

**Modular and Part-Time  
Masters Programmes**

**In**

**The School of Computer Science  
The University of Manchester**

**Supplement to the Handbook for MSc,  
Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate**

This is the Supplement to the Handbook for the Taught Postgraduate Courses offered by the School of Computer Science in the University of Manchester for Modular and Part-Time Students. It contains important additional information relevant for the students taking one of our Masters Programmes on a modular or part-time basis. Please familiarise yourself with this document and the Handbook.

Although the information contained in this document is believed to be correct at the time of going to press, the School reserves the right to make appropriate changes without prior notice; however the School will endeavour to inform students of any substantial changes made affecting the programmes. This disclaimer does not affect any statutory rights which you may have under English law.

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# Chapter 1

## General Information

### 1.1 Who is Who?

The Modular/Part-Time Programme Director is Dr. Renate Schmidt (Room 2.42 in Kilburn Building, Email: [Renate.Schmidt@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Renate.Schmidt@manchester.ac.uk)) who oversees the organisation of the Modular and Part-Time MSc Programmes in the School.

She is assisted by the administrative staff in the Student Support Office and especially Chris Calland, who is Modular/Part-Time Administrator and helps looking after all Modular and part-time students. Chris' contact details are:

Chris Calland  
Student Support Office, Room LF21  
Kilburn Building  
Tel: +44 (0)161 275 6283  
Email: [christopher.calland@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:christopher.calland@manchester.ac.uk).

Emma Flynn and Sue Wolfenden in the External Affairs Office are the Admissions Officers.

### 1.2 Getting in Touch

Please get in touch anytime if you need clarification or if you have further questions about anything. We can always organise a telephone or Skype conversation if necessary.

### 1.3 Overview

The Study programme is designed to allow participation of industrial participants or those requiring a more flexible learning scheme. The aim is to allow students to approach their study in a way that suits them.

The course units are specially adapted to suit Modular/PT students and may be taken individually, or as part of a co-ordinated Modular/PT programme leading to an MSc, Diploma or Certificate by accumulation of the required credits over a longer period.

Technically you will be either registered as a Modular Student or a Part-time Student. The difference between registration as a part-time or modular student is the maximum duration allowed (see table below) and the fee model. Part-time students are charged half the full fees per year, while students on the modular programme are charged per course element (course unit, project).

Award	Duration	Mode of Study
MSc	1.5–2 years	Part-time
MSc	2.5–4 years	Modular

We generally advise students to register as Modular Degree Students to give flexibility to complete the programme over the maximum duration possible. Note, however, full-time students switching to part-time study will only be allowed to register as Part-Time students.

As a Modular or Part-time Students you are required to complete the same number of taught credits and credits for the MSc project as full-time students, but complete your degree over up to two years (if registered as a part-time student) or four years (if registered as a modular student). There is a bit more flexibility in the selection of course units as these do not need to fit the themes, unless you wish to complete an MSc degree with a specialisation (e.g., MSc in ACS with Specialisation in Artificial Intelligence, etc), in which case the requirements for the specialisation must be met.

In 2015/16 Modular/PT students may select from the list of Distance Learning course units. As the Distance Learning Programme is being phased out, this year is the last opportunity to take these course units. See

http:  
[//www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/  
 study-options/distance-learning/](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/distance-learning/)

for the Distance Learning course units on offer this year.

Course units are delivered in an intensive teaching style to enable learning to take place by day-long release from work over a period of 5 consecutive weeks.

## Chapter 2

# Programme Structure

The programme structure, the regulations and requirements are the same as for full-time students except that modular/part-time students have a more flexible study plans depending on their requirements.

### 2.1 Teaching Periods

The taught course units are typically delivered in one of 4 periods that span the academic year. In particular, the teaching periods are:

**Period 1 commencing:** Week 4 or 5 in September for 6 weeks

**Period 2 commencing:** Beginning of November for 6 weeks

**Period 3 commencing:** Last week of January for 6 weeks

**Period 4 commencing:** Middle of March for 6 weeks with Easter break in-between

The exact dates vary slightly from year to year; please refer to the Handbook and/or the Timetable on the School website for the exact dates.

