



Dear Informatics student,

**Important information from Dr Kate Howland, Director of Student Experience**

Welcome to the Department of Informatics. I'm the Director of Student Experience in the School of Engineering and Informatics. One of my responsibilities is to make sure that all students in the School have the support they need to learn and achieve their best. There are many people and services at the University dedicated to helping you overcome any challenges that could interfere with your studies. This isn't an exhaustive list, but here are some of the most common points of first contact:

- Your **Academic Advisor** is often your first contact, especially if you have a general question about your course. Your Academic Advisor is a member of Informatics faculty and you will be introduced to them during Welcome Week. Your Academic Advisor can refer you on to many other sources of information and support.
- **Module tutors** are the best people to provide module specific information — contact them after a teaching session, during their student consultation times or via email.
- For any welfare issues, you can contact the **Student Life Centre** – see their website at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre>. Do contact them straight away if you are experiencing any personal difficulties, especially if they are impacting on your studies. The Student Life Centre advisors handle a wide range of issues including: course transfers, financial issues, disability issues, personal concerns, budgeting, fees, funding, exceptional circumstances claims, and so on.
- If you feel you are struggling academically, you can contact the **Informatics Senior Tutor, Dr Simon Bowes** ([S.C.Bowes@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:S.C.Bowes@sussex.ac.uk)) for advice and to find out more about the support available within and beyond the Department.
- You can also contact me, as the **Director of Student Experience** if you want to talk to someone else about academic issues, or if you have more complex queries relating to reasonable adjustments or exceptional circumstances. You can make an appointment to meet with me via email ([K.L.Howland@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:K.L.Howland@sussex.ac.uk)).
- The **Engineering and Informatics School Office staff** (located at the front of Chichester 1 building, Room C1-002) are a good first point of contact for a wide range of requests, particularly any administrative queries concerning timetables, lecture rooms, registration and so on. To contact them or make an appointment to see someone, please email [ei@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:ei@sussex.ac.uk) as staff availability may be limited while we still have restrictions in place due to Covid-19.
- In Informatics we run a highly successful **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)** scheme where students (who have already taken the module) run non-compulsory additional classes to provide subject-specific support. The team also have trained student mentors who can help with study challenges. Go to: <https://canvas.sussex.ac.uk/enroll/JTBFCW> for the PAL timetable and how to join sessions.

In your first week in Sussex, you may be deluged with information about the University, including a great deal about student support, but here are a few key points you should know about now:

- **How to find out what you will be studying**

Descriptions of all Informatics courses can be found at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/coursesandmodules/informatics/ugcourses>,

which gives really important reference information, especially on each of the modules you will be studying. If you can, look at this information before you arrive.

- **Skills Hub**

Also, have a look at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub> – a website designed specifically for first year and foundation students. There's information there that will help you prepare for university as well as providing support information while you are here.

- **What to do if you cannot attend a teaching session**

If you have to miss a lecture, seminar, exercise class or other live teaching session, contact the module tutor by email. If you have to be away from teaching for longer than 2-3 days (due to illness, for example), you should let the School Office know by email to: [enginf-attendance@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:enginf-attendance@sussex.ac.uk) giving details of your absence and expected return date. Attendance at teaching sessions is compulsory, and is monitored.

- **What to do if you miss a deadline for a piece of work or are absent from an exam**

As soon as a module starts, make sure you understand the rules about the individual pieces of assessed work by reading your module documentation carefully and then check your Assessment Deadlines and Exam Timetable on your Study pages on SussexDirect. If you can't make the deadline for any formally assessed work or if you are absent from an exam and you have an appropriate excuse, you should fill in an 'exceptional circumstances' claim online (available via SussexDirect). The form tells you what evidence is needed and when and how to submit the evidence. Staff at the Student Life Centre ([www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/)) can help you with this process.

- **What to do if you need long-term 'time out'**

It may be possible to withdraw temporarily from your course ("intermit"). The [Curriculum & Assessment Regulations](#) have details and conditions. If you are thinking of intermitting, you should seek advice from the Student Life Centre.

- **Other sources of help**

The University of Sussex web site <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/> contains a huge amount of Information that you will find useful. Also, have a look at the School website: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/> and the University's Student Handbook:

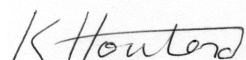
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/students/essentials/studenthandbook/> There are *many* other sources of support and information and you will be introduced to some of them during Welcome Week.

- **And the most important piece of advice**

If in doubt, ask a member of staff, another student — anyone!

I wish you a really happy and trouble-free time at Sussex. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries.

With very best wishes,



Dr Kate Howland  
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School of Engineering & Informatics