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Programme Specification

**Title of Course: BSc (Hons) Cyber Security and Digital Forensics**

**Date Specification Produced: March 2018**

**Date Specification Last Revised: September 2019**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook and Module Descriptors.

# SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

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| **Title:** | BSc (Hons) Cyber Security and Digital Forensics |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | ESOFT Metro Campus |
| **Location:** | Colombo |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | None |

# SECTION 2: THE PROGRAMME

## Programme Introduction

Pervasive increases in cybercrime, industrial espionage and politically motivated cyber-attacks are a persistent and global threat. An urgent and fundamental step towards mitigating and combating such threats requires the employment of skilled cyber security and Digital Forensics professionals to work in government, business, and finance, insurance, industrial, media, legal and intelligence services, as well as many other employment sectors. Currently in the Sri Lanka and abroad, the number of job applicants for cyber security and digital forensics posts is substantially below the number of open vacancies, highlighting recruitment challenges.

As a response to these challenges, the School of Computer Science and Mathematics (CSM) at the Kingston University (KU) offers a full field in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics. This degree is a state-of-the-art course that has been offered for more than a decade as a major field at KU. The major field has been pivotal in the careers of many alumni at the Kingston University who are now working for leading organisations in cyber security related roles. Cyber Security and Digital Forensics degree program offered by ESOFT Metro Campus (EMC) is a replication of the KU programme and adopted under their guidance. This programme is primarily driven by student employability. The KU course curriculum is aligned with numerous industry recognised certifications; examples of which include *Certified Information Systems Security Professional* (CISSP) and *Systems Security Certified Practitioner* (SSCP) for cyber security and *AccessData Certified Examiner* (ACE) for digital forensics.

With the additional support of local career services and the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) initiative, students are supported to identify and pursue tangible career opportunities. The ultimate goal of this course is to nurture highly qualified cyber security and Digital Forensics graduates, who are optimised for placement in industry as skilled professionals.

Pivotal to this degree is the ongoing commitment to enhancing student experiences and attainment. This is achieved in numerous ways:

* All topics are introduced by highly qualified members of staff, who are trained in contemporary learning and teaching approaches. Staff training is continuous and includes additional training in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusive curriculums.
* Industry and research informed teaching ensures relevant, state-of-the-art course content and exposure to cutting-edge insights. Where possible, teaching includes input and contributions from industry speakers and professionals.
* As an extremely practical course, summative assessments are mostly focused on portfolio driven coursework and practical assessments. Formative assessment opportunities are provided throughout the course to help students achieve their full potential.
* The ESOFT Learning Management System (ELMS), provides a cutting-edge Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) not only for accessing learning materials, but also for interacting with lecturers and other students, experiencing formative assessments, submitting assignments and receiving online feedback.
* Students have use of a computer lab optimised for cyber security and Digital Forensics. In this lab, they have access to a suite of specialist ethical hacking, cyber security and forensic tools, resources and equipment. This provides a safe sandbox environment for practical experiments with malware, penetration testing, port scanning and other ethical hacking activities. Example software and tools include Kali Linux, and FTK (Forensic Tool Kit).
* In each year of the course, students undertake practical project-based exercises, which culminate in an individual ‘capstone’ project in the final year. This final year project represents a tangible and noteworthy artefact that can be showcased by students during interviews for placements, internships or full-time roles.

Practical lab sessions, video and quiz activities form the core knowledge-base for all modules in this course, with the additional support of short lectures. Challenging topics are openly discussed by students who take an active role in constructing knowledge, problem solving as well as peer-supported discovery and learning. Feedback is shared with students via ELMS, in-class discussions and surveys.

It is assumed that new students have no prior cyber security knowledge. This degree includes a holistic fundamental education in the broad area of computing, with subsequent specialisms in cyber security and Digital Forensics.

## Aims of the Field/Course

The field shares the general aims and objectives of the Undergraduate Modular Scheme. The aims of the Field are to produce graduates who have: -

