. Experience could be as developers, as project managers of developers, or as specifiers of software systems. Students do not require knowledge of any particular programming language, although they need to be comfortable with studying and manipulating symbols and notations. Specific modules make use of SQL and Java. Practical experience is an important part of the modules.

Associate lecturers

Your role on the taught modules in the diplomas is to comment on and mark assignments and give telephone and electronic tuition to individual students. There may be opportunities to present tutorials to introduce the modules, or at the revision schools (these are contracted separately). You will be concerned with the general progress of your students; you should try to ensure that they submit all assignments as well as encourage them to participate in online forums and attend the optional residential revision school before the examination. For the dissertation module, you are employed as a supervisor and are allocated a single student or a small group. You are expected to support and supervise your student/s during the module of their project, advising on the preparation of assignments, which you will mark, and the dissertation. You are also required to be one of two markers for the dissertation.

Tuition on the postgraduate computing modules increasingly involves electronic communication and you will be required to use online forums to communicate with the Postgraduate Technology and Computing (PTC) office in Nottingham.

Module description

The user interface (UI) can be critical to the success or failure of a computer system. The development of UIs requires an iterative design and evaluation process involving users at every stage. M873 illustrates this user-centred design process by discussing a variety of UIs, including websites, graphical user interfaces and embedded systems. Industrial applications illustrating how UI design issues have been addressed within different organisations will be discussed. Practical exercises using different media are also included. Students will design and evaluate a UI in collaboration with its users.

Person specification

The person specification for this module should be read in conjunction with the [generic person specification](#) for an associate lecturer at The Open University.

As well as meeting all the requirements set out in the generic person specification, you should have:

- experience of some aspects of human-computer interaction
- experience of user-centred iterative user interface design and development (e.g. managing the process or supervising student projects)
- familiarity with recent developments in human-computer interaction, either through research or experience.

It would be an advantage to have:

- a degree in a related subject such as computing, psychology or ergonomics
- an understanding of the software engineering process and its relationship with human-computer interaction.

Additional information

- The minimum computer specification for the module is insufficient for marking assignments electronically. A large monitor (17 inch, 256 colour) would be preferable, and you may need significantly more free disk space than is recommended for students.

Module related details - a full explanation can be found on the website

Credits awarded to the student for the successful completion of a module:	15
Number of assignments submitted by the student:	3
Method of submission for assignments:	1a
Level of ICT requirements:	2
Number of students likely to be in a standard group:	18
Salary band:	3
Estimated number of hours per teaching week:	4.5