



Faculty of  
Computing, Engineering  
and Mathematical Sciences

**Faculty of Computing, Engineering & Mathematical Sciences**

**BA (Hons) Information Systems Studies**

**Definitive Document – February 2004**

## Programme Specification

### Section 1: Basic Data

<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of the West of England
<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of the West of England
<b>Faculty responsible for programme</b>	Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences
<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/A
<b>Highest award title</b>	BA (Hons) Information Systems Studies
<b>Default award title</b>	None. BA (Hons) Information Systems Studies will be the default award title for awards in the School of Information Systems, currently: BA Business Information Systems, BA Information Systems Analysis
<b>Interim award title</b>	BA Information Systems Studies Dip. HE Information Systems Studies Cert. HE Information Systems Studies
<b>Modular Scheme title (if different)</b>	Faculty of Computing, Engineering & Mathematical Sciences Modular Scheme
<b>UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant)</b>	
<b>Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</b>	Computing
<b>On-going/valid until* (*delete as appropriate/insert end date)</b>	
<b>Valid from (insert date if appropriate)</b>	1st September 2004
<b>Authorised by...</b>	<b>Date:...</b>
<b>Version Code 2</b>	
<i>For coding purposes, a numerical sequence (1, 2, 3 etc.) should be used for successive programme specifications where 2 replaces 1, and where there are no concurrent specifications. A sequential decimal numbering (1.1; 1.2, 2.1; 2.2 etc) should be used where there are different and concurrent programme specifications</i>	

## ***Section 2: Educational Aims of the Programme***

Students who fail a module that is core on their programme are, within the Modular Assessment Regulations, denied any further opportunity to progress. This aspect of MAR results in a number of students each year being required to withdraw from their programme of study. The BA Information Systems Studies is intended to offer an alternative route for such students by providing them with a 'fall-back' programme. A student enrolled on a BA in the School of Information Systems (currently these are the BA Business Information Systems and the BA Information Systems Analysis) will be offered transfer to this programme in the event that they had passed at least 60 credits on their existing programme but had subsequently been required to withdraw through failure on a core module. All the credit already achieved on a student's current award will be transferred to BA Information Systems Studies. The programme then provides a set of modules from which the student can choose in order to accumulate sufficient credit, within MAR, to graduate with an honours degree.

Students may not enroll directly to this programme.

Notwithstanding the nature of this programme, the following general aims apply:

1. to teach within an overall information systems perspective, hence emphasizing the importance of information processes and of contexts of use, the role and interests of users, and policy issues;
2. to foster in students an interest in the longer-term and broader implications, directions and impacts of information and communication technologies, while exposing them to specific contemporary technologies, models and methods which will be useful to them as they enter work after graduating;
3. to encourage students to examine the effects and potential of the technologies they study on organizations and on people's life and work
4. to encourage students to develop a critical, resourceful practice of their own, as well as an ability to work effectively in teams

### Section 3: Learning Outcomes of the Programme

#### A. Knowledge and Understanding

<b><i>Knowledge and Understanding of:</i></b>	<b><i>Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Assessment</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Topics in the area of Information Systems.</li> <li>2. Methods and notations to assist in the communication of Information Systems</li> <li>3. An appreciation of the breadth of the field Information Systems.</li> <li>4. The ethical issues in the field of Information Systems</li> </ol>	<p>In addition to traditional lecture/tutorial based teaching, the modules in the Information Systems field make extensive use of case study work and team work. Throughout, students are encouraged to consider the impact of Information Systems on human systems. On all modules, at all levels, the learner is encouraged to undertake independent reading both to supplement and consolidate what is being taught/learnt and to broaden their individual knowledge of the subject.</p>	<p>Testing of the knowledge base is through some combination of:</p> <p>Examination Peer and tutor evaluation Group coursework/project</p>

#### B. Intellectual Skills

<b><i>Intellectual Skills</i></b>	<b><i>Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Assessment</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critical Thinking</li> <li>2. Analysis</li> <li>3. Synthesis of different types of information</li> <li>4. Evaluation</li> <li>5. Problem Solving</li> <li>6. Appreciate problem contexts</li> <li>7. Balance conflicting objectives</li> </ol>	<p>At all levels students are required to bring together knowledge and skills acquired in several modules and hence determine new ways of working. As the student progresses, the need to synthesise (3) ever-greater volumes of information and approaches into a coherent approach is developed and consequently so is their critical thinking (1).</p>	<p>Through some combination of:</p> <p>Examination Peer and tutor evaluation Group coursework/project</p>

### C. Subject, Professional and Practical Skills

<b><i>Subject/Professional/Practical Skills</i></b>	<b><i>Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Assessment</i></b>
<p>Students will typically be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use appropriate notations to describe and critique existing Information Systems</li> <li>2. Discuss the human/business contexts in which Information Systems are placed and the effects thereof.</li> <li>3. Use appropriate techniques and notations to develop new information Systems</li> </ol>	<p>Throughout the CEMS faculty skills are taught by a combination of theory and practice. The general teaching/learning method is to impart these practical/professional skills by a process of moving from an overview of what is required (at level 1) to a specific application of an individual skill at a higher level. Some very specific skills are introduced at level 3. These are underpinned by the more generalised capabilities that are practised throughout the levels in most of the modules that contribute to the award.</p>	<p>In general, the possession of these skills is demonstrated by the development of piece of coursework (an essay, a design or an item of software), by presentation or by examination.</p>