* a thorough understanding of the structure and operation of computer systems and networks, and an awareness of ways in which computers are applied to software engineering problems and data management;
* an understanding of the varieties and impact of cybercrime and how digital devices may be used to aid criminal activities;
* knowledge of the legal system, legal processes, relevant laws and the regulatory environment related to the handling of digital evidence and forensic investigations;
* the ability to undertake digital forensic examinations, to support or oppose an investigative case;
* the knowledge and skills to select and employ appropriate software for use in forensic investigations;
* the ability to handle information, collect digital evidence, apply evidence management strategies, present evidence and conclusions;
* an adequate foundation to enable them to appreciate and absorb future developments in computer and network security; and to communicate with others within and across discipline boundaries regarding the design and implementation of solutions and techniques;
* a range of transferable skills including working in teams, time-management, research, writing (user documentation, reports, handouts) and oral presentation of findings.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmark for Computing and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2016), and relate to the typical student.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | | | | |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding**  **On completion of the course, students will have knowledge and understanding of:** |  | **Intellectual skills**  **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills**  **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |
| A1 | the operation of the components of a computing system | B1 | apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes developed during the course to practice within the profession | C1 | identify, collect, analyse, organise and validate digital evidence |
| A2 | the planning of a computer investigation, using various acquisition tools and interpret the evidence | B2 | acquire, analyse critically and synthesise knowledge from texts and technical documentation, from people, and from observation of and participation in activities | C2 | demonstrate skills applicable to key stages of digital forensics processes |
| A3 | how computing as a technology employed by society, relates to and interacts with other technologies, and an awareness of its current and likely future impact upon society | B3 | translate Digital Forensics requirements into specifications and designs that meet current and future needs | C3 | present and document results at a level which is appropriate to the computing knowledge of the recipient |
| A4 | the design and implementation of computer networks | B4 | critically evaluate issues which arise in the domain of cyber security, Digital Forensics and computing more generally, regarding legal, social and ethical issues | C4 | demonstrate project management controls and communication skills |
|  |  |  |  | C5 | demonstrate the technical ability to search and disseminate information using the various tools of the Internet |
|  |  |  |  | C6 | communicate effectively with other scientists in specifying system objectives, implementing solutions using appropriate software and evaluating the results |
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In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow

students to develop a range of key skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem-Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in written and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

## Entry Requirements

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

1. Three Passes in one sitting at one of the following examinations or equivalent foreign qualifications
   1. G.C.E. (A/L) – conducted by the Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka
   2. G.C.E. (A/L) – conducted by Pearson Edexel, UK (London A/L)
   3. International (A/L) IGCSE’s – conducted by Pearson Edexel, UK
   4. G.C. E. (A/L) – conducted by Cambridge International Examinations, UK

OR

1. ESOFT International Foundation Diploma.

A minimum overall IELTS score of 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 each element, iBT TOEFL 80 with R at 20, L at 19, S at 21 and W at 20 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language. A minimum of a Credit pass at the Sri Lankan G.C.E O/L English Language exam will also be considered as equivalent to this level.

We will consider a range of alternative qualifications or experience that is equivalent to the typical offer. Applications from international students with equivalent qualifications are welcome.

## Field/Course Structure

This programme is offered in a full-time and a part-time mode. It may also be taken as a sandwich course - all leading to the award of a BSc (Hons) degree. Entry is normally at level 4 with A-level or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Transfer from a similar programme is possible at level 5 with passes in comparable level 4 modules – but is at the discretion of the course team. Intake is normally in January and September.

### E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies

### Programme is not currently accredited

### E2. Work-based learning, including sandwich courses

The ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) career service has a dedicated team for sourcing industrial placements. We are already in contact with potential employers in the industry via our contacts with Computer Society of Sri Lanka (CSSL), BCS Sri Lanka Section, Federation of Information Technology Industry Sri Lanka (FITIS), and Sri Lanka Association of Software and Service Companies (SLASSCOM). Placement specialists within the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit will help students throughout the application process, preparing for interviews and transition to work; for example, with mock interview sessions, CV workshops, careers fairs and speakers from the industry. The team will monitor and assist students while in industry. Placement students will be visited by a network of academics at their workplaces who would also act as placement tutors.

Work placements are actively encouraged as they expose students to a real working environment, which makes them more experienced and employable after their first degree. Work placements also enable employers to find employees for permanent positions. Note that ultimately it is the responsibility of individual students to source and secure work placements.

### E3. Outline Programme Structure

*BSc (Hons) Cyber Security and Digital Forensics*

**LEVEL 4 LEVEL 5 LEVEL 6**

**INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT**

EM6275

Network and Mobile Forensics

EM5235

Ethical Hacking

EM4105

Programming I: Thinking Like a Programmer

EM4315

Cyber Crime and Digital Forensics

EM6100

Individual Project

EM5210 Networking concepts

EM6245

Cyber Security

EM5250

Computing Systems

EM4250

Computing Fundamentals

Option Module

EM5450 Professional Environments 2

EM4450 Professional Environments 1

Each level is made up of four modules each worth 30 credit points. Typically, a student must complete 120 credits at each level. All students will be provided with the Campus regulations and specific additions that are sometimes required for accreditation by outside bodies (e.g. professional or statutory bodies that confer professional accreditation). Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

**Part time students**

Part time students should take core modules first, apart from the Individual Project, which is taken last.

Level 4

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level 4** (all core) | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Programming I: Thinking Like a Programmer | EM4105 | 30 | 4 | 1 and 2 |
| Computing Fundamentals | EM4250 | 30 | 4 | 1 and 2 |
| Cyber Crime and Digital Forensics | EM4315 | 30 | 4 | 1 and 2 |
| Professional Environments 1 | EM4450 | 30 | 4 | 1 and 2 |

Progression to Level 5 requires 120 credits including passes in above 4 modules. Students exiting the programme at this point who have successfully completed 120 credits are eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education.