There are no taught activities in the summer. This is when full-time students complete their project and resit exams take place. In this document we refer to this period as Period 5.

**Period 5 commencing:** After the exams/beginning of June – beginning of September

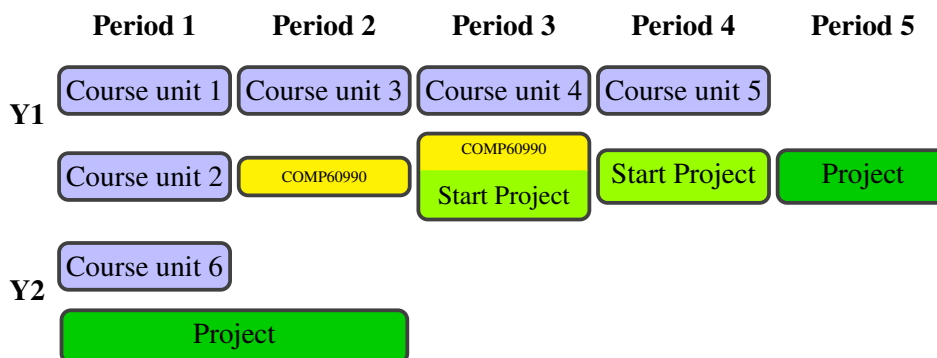
### 2.2 Modular/Part-Time Study Plans

Masters level courses may be taken by modular and part-time students over 2.5, 3 and 4 years to suit the time demands you may have of your own.

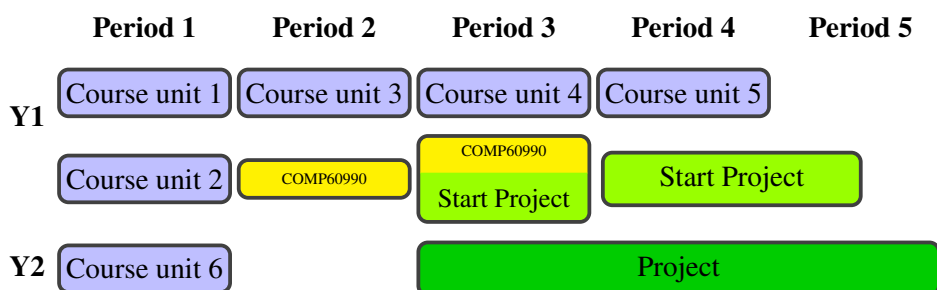
Students who have switched from full-time study to part-time study should plan to complete the study programme within 2 years.

Example study programmes are illustrated below.

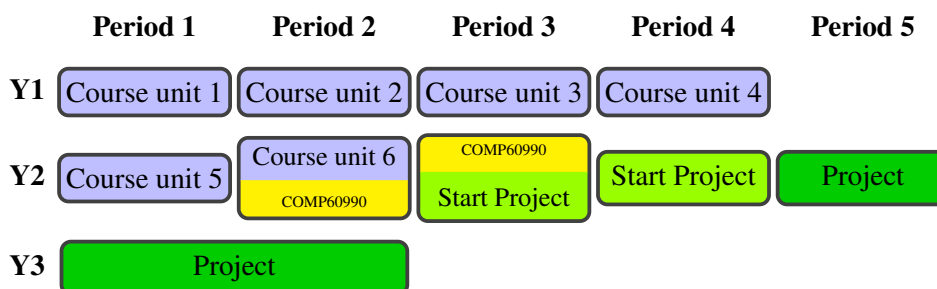
**Part-time MSc Programme over 1.5 years:**



