Programme specification

*(Notes on how to complete this template are provided in Annexe 3)*

1. Overview / factual information

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| **Programme/award title(s)** | BSc (Hons) Computing Science (Top Up) |
| **Teaching Institution** | South West College (SWC) |
| **Awarding Institution** | The Open University (OU) |
| **Date of first OU validation** | September 2020 |
| **Date of latest OU (re)validation** | April 2025 |
| **Next revalidation** | April 2030 |
| **Credit points for the award** | 120 |
| **~~UCAS Code~~** | N/A |
| **HECoS Code** | TBC |
| **LDCS Code (FE Colleges)** | TBC |
| **Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.** | September 2025 |
| **Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)** | Computing, March 2022 |
| **Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes.****For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.**  | * [Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2023-2033](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/skills-barometer-2023-2033)
* [Government Industrial Strategy – Economy 2030](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/industrial-strategy#:~:text=Economy%202030%20%E2%80%93%20draft%20Industrial%20Strategy,2017%20and%2025%20April%202017.);
* South West College Development Plan;
* [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2024)
* Feedback from industry (Industrial Advisory Board) and student focus groups;
* Professional Certifications: CompTia, Microsoft, & EC Council
* [Subject Benchmark Statement: Computing](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/sbs/sbs-computing-22.pdf?sfvrsn=ebb3dc81_4)
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| **Professional/statutory recognition** | N/A |
| **For apprenticeships fully or partially integrated Assessment.**  | N/A |
| **Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL,****Mix of DL & Face-to-Face)****Apprenticeship** | Full Time and Part Time |
| **Duration of the programme for each mode of study** | 1 Year Full Time2 Years Part Time |
| **Dual accreditation (if applicable)** | N/A |
| **Date of production/revision of this specification** | April 2025 |

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| **Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.** **More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.** **The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.** |

2. Programme overview

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| 2.1 Educational aims and objectives |
| The aim of this programme is to produce graduates who can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of computing to address complex challenges, drive innovation and create social and economic value in the context of the Northern Ireland, UK and global technology sectors.The programme emphasises a strong foundation in computing principles, including IoT, cybersecurity, emerging technologies and machine learning and data analysis; enabling graduates to address challenges and design solutions that are ethically, socially and economically responsible.The objectives are to develop graduates who:* Apply critical thinking and evaluation to identify innovative and practical solutions to creatively and effectively solve complex computing problems, using appropriate tools and methodologies.
* Reflect on ethical, societal and technical implications in their work, ensuring responsible practices in research, development and project execution.
* Utilise advanced technologies, tools and software to support secure development, data analysis and computing solutions.
* Exhibit strong time management and organisational capabilities to plan, execute and deliver complex projects within deadlines, while efficiently managing resources.
* Understand the role of technology in driving business growth and creating social and economic value.
* Recognise and adapt to global trends and emerging technologies to maintain relevance in a dynamic industry.
* Develop skills to communicate complex technical concepts clearly to diverse audiences, using appropriate methods and strategies, while also working effectively in individual and team-based settings.
* Demonstrate critical thinking and adaptability to address challenges in dynamic and interdisciplinary environments, ensuring continuous improvement and innovation in their professional careers.
* Operate within professional and ethical standards, adopting best practice to make informed decisions that align with societal and organisational goals.
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| 2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme and arrangements for bridging modules or induction) |
| South West College currently delivers a successful Foundation Degree in Computing, validated by Ulster University. This programme is delivered on three campuses: Dungannon, Enniskillen and Omagh, through a full-time (2 years) and part-time/HLA (3 years) format.The proposed BSc Hons Top-up programme will continue to act as a progression route for successful students on these programmes, allowing them to complete an Honours Degree in Computing by acquiring a further 120 credits of learning at Level 6. The curriculum includes a structured bridge from the Data Analytics module at Level 5 to the Machine Learning module at Level 6, ensuring a seamless transition and deepening of knowledge in this advanced area of study. Additionally, the Work-Based Learning (WBL) module at Level 5 introduces students to project-based learning, which provides valuable insights and skills that directly link to the Advanced Research Project at Level 6. This approach lays a strong foundation at Level 5, enabling students to evolve and excel in their studies as they progress to Level 6.The College also delivers a very successful full-time Level 3 Information Technology programme on all three campuses, with very high success rates.This proposed course will enable students to progress from Level 2 to Level 6 at South West College, maintaining strong connections with employers and the local tech industry. This ensures the development of work-ready graduates equipped to meet the demands of the rapidly growing computing and technology sector in Northern Ireland, UK and beyond.*Students who complete a relevant level 5 qualification can progress to the Level 6 BSc top-up, which may include, but is not restricted to, the following:**FdSc Computing**FdSc Cloud Computing Technologies**FdSc Cloud Computing, Analytics and Security For Industry**FdSc Software and Cloud Development with Data Analysis**FdSc Cyber Security with Cloud and Networking Infrastructure**FdSc Cyber Security and Digital Forensics**HND Computing* |