Level 5

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Compulsory modules** (all core) | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Ethical Hacking | EM5235 | 30 | 5 | 1 and 2 |
| Computing Systems | EM5250 | 30 | 5 | 1 and 2 |
| Professional Environments 2 | EM5450 | 30 | 5 | 1 and 2 |
| Networking Concepts | EM5210 | 30 | 5 | 1 and 2 |

Progression to Level 6 requires 240 credits including passes in above 4 modules.

Students exiting the programme at this point who have successfully completed 240 credits are eligible for the award of Diploma of Higher Education.

Placement

Students who are on the sandwich course take the placement module EM5999 Industrial Placement

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| **Industrial Placement** (60 credit) for students on sandwich course | | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |  |
| Industrial Placement | EM5999 | 60 | 5 | 1 and 2 |  |

Level 6

Level 6 requires the completion of the three core modules plus one optional module.

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| **Level 6** (at least 90 credits = core) | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Cyber Security | EM6245 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |
| Network and Mobile Forensics | EM6275 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |
| Individual Project | EM6100 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |

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| **Level 6** | | | | |
| **Option Modules – select one from** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Internet Protocols and Services | EM6250 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |
| Software Development Practice | EM6125 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |
| Digital Entrepreneurship | EM6415 | 30 | 6 | 1 and 2 |

The complete list of option modules available will be determined annually and is subject to resourcing.

### Student “learning journey” – the development of knowledge and skills

The core knowledge and skills required for Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics professionals in employment, together with those skills that contribute to their ability to develop as undergraduates as well as post-graduation are developed in this course as follows.

(Bold arrows 🡺 indicate growth or development; thin arrows 🡪 suggest a link or supporting activity and colours represent intensity or significance. Typically only the core modules are represented – option modules will link to other modules that develop knowledge/skills as per their pre-requisites and are included only where the relationship is pivotal on a guided student journey

#### Cybersecurity (technical and professional knowledge)

Cybersecurity expertise is predominantly developed alongside the material within which security concerns manifest. The applications or environments considered in the course are software (programming, data and web-based security) in EM4105, EM5320 and EM5235, and computer systems and networks, both physical and mobile, in EM4250, EM5250 and EM6275. The underlying theory, both the security mind-set and the technical aspects, are developed alongside the applications themselves in a top-down, authentic, problem-centred fashion rather than being introduced from a bottom-up, theory-first, approach. Only once students have learned to appreciate the need for cryptosystems, for example, is the underlying mathematical theory discussed in EM6245. In this fashion students are prepared for the theory, which can seem dry, with real-world applications, generating the “hook” to draw students in to an appreciation of the theory in final year. Alongside the theoretical development in EM6245, EM6100 provides an opportunity for students to select a capstone project, guided by a member of staff, that showcases the gamut of skills and knowledge acquired by producing a “product” suited for publication in the student’s professional portfolio (which was introduced and curated through EM4450 and EM5450).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EM4105, EM4250 (software, web and computer systems) | 🡺 | EM5320, EM5235, EM5250 (web and networks) | 🡺 | EM6245, EM6275 (mobile networks and theory) |
| 🡩 |  | 🡩 |  | 🡻 |
| EM4450 (professional portfolio and CPD) |  | EM5450 (portfolio and project management) |  | EM6100 (capstone project) |

#### Digital Forensics (practical professional skills)

The course features a strong professional forensics ethos, simulating the environment where forensics professionals operate from Level 4 through to Level 6 with industry standard software and hardware in a dedicated lab. Typically forensics professionals produce reports and work from or with case studies and so these are signatures of the modules concerned. Students are introduced to forensics and its relationship to the real world (ethics, crime and professional services like consultancy) in EM4315, extending their use of tools and introducing ethical hacking in EM5235, and developing their understanding of data storage and models in EM5320. In the final year EM6275 introduces students to mobile device and “live” (on-line/real-time) data forensics, and further develops their understanding of network security vulnerabilities in EM6245. Students are then guided by academic staff with their industrial contacts in choosing a suitable capstone project topic in EM6100 to showcase their professional portfolio of skills and knowledge.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EM4315 (crime, ethics, forensics tools/techniques) | 🡺 | EM5235, EM5320 (ethics, hacking, databases) | 🡺 | EM6245, EM6275 (mobile and network forensics, cyber security) |
| 🡩 |  |  |  | 🡻 |
| EM4450 (professional context) |  |  |  | EM6100 (capstone project) |

#### Communication skills (presenting work; giving, receiving and acting on feedback)

Presentations, reports and case studies are requirements of the cybersecurity and/or Digital Forensics professional, presenting technical information for a variety of audiences. The use of presentation and document-writing software to create or document these artefacts is guided through workshops in EM4450 and EM5450, whilst the information being presented increases in sophistication from EM4315 through EM5235 to EM6275, where at each level students work with and produce professional reports and case studies as summative exercises, presented/discussed in the classroom (lab) with the cohort. These activities culminate in the capstone dissertation in EM6100 which is assessed summatively by a significant written dissertation, its oral presentation and accompanying project demo. The EM6100 module includes dissertation research and writing sessions and mock/interim prototype demos to prepare students to communicate these artefacts which will form the centrepiece of their professional portfolio.