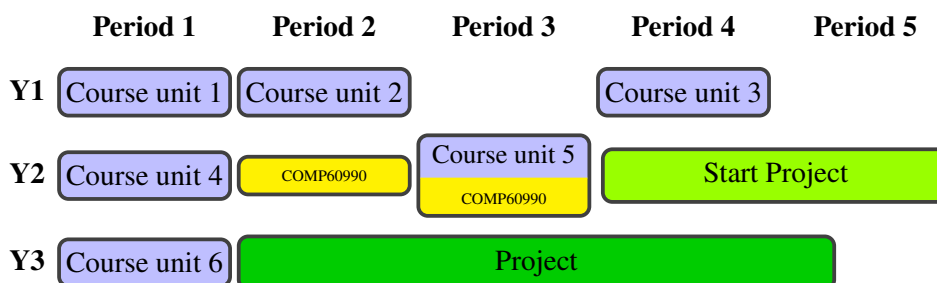
**Part-time MSc Programme over 2 years:**



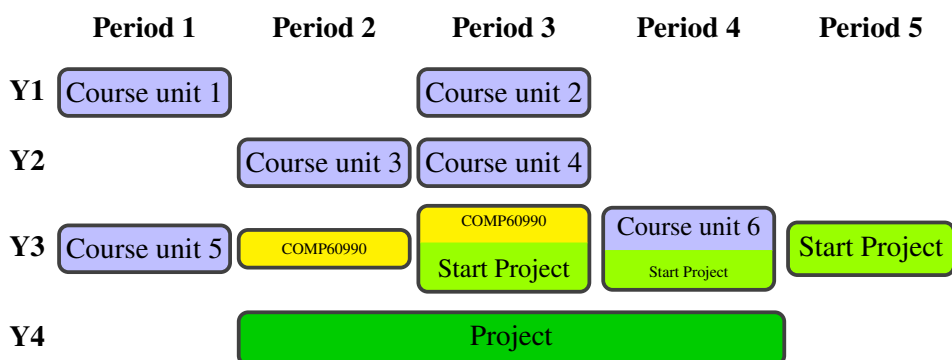
**Modular MSc Programme over 2.5 years:**



**Modular MSc Programme over 3 years:**



### Modular MSc Programme over 4 years:



## 2.3 Welcome Week

The first week of the academic year, before the start of teaching, consists of an introduction to the School, to the computer facilities, a series of introductory talks by the Head of School, the Head of Postgraduate Taught Programmes, meeting your Programme Director, and various other activities. There will be a series of introductory talks, one for each theme of MSc course units on offer. You are encouraged to attend these introductions to the course units in order to choose course units that you will take in the present academic year and also in order to learn about the topics of themes on offer.

### During Welcome Week, every new modular/part-time student must:

1. Meet your Programme Director.
2. Register with the University (online, please follow the instructions in the letter you have received from the University with information of how to sign up for the IT account and register with the University).
3. Register with the School of Computer Science (in person, see below).
4. Complete the Malpractice course (see below).
5. Make a study plan and discuss with the Programme Director; make the course unit selection for the current academic year (deadline: end of Welcome Week, i.e., 25 September 2015).

### During Welcome Week, every returning modular/part-time student must:

1. Make a study plan and make the course unit selection for the current academic year (deadline: end of Welcome Week, i.e., 25 September 2015).

As a returning student you are also encouraged to make arrangements to come in during Welcome Week in order to

- meet with the Programme Director and discuss your study plan, and if possible, attend introductory talks to themes to help you make the course unit selection.

You are of course most welcome to attend any of the other activities.



**The meeting with the Programme Director is very important for both new and returning students, as it is an opportunity to:**

- Discuss and understand the Programme structure, what is possible, what is not possible.
- Ensure that timetabling, the choices on offer, course unit requirements, project selection, etc are fully understood.
- Discuss any changes to the Programme Structure (especially for returning students); as you will be with us for several years and changes do happen.
- Discuss/review your study plans for coming academic year and the remaining study programme.
- Understand the concept of talking deadlines through with the course unit lecturers and how these can be extended specifically to fit with your work schedules.
- The meeting also helps the Programme Director to get to know you better and understand your situation.