## D. Transferable Skills and Other Attributes

<b><i>Transferable Skills and Other Attributes</i></b>	<b><i>Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Assessment</i></b>
1. Communication skills: to communicate orally or in writing.	1. Skill one is typically developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students participate in electronic conferences, workshops, and groupwork sessions.</li> <li>◆ Students participate in discussion tutorials</li> <li>◆ Students present research topic findings in tutorials</li> <li>◆ Students participate in individual tutorials</li> </ul>	All of the skills are demonstrated in varying degrees in all of the employed assessments with the exception of teamwork, which is covered in some of the coursework.
2. Self-management skills: to manage one's own time; to meet deadlines	2. Skill two is typically developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students conduct self-managed work to be completed by a given deadline.</li> <li>◆ Students undertake directed reading to be completed by a given deadline</li> <li>◆ Students undertake research in preparation for classroom based activities.</li> </ul>	
3. IT skills in context: to use software tools in the context of application development.	3. Skill three is typically developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students conduct self-managed practical work</li> <li>◆ Students work through practical work-sheets in teams</li> <li>◆ Students make use of online teaching materials</li> </ul>	

<p>4. Problem Formulation and Decision-Making: To undertake analysis and interpretation of information and express problems in appropriate notations.</p>	<p>4. Skill four is typically developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students develop solutions in relation to case-study based problems</li> <li>◆ Students sketch designs of large systems, where these systems might be business, social or software systems.</li> </ul>	
<p>5. Progression to independent learning: To gain experience of, and to develop skills in, learning independently of structured class work. For example, to develop the ability to use on-line facilities to further self-study.</p>	<p>◆ 5. Skill five is typically developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are encouraged to research relevant topics</li> <li>◆ Students are encouraged to use online facilities to discover information</li> </ul>	
<p>6. Awareness of professional literature: to read and to use literature sources appropriate to the discipline to support learning activities</p>	<p>6. Skill six is developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are encouraged to access online material</li> <li>◆ Students review the literature for discussion in tutorial classes and electronic conferences</li> </ul>	
<p>7. Teamwork: to be able to work as a member of a team; to be aware of the benefits and problems which teamwork can bring</p>	<p>7. Skill seven is developed through a variety of methods and strategies including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are required to participate in electronic conferences</li> <li>◆ Students will develop reports/designs in groups.</li> </ul>	

## **Section 4: Programme Structure**

The programme is designed to provide a fall-back award to students who would otherwise be required to withdraw from their programme. Subject to the requirements of the Modular Assessment Regulations, students may select any combination of modules not already taken, from modules in the Information Systems Field and the Computer Science Field.

There is no intention to recruit to the programme. In order to transfer to the programme, students must already have accumulated at least 60 credits on their existing programme. All credit gained while enrolled on that programme will be transferred to the BA Information Systems Studies.

It is not possible to describe the structure of the programme by level. The lists below show the IS and Computer Science modules currently available. The lists are divided into three sets merely for readability. Students may pursue any of the modules in any order, subject to having the necessary prerequisites.

**PLEASE NOTE: REFER TO THE FACULTY ON-LINE  
INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR UP-TO-DATE  
STRUCTURE INFORMATION**

<http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk/exist/index.xql>

**Section 5: Entry Requirements**

Not applicable. There is no intention to recruit directly to this programme..

**Section 6: Assessment Regulations**

The Modular Assessment Regulations apply to this programme

**Section 7: Student Learning: Distinctive Features and Support**

Students are eligible for BA Information Systems Studies if they have failed (i.e. have used all four assessment opportunities) one or more core modules at any level on their current award. As a consequence, they would be unable to complete their current award. Transfer to BA Information System Studies allows such students to graduate with an award of appropriate, though less prestigious, title rather than an unnamed general award.

The award of a Degree is likely to be of particular value to students failing to achieve at level 3 and who wish to accept a lower level of award rather than fail to graduate at all.

**Section 8 Reference Points/Benchmarks**

The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Computing was published in 2000, and is applicable to this proposal. The design team has considered them in drawing up the structure of the proposed degree, and is of the view that the proposal falls clearly within the scope of the benchmarks, as regards curriculum, teaching and learning, and the benchmarking standards themselves.

The benchmarks (para 2.1) identify a range of types of degrees in computing, from (at one extreme) a programme which "*covers a wide range of topics spanning the entire area of computing*" to (at another extreme) programmes which "*take one very specific aspect of computing and covers it in great depth*". This proposal sits at the boundary of the first of these extremes. Nevertheless it does offer the potential for students to recognise the importance of speciality areas, in particular through the choice of Level 2 and 3 modules, where that is applicable.

The benchmarks recognise (para 3.3) that diversity of provision is to be encouraged. This programme meets the ambition of the faculty to provide programmes suitable for as wide as possible a range of students, by offering a route to a degree for those who would otherwise be forced to withdraw.

The benchmarks also contain (section 5) statements of the standards expected of graduates at both modal and threshold levels. The team is of the view that graduates of the proposed programme will be able to meet the required standards.