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| EM4315 (case studies, forensic reports) | 🡺 | EM5250, EM5235, EM5320 (oral and technical reporting) | 🡺 | EM6275, EM6245 (case studies, forensic and security reports) |
| 🡩 |  | 🡩 |  | 🡻 |
| EM4450 (supported *via* portfolio) | 🡺 | EM5450 (supported *via* portfolio) | 🡪 | EM6100 (capstone dissertation and oral exam) |

#### Group work and the ability to work in teams

Professionals in cybersecurity and/or Digital Forensics often work in multidisciplinary teams and with non-professionals. The course strategy is to carefully introduce and teach the practice of group work in EM4450 and extend the practice to managing projects with multi-disciplinary teams in EM5450. The course cohort identity is strong and develops through work centred in the Digital Forensics lab, through EM4315, EM5235 and EM6275. Group/team-based assessments are used summatively early-on to establish the practice, thereafter the practice is essentially formative within the lab, where students discuss results and present reports and case study summaries. As such, group assessments are used in 3 out of 4 modules at Level 4, separated throughout the year, and then summatively in 2 out of 4 modules at Level 5 and with two cohort-level activities rather than small group assessment at Level 6:

* EM4315 establishes the lab-based professional environment that continues in EM5235 and EM6275 where team work is formative
* EM4450 introduces the practice and process of group work; group working skills are demonstrated, taught and assessed in collaboration with assessed coursework in cross-disciplinary groups, timetabled group workshops (simulating a workplace environment) where attendance is expected and absence must be accounted for, and, typically, using project topics related to industry or research
* EM4105 simulates professional software development practices, reinforcing the employability message without overburdening students with large group activities
* EM5450 continues the professional emphasis with multi-discipline teams working on industry-driven projects simulating a professional environment, with summatively assessed project management skills being developed to build on the group experience in EM4450
* EM5320 further develops the industry simulation with assessed group work built-in to workshops, close monitoring and feedback from the teaching staff as simulated “employers” in the second half of the module
* EM6100 (the capstone project) gives opportunities to celebrate student’s work and to receive feedback from peers, Campus staff and employers in a poster or conference setting.

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| EM4315 (lab practice) | 🡺 | EM5235 (lab practice) | 🡺 | EM6275 (lab practice) |
| 🡩 |  | 🡩 |  | 🡻 |
| EM4450 (teaches, supports and establishes model) | 🡺 | EM5450, EM5320 (uses and assesses by model) | 🡪 | EM6100 (receive peer & other feedback) |
| 🡩 |  |  |  |  |
| EM4105 (development in groups) |  |  |  |  |

## Principles of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The learning and teaching strategies reflect the field aims and learning outcomes, student background, potential employer requirements and the need to develop a broad range of technical and professional skills, with the ability to apply them appropriately. The strategies ensure that students have a sound understanding of areas in computing, cyber security and digital forensics and have acquired the transferable skills expected of modern-day graduates.

For the Digital Forensics part of the course, the students are provided with a laboratory giving access to commercial software to investigate digital crime scenarios. In the first year, students focus on what constitutes digital crime, legal frameworks for the UK, European Union, USA as well comparable legislations in Sri Lanka. There is also an introduction to security and operating systems. In the second year the module content is dedicated to crimes committed using computers (desktop or laptops) and their analysis using commercial software. In the third year the emphasis is on security and on crimes committed on-the-fly.

The programme is designed to utilise a wide range of teaching and learning methods to enable all students to be actively engaged throughout the course. The learning, teaching and assessment strategies reflect the programme aims and learning outcomes, student background, potential employer requirements, and the need to develop a broad range of technical skills with the ability to apply them appropriately.

The academic year includes scheduled contact time for lectures, workshops, enhancement activities, and revision. The first two years are structured to ensure that all students study the core materials necessary to meet the benchmarking standards. The standard module provision includes laboratory sessions, seminars, group work – to underpin the principles taught in the lectures – but, also dedicated programming aid sessions for students needing further help.

In each year of the course students will develop systems, sometimes as members of a team and sometimes as an individual. For example, in their first year students are aided in developing their programming, research (in terms of reading and research methods such as interviewing, distinguishing between strong and weak evidence and argument), writing, decision-making, and analytical skills. They also begin to deal with client requirements and case studies.

The capstone project is a mandatory part of the programme and is undertaken in the final year. It offers students the opportunity to integrate their cumulative academic studies and practical skills within a single project, which may be for a real client. Students are provided with opportunities to engage with the project earlier on in their programme before the start of the project to ensure that they are adequately prepared to undertake this in their final year.