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| 2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.  |
| *N/A* |

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| 2.4 List of all exit awards |
| *The Open University BSc (Ordinary) Degree in Computing Science (awarded upon completion of 60 out of 120 credits of the BSc (Hons) in Computing Science course).* |

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| **3. Programme structure and learning outcomes*****(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)***  |

| **Programme Structure - LEVEL 6 BSc (Hons) Computing Science** |
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| **Compulsory modules** | **Credit points** | **Optional modules** | **Credit points** | **Is module compensatable? \*** | **Semester runs in** |
| Internet of ThingsMachine Learning & Data AnalyticsCyber Security OperationsEmerging TechnologiesAdvanced Research Project | 2020202040 | N/A |  | YesYesYesYesNo | **FT**S1S1S2S2S1&S2 | **PT**Y1 S1Y2 S1Y1 S2Y2 S2Y2 S1&2 |

* Note: No more than 20 credits can be compensated in any one stage of an undergraduate programme.

**Part-time students will infill with the full-time students in the relevant modules in both semesters.**

**Full-time students will study 60 credits per semester during their year of study.  This includes the Advanced Research project which is taught all year long (40 credits).**

**Part-time students will study 20 credits per semester in year 1 and then study 40 credits per semester in year 2. This includes the Advanced Research project which is taught all year long  in year 2 (40 credits).**

**Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:**

| Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6 |
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| 3A. Knowledge and understanding |
| Learning outcomes: | Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods |
| A1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of fundamental and advanced principles across computing disciplines, evaluating concepts and methodologies to create innovative computing solutions.A2 Demonstrate a critical understanding of IoT protocols, networking principles and security risks, while applying best practices and applying research methodologies ethically to collect and interpret data.A3Apply computing principles to develop and evaluate solutions, ensuring information security and adhering to professional, legal and ethical standards to solve complex, real-world problems using interdisciplinary knowledge and emerging computing trends.A4 Critically evaluate and apply professional, social, legal and ethical considerations in the design, development, implementation and security of IoT and Embedded Systems, analysing current machine learning algorithms and model outputs and describe the stages of ethical hacking, ensuring secure and responsible approaches to system testing and vulnerability identification.A5 Analyse and address security challenges inherent to IoT networks and devices, proposing and implementing strategies to mitigate vulnerabilities. Critically reflect on ethical issues and biases associated with machine learning algorithms, identifying forensic tools and methodologies, ensuring effective analysis and investigation of digital evidence.A6 Integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills through hands-on projects, showcasing the ability to design and implement solutions tailored to real-world applications.  | These learning outcomes will be developed through a variety of learning, teaching and assessment methods to enrich and reinforce the student experience. This variety is a key strength of the programme.Lecturers will introduce course content using notes, textbooks/eBooks and other technology-enhanced learning (TEL) resources, alongside discussions and project-based scenarios. Students will have access to teaching materials before class, fostering a flipped classroom approach that encourages individual work, peer collaboration, small group activities, plenary sessions, independent study and active engagement with the course material.Tutorials will enhance students' understanding by applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, including problem-solving exercises related to the course content. Students will have the opportunity to present their work in various formats, such as written, oral and digital, to develop a range of communication skills. Practical exercises will encourage both individual and group work, enabling students to apply foundational concepts in real-world contexts. Students will also be guided to research assigned problems, share their findings and reflect on their learning. Module coordinators will provide selected readings, including academic papers and articles, to support and expand their knowledge.Students will be guided to relevant materials from textbooks, online resources and academic databases to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding of key concepts and procedures. They will be expected to complete all tutorial tasks and address any unfinished work independently before the next session.The course adopts a blended learning approach, combining in-person teaching with asynchronous activities delivered through a virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE serves as a central hub for learning, teaching and assessment, providing students with access to resources, activities and feedback.Assessment will employ a variety of methods, including written examinations, project-based assignments, class tests, lab-based practical assessments and essay-based reports. This diverse approach ensures students can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of the course outcomes effectively. |

