

Postgraduate Programme in Human Computer Interaction Guidance for Part-time and Modular Flexible Study for 2021/22

(Updated August 2021)

Overview

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 three 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 get satisfactory commitment from their employer to allow time away from work for the required attendance and study activities. Total student learning hours (including timetabled events and self-study) are 37 - 40 hours per week. Part-time and modular flexible students will need to make sure they have sufficient time, pro-rata, to study.

Structure and Study Patterns

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 & 4 (April- September) Term 2 coursework deadlines. 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 & 4 (April - September) Term 2 coursework deadlines. Completing project. (September)

Modular Flexible (3 years)

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 & 4 (April - September) Term 1 coursework deadlines (May). No formal study commitments.

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 & 4 (April - September) Term 2 coursework deadlines. Start of project work over 2 years.

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 & 4 (April - September) Term 2 coursework deadlines. 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.

The MSc Project

The project is an individual piece of academic research work that takes 12 weeks of intensive study for full-time students. Students will need to be available for regular meetings with their supervisor in Terms 3 and 4 for meetings and project submission. Due to staff teaching commitments it is only possible for us to offer the bulk of supervision in Terms 3 & 4 unless students have extenuating circumstances. Students can expect up to 10 supervision meetings in total. We have found that most part-time students generally have two options for project work.

- 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;
- To start the project part-time in their penultimate summer and work part-time through each summer, submitting the project at the usual project deadline in the final year.

Students working in HCI related roles may occasionally 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. 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.

Part-Time students are formally registered on and expected to submit the project in their second year. Modular-Flexible students must submit their project by the normal deadline in the year that they formally register on and pay for the project module. Any changes to project registration for Modular-Flexible students must be made by the module confirmation deadline in early December.

Part-Time and Modular-Flexible students can request Individual guidance from the Course Director or the Projects Co-ordinator) on making a choice of work pattern for their project.

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 2s, 3 & 4 No formal study commitments.

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 & 4 (April - September) Term 2 coursework deadlines.

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)

Timetable

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.

In 2020/21 core module teaching will be delivered online with a mixture of materials to work through at your own pace and scheduled online learning events. Providing it is safe to do so up to 1.5 hours of face to face enhancement activities will be offered. These will be designed to complement the MSc Programme but are not compulsory and will not be assessed.

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).. Term 2 coursework deadlines are in late April/early May. Attendance at a personal tutor meeting during this term is compulsory. Full-time project work commences in Mid May and you will be meeting with your supervisor regularly.

Term 4 – (July – September). Students taking the MSc Project will need to arrange sufficient study time to allow them to complete the dissertation. If resits are required these take place in late August, early September.

Fees

Part-time (2 year)

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.

Modular-flexible (3+ years)

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. Each year the fee payable is: (Full fee/180) x number of credits taken that year.

Fees are calculated 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.

The 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.

Information on Interruption for modular-flexible students

Modular/ flexible students are not permitted to interrupt their studies except in their final (5th) year of registration. In other years 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. This is provided that you do not exceed the maximum registration period for your programme (5 years MSc/PGDip, 2 years PGCert).

Further information

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