

# COMP 261: Algorithms and Data Structures

## Course Outline 2010 Trimester 2

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This document sets out the workload and assessment requirements for COMP 261. It also provides contact information for staff involved in the course. If the contents of this document are altered during the course, you will be advised of the change by an announcement in lectures and/or on the course web site. A printed copy of this document is held in the School Office.

### Introduction

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The goal of COMP 261 is to introduce you to a wide range of algorithms and data structures.

### Objectives

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By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. select, adapt, and implement a wide range of standard algorithms and data structures to construct software solutions to complex problems (BE [3\(a\)](#), [3\(d\)](#), [3\(f\)](#), BSc [1](#), [2](#));
2. understand algorithms described in pseudocode and to use analysis of an algorithm's time and space requirements to determine applicability to a problem (BE [3\(a\)](#), [3\(b\)](#), BSc [3](#));
3. recognise the distinction between "easy" problems, 'hard' (NP) problems, and uncomputable problems and the consequences for constructing algorithms and programs for such problems (BE [3\(b\)](#), BSc [3.4](#));
4. know and be able to implement important algorithms related to graphs, searching, B-Trees, and parsing (BE [3\(a\)](#), BSc [2](#)).

Your understanding will be assessed by assignments, an in-lecture term test, and a final examination. Tutorial exercises and readings (not directly assessed) will reinforce lecture material.

### Textbook

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There is no assigned textbook for COMP 261. However, we will be providing printed notes for part of the course, and pointers to web pages that describe algorithms for other parts of the course.

### Lectures, Tutorials, Laboratories, and Practical work

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A [schedule](#) of lecture topics, readings, and assignment due dates is available online. Major topics will include graph algorithms, searching, B-Trees, and parsing.

Lectures for COMP 261 are: *Tuesdays at 3:10p.m. in EA006, Wednesdays at 3:10p.m. in MC102, and Fridays at 3:10p.m. in MC102.*

The Friday lecture slot will typically be an optional "review lecture" which will go over some topics from the previous lectures more slowly or in greater detail.

Regular tutorials, which all students are expected to attend one of, will be held on:

- Friday 4-5 (MY632)
- Monday 9-10 (MY632)
- Monday 3-4 (MY531)
- Monday 4-5 (AM104)
- Tuesday 2-3 (VZ506)

Tutorials start on Friday, 16th of July, 2010 (first week of lectures) and there is going to be no tutorial on the last Friday, 15th of October, 2010. You should sign up for a tutorial slot at <https://signups.victoria.ac.nz/>

### Assignments and Projects

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There will be 6 assignments for the course, all of which will include constructing programs that use particular algorithms. Each assignment will be approximately 2 weeks. The assignments will have to be submitted electronically using the [ECS Submission System](#).

All of the assignments will address objectives 1 and 2 above. Some assignments will address objectives 3 and 4 above.

### Workload

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In order to maintain satisfactory progress in COMP 261, you should plan to spend an average of at least 10 hours per week on this paper. A plausible and approximate breakdown for these hours would be:

- Lectures and tutorials: 3 hours,
- Review and readings: 2 hour,
- Assignments: 5 hours.

**Note:** A 15 point course maps to 150 hours over 15 weeks, where this includes the 12 weeks of lectures, 2 weeks of mid-trimester break, and 1 week of study period - all 15 weeks are expected to be full working (study) weeks for VUW students. As 200-level students, you are expected to acquire the ability to apply your knowledge and skills to the analysis and design of basic problems; you will develop the skills to explain your analysis and design to your peers and to staff. Please refer to [ECS Expectations of Students](#) for more information.

## School of Engineering and Computer Science

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The School office is located on level three of the Cotton Building ([Cotton 358](#)).

## Staff

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The course organiser for COMP 261 is [Peter Andrae](#) ("Pondy"). The lecturers for the course are [Peter Andrae](#) (1st half) and [Alex Potanin](#) (2nd half). Their contact details are:

- [Dr Peter Andrae](#) ("Pondy")
- [Cotton 429](#)
- +64 4 463 5834
- [Peter.Andrae@ecs.vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Peter.Andrae@ecs.vuw.ac.nz)
  
- [Dr Alex Potanin](#)
- [Cotton 262](#)
- +64 4 463 5302
- [Alex.Potanin@ecs.vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Alex.Potanin@ecs.vuw.ac.nz)

The tutorials will be ran by [Carlton Downey](#). His contact details are:

- [Carlton Downey](#)
- [Cotton 349](#)
- +64 4 463 5233 x7529
- [Carlton.Downey@ecs.vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Carlton.Downey@ecs.vuw.ac.nz)

There will also be separate markers for internal assessment items and one of [Peter Andrae](#) and [Alex Potanin](#) will always check forum messages and mark some of the assignments to ensure consistency.