| 3B. Cognitive skills |
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| Learning outcomes: | Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods |
| B1 Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and analytical skills to systematically assess and address complex challenges in computing and technology, applying structured approaches to problem-solving and evaluation.B2 Synthesise knowledge, methodologies and principles from multiple disciplines to design, implement and critically evaluate computing artefacts ensuring effectiveness, usability and sustainability.B3 Identify, analyse and mitigate security vulnerabilities in computing systems, by applying industry best practices, ethical frameworks and risk management strategies to enhance system resilience and ensure responsible decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.B4 Critically evaluate and apply forensic tools and methodologies, assessing their effectiveness to conduct digital investigations responsibly, ensuring compliance with professional and ethical standards in real-world contexts. | These learning outcomes will be developed through a variety of learning, teaching and assessment methods to enrich and reinforce the student experience. This variety is a key strength of the programme.Lecturers will introduce course content using notes, textbooks/eBooks and other technology-enhanced learning (TEL) resources, alongside discussions and project-based scenarios. Students will have access to teaching materials before class, fostering a flipped classroom approach that encourages individual work, peer collaboration, small group activities, plenary sessions, independent study and active engagement with the course material.Tutorials will enhance students' understanding by applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, including problem-solving exercises related to the course content. Students will have the opportunity to present their work in various formats, such as written, oral and digital, to develop a range of communication skills.Practical exercises will encourage both individual and group work, enabling students to apply foundational concepts in real-world contexts. Students will also be guided to research assigned problems, share their findings and reflect on their learning. Module coordinators will provide selected readings, including academic papers and articles, to support and expand their knowledge.Students will be guided to relevant materials from textbooks, online resources and academic databases to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding of key concepts and procedures. They will be expected to complete all tutorial tasks and address any unfinished work independently before the next session.The course adopts a blended learning approach, combining in-person teaching with asynchronous activities delivered through a virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE serves as a central hub for learning, teaching and assessment, providing students with access to resources, activities and feedback.Assessment will employ a variety of methods, including written examinations, project-based assignments, class tests, lab-based practical assessments and essay-based reports. This diverse approach ensures students can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of the course outcomes effectively. |

| 3C. Practical and professional skills |
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| Learning outcomes: | Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods |
| C1 Design, develop and evaluate functional computing artefacts using appropriate tools, standards and methodologies to create applications, investigate cyber incidents using forensic tools and communicate findings effectively, while applying professional standards in developing documentation and narrated presentations, ensuring clarity and relevance.C2 Effective planning, execution and communication of research projects, adopting professional standards to create well-documented work, producing written reports analysing data and recommendations. Work collaboratively or independently and communicate technical insights to both technical and non-technical audiences.C3 Prioritise secure development practices to protect applications and ensure data integrity and confidentiality, evaluating tools to produce documented code, demonstrating the application of techniques to analyse data, highlighting expertise in secure and analytical development practices. | These learning outcomes will be developed through a variety of learning, teaching and assessment methods to enrich and reinforce the student experience. This variety is a key strength of the programme.Lecturers will introduce course content using notes, textbooks/eBooks and other technology-enhanced learning (TEL) resources, alongside discussions and project-based scenarios. Students will have access to teaching materials before class, fostering a flipped classroom approach that encourages individual work, peer collaboration, small group activities, plenary sessions, independent study and active engagement with the course material.Tutorials will enhance students' understanding by applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, including problem-solving exercises related to the course content. Students will have the opportunity to present their work in various formats, such as written, oral and digital, to develop a range of communication skills.Practical exercises will encourage both individual and group work, enabling students to apply foundational concepts in real-world contexts. Students will also be guided to research assigned problems, share their findings and reflect on their learning. Module coordinators will provide selected readings, including academic papers and articles, to support and expand their knowledge.Students will be guided to relevant materials from textbooks, online resources and academic databases to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding of key concepts and procedures. They will be expected to complete all tutorial tasks and address any unfinished work independently before the next session.The course adopts a blended learning approach, combining in-person teaching with asynchronous activities delivered through a virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE serves as a central hub for learning, teaching and assessment, providing students with access to resources, activities and feedback.Assessment will employ a variety of methods, including written examinations, project-based assignments, class tests, lab-based practical assessments and essay-based reports. This diverse approach ensures students can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of the course outcomes effectively. |

