

Guidance for Part-time and Modular Flexible Study for 2017/18

(Jan 2017)

Our Taught Postgraduate Programme in Human-Computer Interaction can be studied part-time over two years or on a modular flexible basis over three years. In exceptional circumstances modular flexible students may be permitted to take up to five years to complete the MSc including the research project. We will not normally approve an initial study plan of more than four years duration. Most students follow a recommended pattern of study and assessment but individual plans can be negotiated.

All applicants to the course who are interested in discussing a pattern of modular flexible attendance should contact the Course Director at the earliest opportunity.

Applicants in employment are advised to seek satisfactory commitment from their employer to permit time away from work for the required attendance and study activities. We have calculated that total student learning hours (including timetabled events and self-study) is around 47 hours per week in term-time. Part-time and modular flexible students will need to allow the same amount of time, pro-rata, for their studies. This works out at 24 hours per week for a 30 credit module and 12 hours per week for a 15 credit module.

Applicants from outside the European Economic Area should check Immigration and Visa requirements carefully before applying for part-time or modular flexible study. See <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/immigration-visa>.

Timetable

An overview of the timetable can be found at <https://uclic.ucl.ac.uk/content/2-study/2-prospective-taught-courses/2-part-time-study/timetable-provisional-16-17.pdf>

Term dates for 2016/17 and future years can be found at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff/term-dates/2017-2018>.

Term 1 and 2

Teaching takes place over two 10 week terms (11 weeks in total with “reading week” break in the middle). Teaching is scheduled on weekdays usually between 10:00 and 5 pm. The 30 credit core modules will be taught in Term 1 (late September - December) with each module taught over two days per week. The 15 credit optional modules will be taught in Term 2 (January – March) and most will be timetabled on one day per week. We very strongly recommend that part-time students negotiate the whole day as study leave on days they are attending teaching. Part-time students will also need to negotiate study time with their employer during the university vacations and between April and September for completing assignments and self-study.

Term 3 and 4

Please note that the taught timetable only applies from September to April each year. You will still need to plan for study commitments, such as revision and reading ahead, as well as attendance at examinations and project meetings.

Term 3 (April to June). In this term attendance may be required at project meetings, examinations and for coursework. Some modules are assessed by prior disclosure exams, which will require an intensive study period, usually of two weeks, between the release of the examination paper and the examination itself. Dates for examinations are typically announced in March each year. Attendance at a personal tutor meeting during this term is compulsory.

Term 4 – (July – September). Students taking the MSc Project will need to arrange sufficient study time to allow them to complete the dissertation.

Structure

MSc Human-Computer Interaction

The MSc is made up of 180 credits, 120 credits of taught modules and a 60 credit dissertation. There are two compulsory 30 credit core modules and students then take 60 credits of 15 credit optional modules.

Part-Time (2 Years)

Students taking the programme MSc over two years take 60 credits of taught modules in Year 1 and 60 credits of taught modules + the 60 credit dissertation in year 2.

Year 1.

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). Induction week (up to 4 days), 1 x 30 credit core module (2 days per week)

Term 2 (Jan – March) 2 x 15 credit optional module (2 days per week)

Term 3 (May-June) coursework deadlines, possible examinations.

Term 4 (July – September) either no formal study commitments/ working on project

Year 2

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). 1 x 30 credit core module (2 days per week)

Term 2 (Jan – March) 2 x 15 credit optional module (2 days per week)

Term 3 (May-June) coursework deadlines, possible examinations (depending on modules taken), research project proposal & presentation.

Terms 4 (June – September) intensive/ continued working on MSc research project

3 year study pattern (modular-flexible).

Year 1.

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). Induction week (up to 4 days), 1 x 30 credit core module (2 days per week)

Term 2 (Jan – March) 1 or 2 x 15 credit optional modules (1 or 2 days per week)

Term 3 (May-June) possible exams (1 day + revision – depending on modules taken)

Term 4 (July – September) no formal study commitments (reading ahead)

Year 2

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). 1 x 30 credit core module (2 days per week)

Term 2 (Jan – March) 1 or 2 x 15 credit optional module (1 or 2 days per week)

Term 3 (May-June) possible exams (1 day for exam + revision – depending on modules taken)

Term 4 (July – September) no formal study commitment/ starting project.

Year 3

Term 1 no modules – start project work

Term 2 (Jan – March) 1 or 2 x 15 credit optional module (1 or 2 days per week)

Term 3 – (May-June) possible exams (1 day for exam + revision – depending on modules taken)

Term 4 – Completing Project

Students taking the programme over three years tend to have more individual patterns. Many students take 60 credits of taught modules in years 1 and 2 and the dissertation in year 3.