**For the schedule of talks and events, in Welcome Week as well as PGT teaching timetable please refer to:** <http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/>. You should attempt to attend most of the activities, if this is possible.

- Registration with the School and several welcome and introductory talks take place on Monday. Alternatively, on other days in Welcome Week, registration in the School can be completed by going to the Student Support Office in Rm LF21 on the lower first floor.
- The times when you can make an appointment for the face-to-face meeting with the Programme Director are as follows:

Monday	9:00–13:00 and 15:00–18:00
Tuesday	9:00–17:00
Wednesday	Morning (tbc)

- The introductory talks about the themes take place on Tuesday and Thursday morning.<sup>1</sup>
- We advise that you attempt to attend one of the two introductory Linux lab sessions on Wednesday afternoon, or another opportunity is on Friday 10:00–12:00.<sup>1</sup>
- The compulsory Malpractice and Plagiarism course can be taken on Wednesday 10:00–12:00 or on Friday 10:00–12:00 in the School.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, it can be taken on-line. The course is on Blackboard as COMP609PM and can be accessed at any time from the start of the academic year.

<sup>1</sup>Please confirm dates, times and venue in <http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/>.

- You are very welcome to take part in the visit to Manchester United Football grounds on Friday afternoon;<sup>1</sup> it is well worth it if you have not been, and a nice opportunity to meet other MSc students.

You will find material and slides that were used in Welcome Week via the Current PGT webpage: <http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/>. If you have missed part of the Welcome Week or forgotten some of it, please check the information provided there.

## 2.4 Taught Course Units

For the taught course units university attendance is required for one day a week over 5 weeks. For the assessed coursework approximately 10 days will be needed throughout the 5 week period, though attendance is not required.

Course Units on offer can be found here:

COMP units (face-to-face)	<a href="http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/face-to-face/modules/">http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/face-to-face/modules/</a>
Distance learning units	<a href="http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/distance-learning/">http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/distance-learning/</a> (Advanced topics in CS, Digital Biology)

Course units are worth 15 credits each and you need to take 90 credits of taught units for an MSc (i.e., 6 course units).

All course units provided by the School of Computer Science (and some provided by other Schools) are taught in the following format:

Each course unit is allocated a day a week in a particular period (see timetable). These 5 days are the taught days of the course unit and typically consist of a mix of activities including lectures, supervised practical work, seminars, and discussion sessions. In addition, each course unit has coursework to be undertaken outside these taught days amounting to one-and-a-half days per week in the period of the course unit and 2.5 days of the coursework completion week at the end of the period (i.e., 10 days work in all). This coursework is likely to be assessed work.

Deadlines for assessed work will be set in individual course units. For most course units there will be weekly assessed coursework to be completed by the next teaching day or by the end of week 6. Most coursework in a period will be expected to be completed by the end of the relevant coursework completion week 6. Extensions to the deadlines can be requested by modular/part-time students.

**Note for students interested in the MSc in ACS with IT Management:** Course units taught by the Manchester Business School which are part of the MSc in Advanced Computer Science with IT Management are delivered in the traditional format over a full semester (12 weeks). **We do not recommend this specialisation to students in full-time work, because experience has shown such students find it hard to make**

**arrangements with their employer to get time off to attend lectures and take part in other organised activities or meet with fellow students for group work activities over a 12 week period.** Employers are generally more open to students taking a whole day off work every Tuesday (let's say, if that is the teaching day for the relevant course unit) for a 5 week period, than half a day for 12 weeks.

If you want to follow this specialisation anyway, see the ACS with IT Management timetable for the selection of course units on offer.

<http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/>

## 2.5 Research Project Procedures

The research project is an important part of the program: in terms of assessment it is equal to the taught component and is worth 90 credits. The project work not only introduces students to scientific research, they are offered the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of a specialist area of study.