| 3D. Key/transferable skills |
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| Learning outcomes: | Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods |
| D1 Develop strong communication skills to convey complex ideas, research findings and project outcomes to diverse audiences, demonstrating their research and problem-solving abilities, communicating insights clearly using written, verbal and visual methods to enable effective engagement in both professional and academic settings.D2 Ensure effective project execution through efficient organisation and management of time and resources for completing complex projects, producing professional reports, communicating interpretations of algorithms and demonstrating adaptability by learning in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. D3 Develop critical thinking, personal initiative and adaptability to solve problems and implement solutions across interdisciplinary areas, analysing data, integrating techniques and reflecting on their learning, demonstrating decision-making and organisational skills to drive improvement. D4 Proficient use of technology, software and equipment to perform a range of technical and analytical tasks to effectively utilise modern technological tools to enhance productivity and innovation in dynamic computing environments. | These learning outcomes will be developed through a variety of learning, teaching and assessment methods to enrich and reinforce the student experience. This variety is a key strength of the programme.Lecturers will introduce course content using notes, textbooks/eBooks and other technology-enhanced learning (TEL) resources, alongside discussions and project-based scenarios. Students will have access to teaching materials before class, fostering a flipped classroom approach that encourages individual work, peer collaboration, small group activities, plenary sessions, independent study and active engagement with the course material.Tutorials will enhance students' understanding by applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, including problem-solving exercises related to the course content. Students will have the opportunity to present their work in various formats, such as written, oral and digital, to develop a range of communication skills.Practical exercises will encourage both individual and group work, enabling students to apply foundational concepts in real-world contexts. Students will also be guided to research assigned problems, share their findings and reflect on their learning. Module coordinators will provide selected readings, including academic papers and articles, to support and expand their knowledge.Students will be guided to relevant materials from textbooks, online resources and academic databases to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding of key concepts and procedures. They will be expected to complete all tutorial tasks and address any unfinished work independently before the next session.The course adopts a blended learning approach, combining in-person teaching with asynchronous activities delivered through a virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE serves as a central hub for learning, teaching and assessment, providing students with access to resources, activities and feedback.Assessment will employ a variety of methods, including written examinations, project-based assignments, class tests, lab-based practical assessments, presentations and essay-based reports. This diverse approach ensures students can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of the course outcomes effectively. |

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| **4. Distinctive features of the programme structure*** **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive featurs such as:**
* where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
* any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules
* where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route
* **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
* how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
* the integration of the ‘on the job’ and ‘off the job’ training
* how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship
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| This programme of study will offer a Level 6 progression route from level 5 qualifications, such as Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diplomas, in related areas of Computing. The programme will provide learners with part time and full-time modes of study. The programme has multiple exit points including Ordinary Degree and Hons Degree.  The BSc (Hons) Computing has a strong Industry Advisory Board (IAB).  Members of the board advise on curriculum and module design and assessment.  Employers are connected to the programme throughout its life cycle to aid in curriculum development, provide placements, guest speakers slots and projects. Innovative technology such as Virtual Hardware Labs, State of the art equipped Hardware Labs, remote access etc. will be used to support and enhance learning.  Students will be able to access and use SWC Innovation Centres to aid project-based learning and research.  Delivery by a strong teaching team who have industry experience, academic and professional qualifications to ensure high quality learning and teaching.  |