Learning cyber security, Digital Forensics and computing more generally, is often most readily undertaken in the context of the search for solutions to real-life problems. This is reflected in the approach that will be gradually introduced to this programme, alongside conventional classroom teaching, and is epitomised in the problem-centred learning practice. Students will be frequently working in groups, focusing on real-world problem solving. This will contribute to creating a rich learning environment in which students and their teachers collaborate as a team. It significantly enhances students’ readiness for employment in industries where different skills and backgrounds complement each other to deliver a better product.

ESOFT Learning management System (ELMS), the Campus’ virtual learning environment (VLE), is used extensively in all modules as a communication tool and means of disseminating learning and reference materials, formative worksheets, assignments, links, videos and lecturer-annotated slides. In this way, it acts as a dynamic study guide, providing a structured learning space to support students for independent study, facilitate discussions and in addition (in some modules) for formative and summative tests and surveys. ELMS is also used to facilitate collaborative work, both formatively and summatively. For example, in the Professional Environment modules students are introduced to the group collaboration features of ELMS and are encouraged to use the ELMS to mediate discussion and to collaborate on coursework “artefacts” which can be formatively assessed in the group workshops, while the record of collaboration contributes, summatively to the module’s assessment outcomes.

Study materials, including examples and exercises, are published on ELMS in advance of time-tabled sessions, to allow students to prepare for classroom time and to fully benefit from flipped or partially flipped sessions. The availability of materials assists students from various backgrounds to achieve a common level at the start of the session or to highlight any deficiencies which they can then address with the lecturer.

Students are encouraged to develop as independent learners as they progress through their degree course; this is supported explicitly through, for example, the strand of professional skills modules culminating in the individual project in the final year.

### Assessment and Feedback

The assessment is regarded as an integral part of our learning and teaching strategy, and incorporates both assessments of and for learning. Ample opportunities are given to students for formative assessment with rapid feedback.

A wide range of assessment mechanisms is used to ensure that students with diverse backgrounds and different strengths and abilities are not disadvantaged and to ensure that our students are capable of tackling many different types of problems. The methods of assessment have been selected to be most appropriate for the nature of the subject material, teaching style, learning outcomes in each module. The balance between various assessment methods for each module reflects the specified learning outcomes. Emphasis is given to authentic assessments based on real-world problems. This allows the students to produce “artefacts” as outcomes of the assessment process, forming a portfolio which provides tangible evidence of their developing skills and knowledge, thus enhancing their employment prospects.

### Inclusive Teaching Practice

Opportunities to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive, take place at forums as the Staff Student Consultative Committees and Boards of Study, together with discussions at module and course level. Meetings take place between subject teams to consider subject specific issues. The variety of teaching activities also takes account of the students’ different learning preferences and experiences, and there is a careful balance of individual and group based activities, helping to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the students. For example, the nature of the practical ethical hacking and digital forensic activities during the lab sessions allows students to work at their own pace. Regular surveys and feedback allow students to self-assess the progress that they have made, and to mature their learning styles perspectives. The use of ELMS as a central hub for all learning activities also accommodates students with difficulties in terms of their geographical and time availability.

Marking criteria are provided for all assessments as part of the assessment booklet at the beginning of the year for each module and care is taken to ensure that the language used in the assessment is jargon free, which is checked by the moderator. The case studies used are designed to be inclusive.

Feedback, in a variety of formats provides students with guidance in developing skills which are both beneficial for future assessments and highly valued by employers. Feedback in the Professional Environment modules, involves the Personal Tutors as a conduit through which feedback is given.

In the final year every student undertakes a 30-credit capstone Individual Project, which draws on and enhances the skills and knowledge developed throughout the programme. This consolidates independent learning skills and typically provides an opportunity for practical application of their academic knowledge, to the implementation of a solution or construction of a suitable artefact.

In the programme as a whole, the following components are used in the assessment of the various modules:

* Practical exercises: to assess students’ understanding and technical competence
* Individual and group-based case studies: to assess ability to understand requirements, to provide solutions to realistic problems and to interact and work effectively with others as a contributing member of a team. The outcomes can be:
  + Written reports, where the ability to communicate the relevant concepts, methods, results and conclusions effectively will be assessed.
  + Oral presentations, where the ability to summarise accurately and communicate clearly the key points from the work in a brief presentation, will be assessed.
  + Poster presentations, where information and results must be succinct and eye-catching.
  + Videos, which may replicate features of oral presentations but allows advance preparation away from the audience (which may suit some students better).
  + Articles, emphasising the ability to communicate with different audiences.
  + Interviews, emphasising the ability to answer questions appropriately and relevantly.
  + Simulated client interactions: letters, quotations, etc.
* Multiple choice or short answer questions: to assess competence in basic techniques and understanding of concepts.
* Long answer structured questions in coursework assignments: to assess ability to apply learned techniques to solve simple to medium problems and which may include a limited investigative component
* Long answer structured questions in end-of-module examinations: to assess overall breadth of knowledge and technical competence to provide concise and accurate solutions within restricted time
* Project: The individual project module represents an opportunity for students to draw together different aspects of their learning on the course and to apply the techniques learned in an extended study. As such, the assessment here will place a greater emphasis on ability to plan work, manage time effectively, and research background information, culminating in a written report and interview.