Projects are either:

- Designed by a member of the academic staff and published on the Project webpage, or
- Designed by the company employing or sponsoring the student, or
- Designed by the student in collaboration with an academic member of staff.

In all cases the project work will enable the student to develop Research & Development skills and gain practical experience of applying the techniques covered during the taught part of the programme to realistic situations. Projects relate to current R&D areas, and are undertaken in the School of Computer Science or in an industrial setting.

Students may propose their own projects as long as the project is suitable for the award of an MSc and that it can be accommodated by the School.

The 90 credits for the research project component of the programme are split into two parts of work. The first part is worth 30 credits and includes assessment of the Initial Report, the Project Progress Report and attendance of the COMP60990 Research and Professional Issues course unit. The second part is the continuation and completion of the research project and is assessed by submission of a dissertation worth 60 credits.

Industrially based students have a choice of carrying out a work based project or selecting one of the individual projects designed by members of staff. Students wishing to carry out work based projects will work on the project with both an industrial and an academic supervisor.

In conjunction with their supervisor each student will develop their own study programme to fit the time commitment they are able to allocate.

1. Please negotiate deadlines for the Project Progress report and the Dissertation with your supervisor, and discuss them if needed with the Programme Director.
2. Once hand-in dates have been agreed then please notify the Modular/PT Administrator so that they know when you are expected to submit.

The following table summarises the assessment elements, default durations and deadlines.

<b>Report</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Important dates</b>
Initial Report	3 weeks	Submission deadline: typically week 3 of the semester 2, assuming end of January start. Contact the COMP60990 course leader for deadline extension, if needed.
Project Progress report	12–18/24 weeks	Submission deadline: middle of June/end of July, assuming end on January start.
Dissertation	28 weeks/ 6.5 months or longer	Latest submission deadline: Beginning of September, within the maximum time-frame of the MSc Programme (2 years part-time, 4 years modular programme)

We recommend to submit the Initial Report, the Progress Report and the Dissertation by the respective dates for full-time students. This allows support staff and markers to carry out necessary tasks and processes in sync with the other normal submissions. This is however not a strict requirement.

### **2.5.1 The COMP60990 Course Unit**

The COMP60990 (Research Methods and Professional Skills) course unit takes place mainly in Period 3 with some activities in Semester 1 where in addition to a careers evening there are four lectures on ethics and professional issues scheduled for Period 2. Most importantly the **Research Project Open House day** in December when students can meet potential project supervisors. The exact date can be confirmed on the COMP60990 webpage or with the course unit leader. If this date is not convenient for you, please feel free to approach academic staff directly to discuss potential projects and introduce yourself to them. In Period 3 a series of one hour lectures take place on a weekly basis.

#### **Important note:**

- 1. You must register for COMP60990 (Research Methods and Professional Skills) BEFORE starting the project.** (This can be done when you make the course unit selection at the beginning of the academic year.)
2. We recommend that all modular/part-time student contact the course unit leader (who is also the MSc Project Coordinator) to work through a plan of what is expected of you, specifically for the COMP60990 course unit.

**A detailed timetable and other relevant information can be found on the COMP60990 webpage:**

<http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/COMP60990/>

Please also refer to the MSc Handbook.

### 2.5.2 Project Selection and Allocation Procedure

**School Project taken from the Project Webpage.** This process is the same for both full and part-time students. The Project webpage is updated each year usually in November. You are invited to attend a Research Project Open Day in December to discuss projects offered with the named project academic. If after a discussion you would like to be considered for that project let the academic know and give them your short CV (so that they remember you when they make their input during the allocation process).

Students can then rank their selected projects in order of preference and submit their list via a web-form. The deadline for handing in these forms is given in the Handbook.

An allocation process then takes place which takes into account the students' preferences as well as staff input. Obviously some projects are more popular than others and there may be several students competing for their first choice. The allocation of projects adheres to a 'best-fit' process that tries to give as many students as possible their preferred project.