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| **5. Support for students and their learning** *(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)* |
| **Students and their learning are supported in a number of ways:** * **Induction process**

The Higher Education Coordinator facilitates an induction with all new Higher Education students at each campus; Course Induction is then delivered by the Course Director and members of staff from the Course Team and the College Student Support staff (Student\Finance\Careers\ Learning Resource Centre).   Student Induction includes: * Introduction to the teaching team (meet and greet). Who’s who (L6 Course Director, Deputy Head / Head of School, Head of Faculty, Head of Curriculum etc.).
* A tour of the campus facilities.
* Access and contact information for students to the Course Director and academic staff, Student Support, Finance.
* Introduction to the Course, Course Outline, Structure, Content and Policies.
* A College Higher Education Handbook provides a guide to life as a student within the College.  It welcomes students to the College, gives detailed information on college structure, staff contact information, teaching and learning resources, health and safety, student support and details on the college environment.  It also provides advice concerning assessment and how to approach study in higher education.  Printed versions are distributed to each student and are available electronically from the VLE.
* Induction to Canvas.
* Module tutors will induct students to each module.
* A Course Handbook provides necessary information about the course.  It includes information on the programme team, outline information on modules studied and the course calendar.  It contains the course specification and the current course.  Printed versions are distributed to each student and are also available electronically from the VLE.
* Module Handbooks describe the content of each module delivered in a particular year.  These provide students with the module teaching and assessment schedules and a list of the recommended texts.  Printed versions are distributed to each student and are also available electronically from the VLE.
* Academic demands of the course.  Requirements from students\ staff.
* Past students’ experiences.  Where are they now?
* An outline of how students will be assessed for the duration of their course and what assessment methods will be used.
* Outline opportunities for students to gain tutor feedback.
* Outline course regulations: Assessment Policy, Plagiarism Policy and Internal Moderation Policy.
* Academic Appeals Policy, Complaints Procedure, Submission of Course Work, Examination Process and 1st Sits/ Resits, Extenuating Circumstances.
* The role of The Open University Link Tutor and External Examiner.
* Opportunities for students to give feedback (Post Induction Surveys, Module Evaluations, SWC and The Open University Students Staff Consultative Meetings, Annual Course Reviews).
* Outline Students and Support Available – including information of Further Education Award (Full-time and Part-time), Hardship Fund and SWC Bursaries).
* Outline of the Tutorial support system - Pathways and HEAR.
* The role and nomination of class representatives.
* Outline of the VLE to support teaching, learning and assessment, Library and Learning Resource Centre.
* Progression Routes.

* ***Study Skills***

The college has a HE Academic Support programme where designated members of staff carry out workshops and give one to one assistance to students on study skills with a focus on report writing, Harvard referencing and exam and study techniques. HE academic support would also effectively support the completion of Advanced Research project * ***L6 Course Director***

The Course Director is an experienced member of staff with the responsibility of overseeing the effective running of the course. The Course Director provides a single first point of reference for both new, continuing, full time and part time students. The Course Director will monitor student achievement in all modules, conduct staff/student meetings and document the teaching team response to all matters raised by students. Course Directors also inform students of their grades and if required prepare plan of action for failed modules in line with The Open University regulations.* ***Advisers of Studies***

Each Course has a tutorial programme as part of the programme of study. Through this, a member of staff acts as adviser of studies, as they regularly meet each student throughout the academic year to discuss progress, attendance, performance, learning needs, any arising issues, pastoral care, referrals to student or other relevant agencies, referrals to Higher Education Academic Support Team for advice on study skills, revision techniques and to set targets and goals.*·* ***Advanced Research Project Supervisor***Each student will be assigned a supervisor who will act as their main point of contact for the module. They will guide the student when choosing projects to ensure suitability, viability and assure that they are satisfied that the Learning Outcomes of the module can be met within the scope of the potential project. Where possible, the supervisor will have no more than four students to supervise, in order to ensure a quality of experience for the student. Supervisors will meet their candidates regularly by various means and guide them through the challenges of the module. Other members of staff will also be utilised with specialist skills for specific elements of a project or, for example, to aid with manufacturing processes. This will all be with oversight of the Advanced Research Project Supervisor.* ***Centralised Career Service***