Part-time project work for the MSc

The project is an individual piece of academic research work that takes 13 weeks of intensive study for full-time students. Attendance is required periodically in Terms 3 and 4 for meetings with project research supervisors and for project submission.

We have found that most part-time students have three realistic options for project work.

- a) To negotiate with their employer to work full-time through their first summer(s), then dedicate themselves full-time to the project through their final summer;
- b) To start the project part-time in their penultimate summer and work part-time through each summer, submitting the project in their final year.
- c) Students working in HCI related roles may be able to arrange for the MSc project to be hosted by their employer. This is dependent on the successful negotiation of a project that fulfills the academic requirements of the MSc Project. If this is successfully arranged project activities do not need to be limited to the summer months. Guidance must be sought from the MSc Project Co-ordinator/ Programme Director before embarking on a project with an industry host and a member of UCLIC Academic Staff must be secured as a supervisor.

Individual guidance (from the Course Director or the Projects Tutor) will be given to each part-time student on making a choice of work pattern for their project and on the pros and cons of each pattern.

PGDip Human-Computer Interaction

The PGDip is made up of 120 credits of taught modules. There are two compulsory 30 credit core modules and students then take 60 credits of 15 credit optional modules.

Part Time (2 years)

The same as for the MSc but without the MSc Project in Year 2.

Modular Flexible (3+years)

The same as for the MSc but without the MSc Project in Years 2/3

PGCert in Human-Computer Interaction

The PGCert is made up of 60 credits of taught modules. Students must take one out of the two 30 credit core modules and 30 credits of option modules (for PGCert students this can include the remaining 30 credit core module).

4 month study pattern

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). Induction week (up to 4 days), 2 x 30 credit core module (4 days per week)

Term 2 no modules

Term 3 – (May June) possible exams (attendance at exams + time for revision – depending on modules taken)

1 year study pattern

Term 1 (Late Sept – Dec). Induction week (up to 4 days), 1 x 30 credit core module (2 days per week)

Term 2 (11 week Jan – March) 2 x 15 credit optional module (2 days per week)

Term 3 – (May June) possible exams (attendance at exams + time for revision – depending on modules taken)

2 year study pattern

We anticipate that two year study pattern for the PG Cert will be highly individual once the initial 30 credit core module has been completed. We anticipate that students will attend induction week (up to 4 days) and complete the 30 credit core module in Term 1 of their 1st year (2 days per week Sept – Dec)

Fees for Part-Time study

Two year part-time students pay half the full-time course fee set in each year of study. The fee is subject to an inflationary increment each year so the fee will be slightly higher in the second year.

Fees for flexible study

Modular flexible students pay fees each year on a pro-rata basis. This is worked out based on the number of credits taken for the first time in that academic year. The overall fee for the MSc is subject to an inflationary increment each year so you will pay slightly more per credit (effectively per module). The MSc is worth 180 credits in total. Each of the modules is worth 15 credits and the dissertation is worth 60 credits.

So, each year the fee payable is: $(\text{Full fee}/180) \times \text{number of credits taken that year}$.

Each year your fees will be worked out based on your module selections made in October. If you are a sponsored student your sponsor is expected to pay within 28 days of invoice. If you are paying your own fees you can arrange to pay in two instalments – one due within 28 days of the fee notice and the other in February.

Please contact fees@ucl.ac.uk for more details.

Challenges of part-time study

The HCI course is intensive and the subject is diverse and wide-ranging. We believe that part-time students bring a wealth of valuable experience and perspectives to the programme. Whilst there are benefits of having a longer time-frame in which to acquire the knowledge and skills to complete the degree applicants need to be realistic about the challenges of part-time flexible study – these commonly include

- Integrating with multiple cohorts of students
- Balancing study with work and home life
- Financing the course.

Modular/ flexible students are not permitted to interrupt their studies. However, should circumstances arise that mean you are unable to study for a period of time you can remain a registered student of UCL without taking any modules in that year/term provided that you do not exceed the maximum registration period for your programme (5 years MSc/PGDip, 2 years PGCert).

Any further queries on part-time study?

Please contact the Course Director Dr Duncan Brumby (d.brumby@ucl.ac.uk) or the Senior Teaching & Learning Administrator Jo Pearson (jo.pearson@ucl.ac.uk).