**Projects designed by the company employing or sponsoring the student.** This type of project must have an Academic Supervisor and also an Industrial Supervisor. The student should produce a one page (A4) outline of the project (project proposal) and send this to the Modular/Part-time Programme Director, and at the same time they should make an appointment to meet to discuss the proposal. After discussion the project proposal will be forwarded to the member of staff responsible for MSc project allocation. They in turn will select a member of the academic staff who has the relevant skills in that research area to act as Academic Supervisor.

**Project designed by the student in collaboration with an academic staff member.** The normal process would be that a short description of the project together with an agreement to supervise from the collaborating academic member of staff should be passed to the academic member of staff responsible for MSc project allocation.

### 2.5.3 Submission of Initial Report, Progress Report and the Dissertation

The initial report, project progress report, and dissertation form part of the assessments of COMP60990 and the MSc project. These should be submitted as follows in accordance with the study plan agreed with your supervisor and approved by the Programme Director.

- Initial Report and Project Progress Report to COMP60990 part of Blackboard.
- Dissertation to COMP60900 part of Blackboard.

#### **Important note:**

- **As soon as you have submitted your initial report, project progress report, or dissertation to Blackboard, please inform the Modular/PT Administrator (email above), so that they can ensure the necessary tasks and processes are carried out, including marking.**

#### **2.5.4 School and Student Commitments**

Modular and part-time students are usually highly motivated and would not get to the project phase of study otherwise. During the project phase however it is very easy for them to switch off for long periods, especially when they are under heavy work pressures

**Student.** The student needs to maintain contact with their Academic Supervisor throughout the project period, attend agreed meetings and use telephone, Skype and email contact to keep the supervisor up to date with their progress. The student has an equal responsibility with the School to maintain the communication whilst the project is in progress.

**Modular/Part-Time Programme Director.** The Programme Director will be available to offer initial counselling to the student whilst choosing the type of project, the subject area, and composition of their project proposal.

**Academic Supervisor.** The Academic Supervisor has to maintain regular contact with the student however when students are not based close to Manchester it would be inappropriate to set specific time periods. Therefore the Academic Supervisor will usually reach an agreement with the student at the commencement of the project work to establish the minimum level of communication between them, e.g., once a month.

**Industrial Supervisor.** Companies or sponsors who have designed the project are expected to appoint an Industrial Supervisor. This is to ensure that the student is given sufficient time to work on the project and that the project is moving towards the expected outcomes. Industrial Supervisors are involved in the scientific development work but not the academic requirements of the project.

## Chapter 3

# Changes to Study Plans and Degree Programmes

Because modular/part-time students are normally balancing full time work, family life and study, changes in their work and family situation can have a far reaching effect on their study plans during every year of study. We therefore aim to be as flexible as we possibly can to ensure that these typically highly motivated individuals are supported to enable their ultimate success in obtaining a good result at the end of their study.

### 3.1 Deadline Extensions for Modular/Part-Time Students

Often modular/part-time students manage to work with the normal weekly deadlines, and this solution is easiest for everyone. Course unit leaders are however encouraged to make allowances with deadlines or project meetings out of hours, via Skype, and other aspects as they may arise for modular/part-time students.

As only students know their time constraints, and equally the course unit leader may also have constraints (such as being away from Manchester, leave of absence, sickness), modular/part-time students should contact the course unit leader at the beginning of the course unit (and in advance of relevant deadlines), to discuss their constraints and come to a mutually acceptable way forward.

The extension to deadlines may be subject to the following constraints: Coursework may be essential preparation for a firmly scheduled activity (e.g., a specific lecture in the next week). The deadlines for modular/part-time students cannot be at a date that is after feedback on the relevant coursework has been given to the class. It is therefore important that students identify themselves as modular/part-time students to the relevant lecturers and if needed, agree a mutually convenient submission plan with them.