At the beginning of each academic year there is a joint department-wide meeting at which the delivery of material and assessments is planned with a full calendar being constructed. This ensures:

* that care is taken to avoid summative assessment bunching and thus student workloads are managed;
* synchronised and coherent delivery of material across the programme in a way that is visible both to staff and students, thus enabling assessments to draw on skills and knowledge from an appropriate variety of modules.

Students are expected to develop their skills, knowledge, confidence and understanding through independent and group learning, in the form of guided and self-directed study, and the exploration of the application of cyber security and Digital Forensics in the real world, throughout their course. For example, basic team-working, investigative, researching and (informal) communication skills are introduced, developed and facilitated through the Professional Environment modules. Students are also introduced to the professional environment surrounding their area of study, alongside considerations of ethical behaviour and responsibility. These themes are reinforced with professional development opportunities tailored for each programme level and delivered by colleagues from ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU). Furthermore, all students explore group case studies in cyber security, Digital Forensics and computing, requiring the collaborative investigation/solution of some real-world problems as well as the production of written reports and oral or poster presentations. These foster the development of team-working, research and (formal) communication skills. In the final year all students will carry out research and development and present the background to and findings of their projects as indicated above. This will enhance their research and investigative skills to explore and master complex new ideas, learn and apply advanced techniques and further develop their independent working and communication skills.

### Research Informed Teaching

The course team is research active within the ESOFT Research Centre (ERC), which is dedicated to the advancement of the theory and applicability of computer science to enable internationally-leading work in the field of informatics, addressing the needs of society in the thematic areas of health, communications, security and data. The centre provides an inclusive and outward looking environment for research development, fostering interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research to achieve maximum impact in real-world applications.

The ERC is still in its early stages. An international research journal has already been published, and academic staff are actively encouraged to take part in all areas of research. The ERC is a specific requirement of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in terms of approving the application that has been submitted by ESOFT Metro Campus, to be recognised as a non-state degree awarding institution.

There is good linkage between research and teaching and the teaching team for computer science draws from ERC members.

Students are also able to develop their research skills which form a fundamental part of Levels 4 to 6’s curriculum. These skills enable students to distinguish and present appropriate evidentiary information in an argument. These skills are greatly valued by employers.

Staff members also engage with research into teaching and learning in Higher Education which feeds through to support learning in lectures and other forms of student engagement during contact time.

## Support for Students and their Learning

Students are supported by a highly qualified team of academic staff that includes individuals in the following roles:

* A Course Director to help students understand the programme structure
* A Module Leader for each module
* A Personal Tutor to provide academic and personal support

Additional support is provided by the following specialist staff:

* A Placement Tutor to give general advice on placements
* Technical Support to advise students on IT and the use of software
* A designated Programme Administrator
* English language support for international students

Matters outside the academic arena are supported by:

* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* Disability and dyslexia student support
* Careers and Employability Service
* ESOFT Student Council(ESC)
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* A virtual learning environment (VLE) available on the Campus’ intranet

The students are introduced to all these mechanisms during induction sessions at the beginning of each new academic year. It is here that the level 4 students first encounter the Campus’ computer network, which includes their personal access to the VLE and how to use it as a learning environment. They are also encouraged to make use of important resources that provides additional help across a range of academic skills.

Students are expected to be involved in the development of their programme. On an individual level through meetings with their personal tutors at which they can discuss their academic progress, personal development and can seek advice on course and module choices in the light of their career aspirations. As a cohort, students can contribute to many aspects of programme evolution for example by student representation on committees including Staff Student Consultative Committees as well as by their formal and informal feedback such as the mid-module and end-of-module reviews.

### Support for Academic Skills

There is a Student Support Team to help students with any problem has an effect on their studies. This can range from illness, problems writing an assignment, questions about academic regulations to serious confidential issues.

### The Personal Tutoring Scheme (PTS)

There exists a Faculty-wide student support system. It includes, for example, a SEC wide drop-in centre where students could seek advice without an appointment; also, they can email, or phone a designated number to get instant help. Students are assigned a member of the computing academic staff as their Personal Tutor (PT) which they retain for the full three or four-year duration of their time at Campus. The first contact between student and PT is during Induction Week for an introductory meeting and thereafter the following procedure is followed:

#### Level 4 [settling in and building confidence]

In the first year (Level 4) PTs follow-up the Induction Week contact with a 1-to-1 meeting between weeks 1 and 3 in order to discuss any academic or pastoral issues that might have arisen during this important settling-in period. Employability topics such as the value of industrial placements and internships are introduced; they are encouraged to think about compiling a CV in preparation for their future applications (this is followed up in the professional environments module).

