

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Computer Science

### Q 1. Are there exams or coursework?

*Both. At the end of this 2 year A Level course there are 2 Exams of 2.5 hours each making up a total of 80% of the marks for the grade. 20% of the marks for the grade will come from a thoroughly written up program that the student will choose and create themselves.*

### Q 2. What is the difference between Computer Science and IT?

*IT is mostly understanding what computers are and how they are used as well as how to use some existing software.*

*In Computer Science you gain a range of detailed and scientific, technical knowledge of hardware, web sites, networking, algorithms, computational thinking and programming skills, amongst other topics.*

### Q 3. Is Computer Science hard?

*All Level 3 courses are harder than GCSEs and has a need for high level of Mathematical skill and to develop the coding skills needed. We are highly experienced teachers who will support you fully.*

### Q 4. Do I need to be good at Maths?

*We require at least a grade 6 in GCSE mathematics. A large part of the Computer Science course uses algorithms which is underpinned by a substantial set of mathematical knowledge and skills.*

*Most universities place Maths A level as the first requirement when applying for a Computer Science degree.*

### Q 5. Do I need to do A Level Maths too?

*No. You are not required to also do A level Mathematics alongside this course, however, if you wish to pursue Computer science to degree level and beyond then it is highly recommended that you do. Most good universities place Maths A level as the first requirement when applying for a Computer Science degree.*



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## Q 6. Do I need to have done GCSE Computer Science?

*No. It is obviously an advantage if you have done the GCSE and done well at it, but it is not essential so long as you have an interest in Computer Science, have a suitably logical and inquisitive mind and are willing to put in the work and effort needed.*

## Q 7. What if I need extra help? Will there be homework?

*Yes. The department has 'drop-ins' and more formally timetabled support sessions. The way the course is planned and delivered, builds skills for students to flourish. We set homework at least once a week to help you develop your skills and succeed.*

## Q 8. Do I need a computer at home?

*Yes, you will need access to a computer outside of College to complete homework and continue set tasks. We have excellent facilities at the College in our library and study centres to get the work completed, but ultimately you will need access to a PC type computer. If you do not have access to a computer at home, you can discuss this with a member of the department when you enrol at Loreto. An Apple computer will be only partially useful as all our work, documents, programming language, etc. are based around PCs.*

*Some students prefer to work on a laptop and use this in class in addition to our facilities.*

## Q 9. What equipment will I be provided with?

*The Computer Science department will provide you with the use of a PC in lessons, a lever-arch folder for storing your work, printed booklets containing the lesson notes, an exercise book to make your own notes in, online resources for recording your tasks done as well as online versions of all printed materials.*

## Q 10. Will I need a text book?

*No. We do not require that you purchase a textbook. We have books to use in lessons and you are, of course free to purchase your own copy from elsewhere if you wish.*



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## Q 11. Will I get to build a computer?

*No. This course does cover the various bits of hardware inside the computer in detail, but it does not include any practical computer build elements.*

## Q 12. How long are lessons?

*Throughout college lessons are all 1hr - 1hr 15 mins long. In each subject you will be taught for 4 of these lessons totalling 4.5 hours per week. These are normally taught in “doubles” with breaks between although some groups will get a double and 2 singles.*

## Q 13. Do you run any extracurricular activities?

*Yes. We run the ‘Coding Club’ as a timetabled and after college activity that people can attend, even if they don’t take the computer science course. The aim of the sessions is to make the coding more enjoyable and to try things that are outside of the courses more rigid curriculum. These can include building robots and learning to control them through code.*

*We have also had groups of students enter ‘hack-a-thons’ which are company sponsored competitions where groups of students try to create solutions to the problems given them on the day. Through these activities, several of our students have been talent spotted by the corporate sponsors and have even been offered jobs, sponsorships and degree apprenticeships for when they finish their A levels.*