**Important note: NO extensions to deadlines are given to course units run by the Manchester Business School, i.e., course units with the code starting with BMAN or MSEC.** The Manchester Business School very rigidly gives extensions to deadlines *only for mitigating circumstances* and there is a strict procedure for applying for mitigating circumstances that must be followed (for this see the MSc Handbook or

contact relevant course unit lecturer). Being a modular/part-time student or being in part-time/full-time work is not a mitigating circumstance.

### **3.2 Mitigating Circumstances**

If there are serious mitigating circumstances that prevents you from studying as normal, extensions to deadlines can be requested by completing a mitigating circumstances form. This mechanism can also be used to ask the School for mitigating circumstances affecting exam performance, for example. Please refer to the Handbook for full details and/or discuss the circumstances with the relevant Course lecturer, the Modular/Part-Time Administrator or the Programme Director. The form can be obtained from the Student Support Office or the Modular/Part-Time Administrator.

### **3.3 Problems with Work Load and Interruption of Studies**

If at anytime during your studies you have problems with your workload, please do not hesitate to contact the Modular/Part-Time Administrator or Programme Director. If for any reason you need to take some time out from your studies due to some unforeseen difficulties or external pressures, we can arrange this. Taking an interruption of studies means that your clock on fees and deadlines is stopped and resumed once you are able to start studying again.

Requests for interruptions of studies can be made by completing an appropriate form available from the Modular/Part-Time Administrator. These should be made immediately as the University does not normally accept retrospective applications. The form can be obtained from the Student Support Office or the Modular/Part-Time Administrator.

### **3.4 Changing or Dropping Course Units**

If you feel you want to change a course unit selection to another one in the same period this is possible up to *one week* into the delivery of a course unit. If you feel you want to drop a course unit selection and do one in another period this is possible up to *two weeks* into the delivery of a course unit. Please simply contact the Modular/Part-Time Administrator in each case. Any request for a course unit change after one week into a course, or dropping a course after two weeks into a course, should be discussed with the Programme Director.

### **3.5 Changing Degree Programme**

Changes in MSc Degree Programme/Specialisation within the School are permitted at any time as long as the requirements of the programme/specialisation changed to are met. Please contact the Modular/PT Administrator, if you consider changing programme or specialisation.



When students have accumulated enough credits to fulfil the requirements for the Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma they may exit with such an award. In this case again the Modular/PT Administrator needs to be consulted.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Required modules</b>
CPD Certificate <sup>2</sup>	1 x 15 credit postgraduate module (15 credits)
Postgraduate Certificate	4 x 15 credit postgraduate modules (60 credits)
Postgraduate Diploma	6 x 15 credit postgraduate modules (90 credits) 1 x mini-project (30 credits) (Total 120 credits)
MSc	6 x 15 credit postgraduate modules (90 credits) 1 x Research Skills and Professional Issues, incl. first part of project (30 credits) 1 x Research Project (60 credits) (Total 180 credits)

### **3.6 Changing Organisation and Regulations**

From time to time the organisation of some aspect of the study programme changes, or the course units on offer change.

Generally once a student has registered for the first year then the regulations that are in effect at the date are the regulations that they work to until completion. In rare cases the University insist on a change in which cases students will be advised in start of year meetings on what needs to be done.

If you find that there have been changes that have an adverse affect on your study plan do discuss these with the Programme Director.

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<sup>2</sup>CPD = Continuing Professional Development

## Appendix A

### Additional resources

MSc webpages:	<a href="http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/">http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/</a>
Handbook:	<a href="http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/study-curriculum.php">http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/study-curriculum.php</a>
Timetable:	<a href="http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/">http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/timetable/</a>
Face-to-face course units:	<a href="http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/face-to-face/modules/">http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/face-to-face/modules/</a>
Distance learning course units:	<a href="http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/distance-learning/">http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/study/professional-development/study-options/distance-learning/</a>
Research methods webpage:	<a href="http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/COMP60990/">http://studentnet.cs.manchester.ac.uk/pgt/COMP60990/</a>