Throughout the first teaching block, dedicated academic sessions encourage the students to work together in their tutor groups in formative assessments to facilitate the bonding of these individuals into self-supporting study teams which are intended to endure. In addition, selected second year students are recruited as mentors in the Level 4 programme to encourage the community spirit of their course and foster engagement.

Student attendance is closely monitored from the first teaching week. In the Professional Environment module, this includes monitoring attendance and participation in group (team-based) workshops where students are developing their group working skills. Those absent from classes are contacted by their tutor to determine whether they need additional support. This is to address the danger of poor attendance at the beginning of the course which can be associated with poor academic outcomes.

Subsequent PT meetings are motivated by continued monitoring of formative assessment in core modules and helping students to begin preparing for summative assessments by providing support. Where problems exist, both PTs and the module team(s) will direct students to relevant support programmes.

#### Level 5 [‘stepping it up’ and broadening horizons]

In the second year the focus of the PT system is to encourage students to begin looking forwards, toward some form of academically-relevant placement activity, perhaps as a full-scale Industrial Placement in year 3, or as some form of identifiable engagement with industry, such as a relevant short-term placement, summer work or a subject-relevant internship. All students receive information from the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) team on the process and opportunities before the winter vacation.

The PT highlights the importance of students engaging with this in their “welcome back” induction meeting in week 1, together with an explanation of how Level 5 modules contribute to degree classification and any other differences in course structure and assessment procedures between Level 4 and Level 5.

#### Level 6 [maximizing success and moving on]

In the final year the focus shifts to graduation and employability and the PT scheme uses the capstone project module to promote PT-style discussions alongside regular project meetings

In the first weeks of term the PT’s role is to welcome students back, encourage them to reflect on their progress and module feedback, and plan to make the most of their final year, exemplified by early deliverables in the project module. Throughout Level 6, the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) team provides activities which the PT signposts for students, some of which are delivered within and linked explicitly to sessions and assignments in core modules.

After the winter vacation, the PT meets with their tutees to discuss the opportunities for graduate study and employment and provide contact details for employers’ reference requests. The final project is a key employability “artefact”. Students can seek advice from their personal tutor or project supervisor who may be a different academic.

Both the Project Supervisor and Personal Tutor are able, in collaboration with ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU), to encourage students how best to present their project on their *CV* and at interview.

## Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course

The ESOFT Metro Campus has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These methods are actively monitored by the Kingston University. These include:

* External examiners
* Boards of study with student representation
* Annual review and development
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation
* Moderation policies

## Employability Statement

Computing qualifications are amongst the most versatile and enable graduates to find employment in a wide spectrum of careers ranging from systems and business analysts, and software engineers, through to programmers and network specialists in a wide range of public and private sector industries.

The Kingston University’s is largely applied in nature with many case studies chosen for their topicality and relevance to industry such as information systems design, programming, networking, and implementation issues. Working on case studies designed to simulate the working environment, typically in teams, gives students experience of applying their computing, information systems and networking methods and key skills to open-ended problems with complex solutions, and presenting their findings, including any limitations, in a professional manner. This mirrors the experience of computing professionals working in commerce and industry. To further set the material in context as well as inspire our students, leading practitioners from industry. Throughout the course students develop communication and interpersonal skills, learn time management and the value of prioritising and planning by involvement in the learning activities outlined in section F above.

In preparation for their future employment we make extensive use of industry standard software and tools throughout the course.

### Personal Development Portfolio (PDP)

PDP is centred on student learning and development to encourage the student to become a more effective, independent and confident self-directed learner which appeals to employers. The student is responsible for engaging with the PDP process which is introduced in the core Professional Environments modules to support them and enable them to reflect upon their learning and achievements, formulate study action plans and to plan their career development needs. Students create a personal record of learning containing evidence of their qualities, key skills, achievements and products (artefacts of their learning and assessments) to support industrial placement applications and future job applications or applications for graduate studies. The development plans are reviewed regularly for feedback from their personal tutor

### Industrial Placement (IP) and its Importance to Student Employability

All of our students are encouraged to make use of the opportunity to enhance their learning and personal development by undertaking a Summer Internship between years of study and/or an industrial placement in the third year of their programme. All placements are vetted to ensure that they provide a relevant experience in which students can apply their learning in a practical situation. All placement students on the course receive comprehensive support from the placement specialists within the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) team in securing a position and while in the workplace, although ultimately the responsibility for the placement remains with the student. Students also gain employability and transferrable skills through participation in the School’s annual monitoring process (*e.g.* as student representatives on the Staff Student Consultative Committee, Board of Study and Faculty Board), through volunteering as Student Ambassadors, where our students have been excellent ambassadors for our courses at Open Days, Enrolment and Induction events. Large numbers of suitable employers and alumni come to the Campus to take part in Careers Fairs, deliver talks and to recruit students for specific opportunities