A centralised Careers Service is available through the student support unit to help students determine their future career and support their applications for employment and UCAS applications. Students will discuss career options during meetings with their class tutor and course director. This provides advice and direction to students and enables them to make meaningful use of the careers service during the year. * **Library**

The Learning Resource Centres (one at each campus) exist to support the information needs of all members of the College including students, lecturers, managers and support staff. The LRCs offer an excellent range of facilities designed to provide access to both the latest technology and traditional learning resources. Experienced staff will complete an induction with all students at the start of their course. They are also available to answer enquiries, to help users access information and resources throughout the academic year.To support Higher Education students in their research all centres provide a range of mentoring either in group sessions or one to one including the following:* **Getting ready for academic study:**
* Student Inductions - introduction to college systems.
* Referencing - how to reference and referencing tools.
* Researching projects/assignments - using Discovery.
* Understanding plagiarism and copyright.
* Microsoft Office Suite: email, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher.
* **Library Resources:**
* Books, Journals and Magazines.
* E-books.
* Databases.
* Newspapers.
* Reports.
* Heritage online library service.
* Inter campus loans service.
* IEEE subscription
* **I.T. Facilities:**
	+ Computer suites are equipped with a wide range of software (on all campuses).
	+ High speed internet access and Wi-Fi.
	+ Web based learning resources.
	+ Virtual learning environment.
	+ Printing, photocopying and scanning.
	+ Laptop loans for use in the Learning Resource Centre.
	+ **Information Technology Department**

SWC has a dedicated technical team based on each campus. This team is responsible for the day-to-day running, maintenance and troubleshooting all IT and Technical support, including support for off campus access to software and VLE systems.* **Student Support Department**

A dedicated student support team who supports both academic staff and students, available on each campus. The student support team support students through personal or academic difficulties through the implementation of college induction, class representative training, organising of ad hoc training and information events, learning support, careers, enrolment, health, finance and pastoral care.* **Counselling Service**

A centralised Counselling Service is based on each campus and can be accessed confidently via Course Director (self-referral) following one to one student tutorial on academic progress. The counselling service is carried out weekly in a supportive, caring and non-judgmental way. It is available for all students regardless of study path.   The counsellors are fully qualified in a range of issues that affect students and have extensive expertise on a wide range of issues that may be affecting their wellbeing.* **Student representation**

Student representatives attend student/staff consultative committee meetings in week 6 of each semester, during which they have the opportunity to address general programme concerns that have been raised by their class. The meeting is chaired and minutes taken by the Course Director.* **Module Feedback opportunities**

Fifteen working days following the submission of each module assessment and at the end of each semester on academic progress.* **Induction Feedback opportunities**

Post induction in semester one students will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the induction process.* **Student Email**

Email accounts and full access to the internet and VLE. Remote student login to gain access to all module software and resources.* **Student Tutorial**

Tutorial classes are timetabled on a weekly basis with the Course Director. During these sessions the Course Director will meet with the student group and individually to discuss progress, any issues that may be affecting progress, arrange for additional support (if required) and update the electronic individual learning plan (e-ILP) monitoring and actioning during tutorial sessions and one to one with the Course Director.* **Equality and Diversity**

The College Disability Policy for Students sets out the College’s commitment to both potential and existing students with a disability and those whose disability worsens during their studies. The College will seek to encourage students to disclose a disability and to ensure that students with a disability are protected from discrimination and have equal access, where appropriate, to the full range of College facilities. The College will treat all students with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive learning environment free from disability discrimination, harassment or victimisation. SWC recognises its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006), Special Educational Needs Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and its statutory obligations.In accordance with SENDO (NI) 2005 and the College's ethos of inclusion, the facilitation of 'special' arrangements for students with disabilities will be applied in relation to these assessment schemes. A flexible approach will always be taken using the guidelines from both the Examinations Office and/or Student Support to ensure that disabled students have the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. |

