Computer Science 7517 PLC

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| Student Name: |  | Tutor Grp: |  |

Please use the “Personal Learning Checklist” below to rate your knowledge and understanding of the AQA A-Level Computer Science 7517 course. Further information about each element of the “Subject Content” can be found at:

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# Assessed in Paper 1 (4.1.-4.4)

|  |  |  |  | **Knowledge & Understanding Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit** | **Topic** | **Sub-Topic** | **Subject Content** | **Insecure** | **Intermediate** | **Secure** |
| **4.1 Fundamentals of Programming** | **4.1.1 Programming** | **4.1.1.1 Data types** | Understand and use the following appropriately:* integer
* real/float
* Boolean
* character
* string
* date/time
* pointer/reference
* records (or equivalent)
* arrays (or equivalent)
 |  |  |  |
| Define and use user-defined data types based on language-defined (built-in) data types |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.2 Programming concepts** | Use, understand and know how the following statement types can be combined in programs:* variable declaration
* constant declaration
* assignment
* iteration
* selection
* subroutine (procedure/function)
 |  |  |  |
| Use definite and indefinite iteration, including indefinite iteration with the condition(s) at the start or the end of the iterative structure. A theoretical understanding of condition(s) at either end of an iterative structure is required, regardless of whether they are supported by the language being used |  |  |  |
| Use nested selection and nested iteration structures |  |  |  |
| Use meaningful identifier names and know why it is important to use them |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.3 Arithmetic operations in a programming language** | Be familiar with and be able to use:* addition
* subtraction
* multiplication
* real/float division
* integer division, including remainders
* exponentiation
* rounding
* truncation
 |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.4 Relational operations in a programming language** | Be familiar with and be able to use:* equal to
* not equal to
* less than
* greater than
* less than or equal to
* greater than or equal to
 |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.5 Boolean operations in a programming language** | Be familiar with and be able to use:* NOT
* AND
* OR
* XOR
 |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.6 Constants and variables in a programming language** | Be able to explain the differences between a variable and a constant |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the advantages of using named constants |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.7 String-handling operations in a programming language** | Be familiar with and be able to use:* length
* position
* substring
* concatenation
* character → character code
* character code → character
* string conversion operations
 |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.8 Random number generation in a programming language** | Be familiar with, and be able to use, random number generation |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.9 Exception handling** | Be familiar with the concept of exception handling |  |  |  |
| Know how to use exception handling in a programming language |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.10 Subroutines (procedures/ functions)** | Be familiar with subroutines and their uses |  |  |  |
| Know that a subroutine is a named ‘out of line’ block of code that may be executed (called) by simply writing its name in a program statement |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the advantages of using subroutines in programs |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.11 Parameters of subroutines** | Be able to describe the use of parameters to passdata within programs |  |  |  |
| Be able to use subroutines with interfaces |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.12 Returning a value/values from a subroutine** | Be able to use subroutines that return values tothe calling routine |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.13 Local variables in subroutines** | Know that subroutines may declare their own variables, called local variables, and that local variables:* exist only while the subroutine is executing
* are accessible only within the subroutine
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to use local variables and explain why it is good practice to do so |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.14 Global variables in a programming language** | Be able to contrast local variables with globalvariables |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.15 Role of stack frames in subroutine calls** | Be able to explain how a stack frame is used withsubroutine calls to store:* return addresses
* parameters
* local variables
 |  |  |  |
| **4.1.1.16 Recursive techniques** | Be familiar with the use of recursive techniques in programming languages (general and base cases and the mechanism for implementation) |  |  |  |
