GUIDANCE ON HCI-E FLEXIBLE STUDY 09/10/11

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PROVISIONAL

Background

UCLIC recognises that for many applicants a flexible option is the best way for them to combine study with their other responsibilities. The Courses in HCI-E are modularised, and students are therefore offered the possibility of flexible part-time study over two or three years (or sometimes up to 5 years if including the MSc Project).

A recommended pattern of attendance and assessment spread over two or three years is usually followed. However, individual patterns are possible and applicants to the course who are interested in discussing an individual pattern of attendance should contact the Course Director at the earliest opportunity.

Any applicant considering a flexible study option should ensure they have discussed their situation and clarified any personal issues with Admissions staff, to ensure they are eligible to apply to be flexible students.

Structure of the full-time course

The following taught modules will be offered in 0910 (note that this information is subject to change for future years, and we do not guarantee the availability of any particular module in future years, nor on what day it might be available):

Term	Module no	Module	Taught days
Term 1	1	Physical Ergonomics 1	Tuesdays x 8
	2	Physical Ergonomics 2 (Ergonomics Mini-Project)	10 days end term 1
	3	Design Practice	Thursdays x 8
	4	Usability Evaluation Methods	Mondays x 8
Term 2	5∗	Organisational Informatics	Mondays x 8
	6∗	Perspectives on Design	Thursdays x 8
	7∗	Affective Interaction	Fridays x 8
	8	Applied Cognitive Science	Tuesdays x 8
	9	Design Experience (Design Mini-Project)	10 days end term 2
	∗ *Students choose 2 out of these 3 optional modules in Term 2*		
Non-modular	Induction week		5 days beginning term 1
Non-modular	HCI-E Practice Seminars (including some project guidance and option choices events)		2 hours on 8 Mondays in term 1 and 8 Tuesdays in term 2
Non-modular	Ergonomics Society Student Conference		1 Wednesday term 1

Non-modular	UCLIC Project Research Day	1 Wednesday term 2

Module 2 cannot be taken without previously taking module 1, and module 6 cannot be taken without previously taking module 3.

For the MSc and the PGDip, students must complete eight taught modules; there is an advisory minimum of 1 and maximum of 8 in any year. In addition, MSc students will complete a Research Project module.

For the PGCert, students must complete four out of modules 1-8; there is an advisory minimum of 1 and maximum of 4 in any year. A PGCert can only be followed over one or two years.

Timetable

Please note that the taught timetable only applies to the period from September to April each year. During the months April to September, study commitment is still required, but the time is less structured and students can mostly plan their own pattern of study. Course registration covers 12 study months in total for the MSc, and 9 study months for the PGDip. PGCert registration study time usually adds up to about 12 weeks.

Induction Week is timetabled in the week prior to the start of Term 1. All students should attend this in their first study year.

In most weeks from Sept to April the full-time students follow three days a week of timetabled teaching and two days per week of self-study, amounting in total to about 40 hours of effort per week. A two-year flexible MSc or PGDip student should cover about 50% of this per year, ie 4 modules, which would require 1 or 2 days per week of attendance, supplemented with a substantial amount of self-study pro-rata. Those wishing to cover the teaching in three years can follow 2 or 3 modules per year.

There are two intense periods where greater attendance is required, in the end two weeks of each term. Part-time students need to plan to do the DE intensive (module 9) in their final year of study. The PE2 intensive (module 2) can be done in either year, so long as PE1 (module1) has been completed. For both these modules, attendance is required for 10 days during 2 weeks, so those in employment must make advance arrangements to be available, and in London, for these periods.

There are also occasional exams and coursework requirements in the third term, and two Wednesdays during the teaching terms for special events, and part-time students need to plan to spread these over their period of study, and again to make advance arrangements with employers for the required time off.

On taught days, there are usually four hours of contact time (lectures, labs, etc) and the rest of the time is usually open for group work, self study, library visits etc. Part-time students are advised that on a course day they are expected to use the whole of that day for study, free of employment commitments.