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| **6. Criteria for admission***(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)* |
| The Honours Degree Top Up will be available to any candidate who satisfies the criteria below:  * An Ulster University or Queen’s University Belfast Foundation Degree (or other relevant L5 qualification such as a Higher National Diploma) in a related discipline, qualifications deemed equivalent.
* Candidates presenting with FDs or HNC/Ds from other awarding bodies will be considered under RPL procedures.
* GCSE English Language and Maths at grade 4 (grade C) or above. (or equivalent, - for example, Level 2 Literacy and Numeracy Essential Skills qualifications are also accepted).
* Have reached the age of 18 years on admission.
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| **7. Language of study**  |
| English |

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| **8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including PSRB requirements)** |
| N/A |

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| **9. For apprenticeships in England End Point Assessment (EPA)***(Summary of the approved assessment plan and how the academic award fits within this and the EPA)* |
| N/A |

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| **10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning** |
| All HE programmes at SWC are subject to the Quality Management and Enhancement processes. In line with FHEQ Benchmark Statements (2024) the following processes are in place:  * Internal verification/moderation, cross marking and external examining processes used to ensure validity and reliability of assessment process.
* Staff/Student Consultative Committee meetings and SWC student focus groups provide the means of highlighting any difficulties, relating to the course, experienced by the cohort.
* Learners complete a module evaluation at the end of each module, each semester/year and at the end of the programme.
* The Course Committee considers learner feedback from each module.
* Annual Course Review procedures consider quantitative and qualitative feedback and formulate action plans.
* Staff appraisal is carried out on a two-year cycle with attention given to the development needs of the individual staff member.
* The College will annually complete the OU course review & evaluation documentation, if applicable.
* The College has a Staff Development Programme, which facilitates specific training/development for staff.
* All staff are encouraged to complete Information & Learning Technology qualifications.
* Views of external examiners are considered, and SWC/OU reporting mechanisms are/will be followed.
* Informal views and formal written feedback are considered from Employers via the Industrial Advisory Board.
* Learner performance data and career progression is annually monitored.
* Peer observation and assessment has been introduced to assessment matrix.

 All team members must attend programme specific team meetings during the year, all with pre-set agendas and the Course Directors must attend Higher Education Committee Meetings, which consider quality management. All new staff to the programme are supplied with a dedicated mentor and a full induction, with extra supervision over their first year in many forms such as Teaching & Learning Mentors and additional peer observations.  |

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| **11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation** |
| The programme has been running successfully for five years, with minor adjustments considered through module and course reflection each year.  However, the course has updated its content to reflect advancements in emerging technologies and align with industry demands. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity and the Internet of Things are rapidly transforming the technological landscape. This course is designed to not only incorporate these advancements but also to ensure that, as developments emerge, students continuously build the skills and knowledge necessary to tackle the challenges posed by new technologies. By fostering adaptability and a forward-thinking mindset, the course prepares students for careers in a dynamic and evolving field, enhancing their employability and equipping them to meet the expectations of modern employers.Since the initial validation of the programme in 2020 the changes are:* Introduction of the following modules: Internet of Things, Machine Learning & Data Analytics and Cyber Security Operations.
* The Advanced Research Project will now span both semesters, replacing the separate Research Methods and Design module in Semester 1 and the Dissertation Project in Semester 2.
* The content of the Emerging Technologies module has been updated.
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Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework (delete if not required.) – *not required*

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (ü) particular programme learning outcomes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **Level** | **Study module/unit** | **A1** | **A2** | **A3** | **A4** | **A5** | **A6** |  | **B1** | **B2** | **B3** | **B4** |  | **C1** | **C2** | **C3** |  | **D1** | **D2** | **D3** | **D4** |
| 6 |  Internet of Things  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   | ✓ |   | ✓ |   | ✓  |   | ✓ |
|  Machine Learning and Data Analytics  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  Cyber Security Operations  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓  | ✓  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |
|  Emerging Technologies |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |   |  |
|  Advanced Research Project | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

**Annexe 3: Notes on completing programme specification templates**

1 **-** This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx>

3 – Learning outcomes mustalso reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.