Our programme is designed to embed employability skills within the curriculum at all levels and develop students’ ability to recognise their personal and academic achievements and career aspiration. This is fostered through the strand of professional environments modules built into the programme from the start. During these, students experience a transition from guided towards independent learning and career planning and development, through a series of sessions, offered under the auspices of ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU), including; Professional Communication, Time and Self-Management and Identifying and Articulating Skills. There are also opportunities to perfect skills required to gain employment such as; CV writing, Psychometric Test and Using LinkedIn. These modules are shared with other courses in the School and students study and work in a multidisciplinary environment, developing their ability to communicate with non-mathematicians. In this way students gain insight into the true nature of commercial teamwork, harnessing a range of different talents and skills to tackle complex problems, preparing them for the workplace. As they progress students enhance their planning, teamwork and communication skills, (in the professional environments modules and throughout the programme) and show evidence of these though oral and poster presentations and both individual and group written reports. Outputs from these (written reports, posters and records, e.g. as videos and/or slideshows), plus products such as computer programs or results from modelling exercises on real-world problems, can be collated into a portfolio which may be presented to potential employers. Furthermore, their personal development and career options and plans are discussed with their personal tutors at regular intervals throughout their studies, and guidance given as appropriate. This is in liaison with the ESOFT Career Guidance Unit (ECGU) team, the Campus’ Careers Service.

This theme culminates in the Level 6 capstone project module, which draws together the academic strands of the course. It also enhances students’ employability skills in different ways, giving them an insight into what professionals do in graduate careers. Typically, the project involves the creation of an artefact relevant to the course, often with some new element or feature. Undertaking this type of activity gives students a taste of independent research, albeit supported by the supervisor, as they familiarise themselves with the real-world situation and the techniques required to investigate it. In the project, students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking, creative and analytical skills, and gain experience and proficiency in technical writing. When choosing their Level 6 option choices and project topic, students are guided by their Personal Tutor regarding what possible choices best suit their career aspirations.

The experiences gained during, and their reports and presentations on, students’ projects can provide a valuable case study to be cited in job applications and, if shortlisted, a focus for discussion and demonstration of professional skills in interviews. This has proved to be vitally important for several recent graduates, for whom giving an account of their project and the skills developed therein was crucial in securing a position of graduate employment during their interviews.

Cyber Security and Computer Digital Forensics jobs are often available in (but not limited to) law-enforcement agencies, military and government intelligence agencies, private security and consulting companies.

Graduates can work as penetration testers (finding security vulnerabilities in target systems, networks, and applications in order to help enterprises improve their security), Forensic Analysts (recovering and examines data from computers and other electronic storage devices in order to use the data as evidence in criminal prosecutions), Incident Responders (members of a team that reviews services and information at risk to contain and eradicate threat agents by providing service recovery guidance).

## Approved Variants from the Undergraduate Regulations

* Not applicable

## Other sources of information that you may wish to consult

QAA Benchmark statement website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statement-Computing.aspx>

Professional or statutory body information: <http://www.bcs.org/>

Module guides

Course handbook

Guidance on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (Draft)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/EE_Draft_Guidance.pdf>

## Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules

This map identifies where the programme learning outcomes are assessed across the modules for this programme. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the programme aims, and a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the programme progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

|  |  |  | **Level 4** | | | | **Level 5** | | | | | **Level 6** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Module Code** |  | EM4105 Programming I – Thinking like a programmer | EM4250 Computing Fundamentals | EM4315  Cyber Crime and Digital Forensics | EM4450 Professional Environments 1 | EM5235  Ethical Hacking | EM5250  Computing Systems | EM5320 Database-Driven Application Development | EM5450 Professional Environments 2 | EM5210 Networking Concepts | EM6100 Individual Project | EM6275 Network and Mobile Forensics | EM6245 Cyber Security | EM6250 Internet Protocols and Services | EM6125 Software Development Practice | EM6415 Digital Entrepreneurship |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  |
| A2 |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |
| A3 |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | A4 |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| B2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | B3 |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | B4 |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Subject Practical Skills** | C1 |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |
| C2 |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| C3 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| C4 | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | C5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  |  | C6 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |

*(Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.)*

Shaded columns denote core modules

## Technical Annex

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Final Award(s):** | BSc (Hons) Cyber Security and Digital Forensics |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | Cert HE, Dip HE, Ordinary degree |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | Full-time – 3 years  Sandwich – 4 years  Part-time – 6 years |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | Full-time – 6 years  Sandwich – 8 years  Part-time – 12 years |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:**  **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | 6  Computing |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, part-time, sandwich |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | ESOFT Metro Campus (EMC) |
| **School:** | EMC School of Computing |
| **Department:** | Department of Networks and Digital Media |
| **JACS code:** | I100 |
| **UCAS Code:** | N/A |

**Course/Route Code:**