## Announcements and Communication

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The main means of communication outside of lectures will be the COMP 261 web area at [http://ecs.victoria.ac.nz/Courses/COMP261\\_2010T2/](http://ecs.victoria.ac.nz/Courses/COMP261_2010T2/). There you will find, among other things, this document, the [lecture schedule](#) and [assignment handouts](#), and the [COMP 261 Forum](#). The forum is a web-based bulletin board system. Questions and comments can be posted to the forum, and staff will read these posts and frequently respond to them.

## Test and Exam

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There will be a one terms test during the lecture slot on Friday 10 Sept.

The final examination will be three hours long. No computers, electronic calculators or similar devices will be allowed (or needed).

The [timetable for final examinations](#) will be available from the University web site and will be posted on a notice board outside the faculty office. The final examination will be three hours long. No computers, electronic calculators or similar device will be allowed in the final examination. Paper non-English to English dictionaries will be permitted. The examination period for trimester 2 is 18 October - 14 November.

## Assessment

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Your grade for COMP 261 will be determined based on the following assessment weightings:

Item	Weight
Assignment 1	6%
Assignment 2	6%

Assignment 3	6%
Assignment 4	6%
Assignment 5	6%
Assignment 6	5%
Term Test	10%
Final Examination	55%

Typically, each assignment will cover the material presented in the corresponding weeks of the course. Each assessment item will address all or most of the course objectives.

## Practical Work

Work for marking should be submitted electronically using the [ECS Submission System](#). Marked assignments will be available at tutorials, or from the School Office ([Cotton 358](#)).

The assignments are due on the following Tuesdays (and one Friday) at 3pm (just before the lecture):

Item	Due Date
Assignment 1	3pm, Tuesday, 3rd of August, 2010
Assignment 2	3pm, Tuesday, 17th of August, 2010
Assignment 3	3pm, Tuesday, 7th of September, 2010
Assignment 4	3pm, Tuesday, 21st of September, 2010
Assignment 5	3pm, Tuesday, 5th of October, 2010
Assignment 6	3pm, Friday, 15th of October, 2010

### The policy on late submission is as follows:

- Each assignment that is late (ie, submitted on the submission system after the deadline) will be penalised by 20 marks if it is up to 24 hours late, and penalised by 40 marks if it is between 24 hours and 48 hours late. Any work submitted more than 48 hours after the deadline **will receive 0 marks**.
- Each student will have 3 "late days" which you may choose to use for any assignment or assignments during the course. There will be no penalty applied for these late days. You do not need to apply for these - any late days you have left will be automatically applied to assignments that you submit late.
- The late days are intended to cover minor illnesses or other personal reasons for being late. You should only ask for extensions in the case of more significant or longer lasting problems (and you may need documentation). Do not waste "late days" on procrastination!

## Plagiarism

### Working Together and Plagiarism

We encourage you to discuss the principles of the course and assignments with other students, to help and seek help with programming details, problems involving the lab machines. However, any work you hand in must be your own work.

The [School policy on Plagiarism](#) (claiming other people's work as your own) is available from the course home page. Please read it. We will penalise anyone we find plagiarising, whether from students currently doing the course, or from other sources. Students who knowingly allow other students to copy their work may also be penalised. If you have had help from someone else (other than a tutor), it is always safe to state the help that you got. For example, if you had help from someone else in writing a component of your code, it is not plagiarism as long as you state (eg, as a comment in the code) who helped you in writing the method.

## Mandatory Requirements

1. Achieve at least 40% average across all of the assignments.
2. Achieve at least 40% in the exam.

## Passing COMP 261

To pass COMP 261, a student must satisfy the mandatory requirements and gain at least a **C** grade overall.

## Withdrawal

The last date for withdrawal from COMP 261 with entitlement to a refund of tuition fees is Fri 23 July 2010. The last date for withdrawal without being regarded as having failed the course is Fri 24 Sept 2010 -- though later withdrawals may be approved by the Dean in special circumstances.

## Rules & Policies

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Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study>.

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress>.

The University's statutes and policies are available at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic>

All students are expected to be familiar with the following regulations and policies, which are available from the school web site:

[Grievances](#)

[Student and Staff Conduct](#)

[Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities](#)

[Student Support](#)

[Academic Integrity and Plagiarism](#)

[Dates and Deadlines including Withdrawal dates](#)

[School Laboratory Hours and Rules](#)

[Printing Allocations](#)

[Expectations of Students in ECS courses](#)

The School of Engineering and Computer Science strives to anticipate all problems associated with its courses, laboratories and equipment. We hope you will find that your courses meet your expectations of a quality learning experience.

If you think we have overlooked something or would like to make a suggestion feel free to talk to your course organiser or lecturer.

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