Criteria for Attendance

UCL Regulations allow students on a flexible scheme to make their own choices about which modules to do when and how many to follow in any one year. However, students on the HCI-E programme must take into account the following important criteria:

1. **Pre-requisites** – PE2 cannot be followed till PE1 is completed, POD cannot be followed till DP is completed, and DE should be planned for a student's final year.
2. **Optionality** – Three modules are optional and students select 2 out of the 3 – this choice may be best spread over more than one year for reasons of workload distribution. If POD is one of the choices, it can only be followed once DP is completed.
3. **Timetable crowding** – Certain choices might leave a part-time student with a 3 day per week attendance in one term and none in another term. Attendance needs to be spread out evenly if possible.
4. **Assessment crowding** – Certain choices might leave a part-time student with too many coursework deadlines or exams at the same time of year. Assessment needs to be spread out over the years of study to ensure the workload is feasible.
5. **Limits on annual leave** – Many part-time students need to use their annual leave from their employer to cover periods of intensive attendance such as Induction, PE2, DE and Exams. If a student is bound by such limitations, then these requirements should be spread out over the years of study, to avoid running out of annual leave in any one year.
6. **Induction week** – Part-time students must attend this in their first year.
7. **Personal issues** – These are individual to each student and may involve transport issues, childcare, work commitments and so on. It is best to discuss how these matters might impact attendance by talking individually to the Course Director.

In the following section, there are some sample patterns of attendance, taking account of criteria 1-6 above. Either of these presents an acceptable and advised attendance pattern for a two-year part-time student.

A three-year part-time student can select from either of these patterns and just spread them out more thinly. It would be best to discuss proposed patterns of attendance with the Course Director in advance of course enrolment.

Suggested Flexible Attendance

Notes:
   a) *Week numbers are those set by UCL. The numbering system starts 4 weeks before term begins*
   b) *These schedules do not specify self-study time (apart from the UCL Reading Weeks); in general, for every hour of contact time, students should expect to put in about 4 hours of self-study, including time spent on coursework and other forms of assessment.*
   c) *These schedules do not include occasional events such as the UCLIC Project Research Days or exams. Occasional events can happen on Wednesdays.*
   d) *Part-time students can attend HCI Practice Seminars in any year, though it is advisable to spread the attendance over all years.*

PATTERN A For a student who can only attend one intensive module per year

For Terms 1 and 2 for a 2-year part-time MSc or PGDip student:

Year 1 (0910)

Term	UCL Week Numbers (inclusive)	Dates	Days	Module	Note
1	5	28/9/09 – 2/10/09	all		Induction
	6-10	6/10/09 – 3/11/09	Tuesdays	Physical Ergonomics 1	
	11	9/11/09 – 13/11/09			Reading Week
	12-14	17/11/09 – 1/12/09	Tuesdays	Physical Ergonomics 1	
	15-16	7/12/09 – 18/12/09	all	Physical Ergonomics 2	

Term	UCL Week Numbers	Dates	Days	Module	Note
2	20-24	11/1/10 – 8/2/10 12/1/10 – 9/2/10 12/1/10 – 9/2/10 15/1/10 – 12/2/10	Mondays Tuesdays Tuesdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Applied Cognitive Science HCI Practice Seminars Affective Interaction*	*Choose 1 out of 2 optional modules
	25	15/2/10 – 19/2/10			Reading Week
	26-28	22/2/10 – 8/3/10 23/2/10 – 9/3/10 23/2/10 – 9/3/10 26/2/10 – 12/3/10	Mondays Tuesdays Tuesdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Applied Cognitive Science HCI Practice Seminars Affective Interaction*	*Choose 1 out of 2 optional modules
	29-30	15/3/10 – 26/3/10	-	-	

Year 2 (1011)

Term	UCL Week Numbers (inclusive)	Dates	Days	Module	Note
1	6-10	4/10/10 – 1/11/10 4/10/10 – 1/11/10 7/10/10 – 4/11/10	Mondays Mondays Thursdays	Usability Evaluation Methods HCI Practice Seminars Design Practice	
	11	8/11/10 – 12/11/10			Reading Week
	12-14	15/11/10 – 29/11/10 15/11/10 – 29/11/10 18/11/10 – 2/12/10	Mondays Mondays Thursdays	Usability Evaluation Methods HCI Practice Seminars Design Practice	
	15-16	6/12/10 – 17/12/10	-	-	

Term	UCL Week	Dates	Days	Module	Note
2	20-24	10/1/11 – 7/2/11 13/1/11 – 10/2/11 14/1/11 – 11/2/11	Mondays Thursdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Perspectives on Design* Affective Interaction*	*Choose 1 out of 3 optional modules
	25	14/2/11 – 18/2/11			Reading Week
	26-28	21/2/11 – 7/3/11 24/2/11 – 10/3/11 25/2/11 – 11/3/11	Mondays Thursdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Perspectives on Design* Affective Interaction*	*Choose 1 out of 3 optional modules
	29-30	14/3/11 – 25/3/11	all	Design Experience	

PATTERN B – for a student who can attend two intensive modules in one year

For Terms 1 and 2 for a 2-year part-time MSc or PGDip student:

Year 1 (0910)

Term	UCL Week Numbers (inclusive)	Dates	Days	Module	Note
1	5	28/9/09 – 2/10/09	all		Induction
1	6-10	5/10/09 – 2/11/09 5/10/09 – 2/11/09 8/10/09 – 5/11/09	Mondays Mondays Thursdays	Usability Evaluation Methods HCI Practice Seminars Design Practice	
	11	9/11/09 – 13/11/09			Reading Week
	12-14	15/11/10 – 29/11/10 15/11/10 – 29/11/10 18/11/10 – 2/12/10	Mondays Mondays Thursdays	Usability Evaluation Methods HCI Practice Seminars Design Practice	
	15-16	6/12/10 – 17/12/10	-	-	

Term	UCL Week Numbers	Dates	Days	Module	Note
2	20-24	11/1/10 – 8/2/10 14/1/10 – 11/2/10 15/1/10 – 12/2/10	Mondays Thursdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Perspectives on Design* Affective Interaction*	*Choose 2 out of 3 optional modules
	25	15/2/10 – 19/2/10			Reading Week
	26-28	22/2/10 – 8/3/10 25/2/10 – 11/3/10 26/2/10 – 12/3/10	Mondays Thursdays Fridays	Organisational Informatics* Perspectives on Design* Affective Interaction*	*Choose 2 out of 3 optional modules
	29-30	15/3/10 – 26/3/10	-	-	

Year 2 (1011)

Term	UCL Week Numbers (inclusive)	Dates	Days	Module	Note
1	6-10	5/10/10 – 2/11/10	Tuesdays	Physical Ergonomics 1	
	11	8/11/10 – 12/11/10			Reading Week
	12-14	16/11/10 – 30/11/10	Tuesdays	Physical Ergonomics 1	
	15-16	6/12/10 – 17/12/10	all	Physical Ergonomics 2	

Term	UCL Week Numbers	Dates	Days	Module	Note
2	20-24	11/1/11 – 8/2/11 11/1/11 – 8/2/11	Tuesdays Tuesdays	Applied Cognitive Science HCI Practice Seminars	
	25	14/2/11 – 18/2/11			Reading Week
	26-28	22/2/11 – 8/3/11 22/2/11 – 8/3/11	Tuesdays Tuesdays	Applied Cognitive Science HCI Practice Seminars	
	29-30	14/3/11 – 25/3/11	all	Design Experience	

Attendance for the PGCert

A PGCert student can choose their 4 modules out of the 8 on offer (Design Experience is not on offer), and attend those modules according to the two-year timetable, allowing for the same pre-requisistes.

Third and fourth term attendance requirements

In the third term (April to June) there will be some attendance required for project meetings and for examinations and coursework, including a prior disclosure exam which will require a couple of whole weeks. The dates for these will be announced during each academic year. Part-time students will need to arrange availability for these assessment commitments, plus revision time where appropriate, in the year they study the relevant modules.

The fourth term (the summer months) is only relevant to MSc students. Attendance is usually required periodically for meetings with project research supervisors and for project submission, but these can be arranged on an individual basis.

Part-time project work for the MSc

The project is an individual piece of work that takes a nominal 13 weeks for full-time students. Part-timers have three real options for a pattern of project work, depending on personal circumstances:

a) To negotiate with their employer to work full-time through their first summer(s), then dedicate themselves full-time to the project though their final summer; or

b) To start the project part-time in the first summer and continue part-time through each summer, finishing it during the final one; or

c) A third option may be feasible if the student is involved in HCI-E related work at their place of employment, which is to arrange for the MSc project work to be based around the employment activity; if this is successfully arranged, then project activities may not need to be limited to the summer months. However, this will need careful planning in order to meet the requirements of the MSc, and should not be set up without guidance from UCLIC staff.

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.

Fees for flexible study

Part-time students completing the course pay a proportion of the full-time fee, pro rata each year per module. Please contact fees@ucl.ac.uk for more details.

Challenges of part-time study

The HCI-E course is quite intensive and the subject quite broad. Studying part-time can give a student a longer time in which to consolidate their reading and learning, and this is a big plus. However, applicants need to be realistic about the challenges inherent in part-time flexible study, such as: the need to integrate with two or more cohorts of students; the need to be self-reliant and proactive in progressing their work; the need for good time management; the need to balance requirements for work and study and home life; and the need for a reliable financial plan.

Any further queries on flexible study?

Please contact Rachel Benedyk, Course Director, on 020 7679 0685 or
r.benedyk@ucl.ac.uk