| Be able to solve simple problems using recursion |  |  |  |
| **4.1.2 Programming paradigms** | **4.1.2.1 Programming paradigms** | Understand the characteristics of the procedural and object-oriented programming paradigms, and have experience of programming in each |  |  |  |
| **4.1.2.2 Procedural-oriented programming** | Understand the structured approach to program design and construction |  |  |  |
| Be able to construct and use hierarchy charts when designing programs |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the advantages of the structured approach |  |  |  |
| **4.1.2.3 Object-oriented programming** | Be familiar with the concepts of:* class
* object
* instantiation
* encapsulation
* inheritance
* aggregation
* composition
* polymorphism
* overriding
 |  |  |  |
| Know why the object-oriented paradigm is used |  |  |  |
| Be aware of the following object-oriented designprinciples:* encapsulate what varies
* favour composition over inheritance
* program to interfaces, not implementation
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to write object-oriented programs |  |  |  |
| Be able to draw and interpret class diagrams |  |  |  |
| **4.2 Fundamentals of data structures** | **4.2.1 Data structures and abstract data types** | **4.2.1.1 Data structures** | Be familiar with the concept of data structures. |  |  |  |
| **4.2.1.2 Single- and multi-dimensional arrays (or equivalent)** | Use arrays (or equivalent) in the design of solutions to simple problems |  |  |  |
| **4.2.1.3 Fields, records and files** | Be able to read/write from/to a text file |  |  |  |
| Be able to read/write data from/to a binary (non-text) file |  |  |  |
| **4.2.1.4 Abstract data types/data structures** | Be familiar with the concept and uses of a:* queue
* stack
* graph
* tree
* hash table
* dictionary
* • vector
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to distinguish between static and dynamic structures and compare their uses, as well as explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each |  |  |  |
| Describe the creation and maintenance of data within:* queues (linear, circular, priority)
* stacks
* hash tables
 |  |  |  |
| **4.2.2 Queues** | **4.2.2.1 Queues** | Be able to describe and apply the followingto linear queues, circular queues and priorityqueues:* add an item
* remove an item
* test for an empty queue
* test for a full queue
 |  |  |  |
| **4.2.3 Stacks** | **4.2.3.1 Stacks** | Be able to describe and apply the followingoperations:* push
* pop
* peek or top
* test for empty stack
* test for stack full
 |  |  |  |
| **4.2.4 Graphs** | **4.2.4.1 Graphs** | Be aware of a graph as a data structure used to represent more complex relationships |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with typical uses for graphs |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the terms:* graph
* weighted graph
* vertex/node
* edge/arc
* undirected graph
* directed graph
 |  |  |  |
| Know how an adjacency matrix and an adjacency list may be used to represent a graph |  |  |  |
| Be able to compare the use of adjacency matrices and adjacency lists |  |  |  |
| **4.2.5 Trees** | **4.2.5.1 Trees (including binary trees)** | Know that a tree is a connected, undirected graph with no cycles |  |  |  |
| Know that a rooted tree is a tree in which one vertex has been designated as the root. A rooted tree has parent-child relationships between nodes. The root is the only node with no parent and all other nodes are descendants of the root |  |  |  |
| Know that a binary tree is a rooted tree in which each node has at most two children |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with typical uses for rooted trees |  |  |  |
| **4.2.6 Hash tables** | **4.2.6.1 Hash tables** | Be familiar with the concept of a hash table and its uses |  |  |  |
| Be able to apply simple hashing algorithms |  |  |  |
| Know what is meant by a collision and how collisions are handled using rehashing |  |  |  |
| **4.2.7 Dictionaries** | **4.2.7.1 Dictionaries** | Be familiar with the concept of a dictionary |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with simple applications of dictionaries, for example information retrieval, and have experience of using a dictionary data structure in a programming language |  |  |  |
| **4.2.8 Vectors** | **4.2.8.1 Vectors** | Be familiar with the concept of a vector and the following notations for specifying a vector:* [2.0, 3.14159, -1.0, 2.718281828]
* 4-vector over ℝ written as ℝ4
* function interpretation
* 0 ↦ 2.0
* 1 ↦ 3.14159
* 2 ↦ -1.0
* 3 ↦ 2.718281828
* ↦ means maps to

That all the entries must be drawn from the samefield, e.g. ℝ |  |  |  |
| Dictionary representation of a vector |  |  |  |
| List representation of a vector |  |  |  |
| 1-D array representation of a vector |  |  |  |
| Visualising a vector as an arrow |  |  |  |
| Vector addition and scalar-vector multiplication |  |  |  |
| Convex combination of two vectors, u and v |  |  |  |
| Dot or scalar product of two vectors |  |  |  |
| Applications of dot product |  |  |  |
| **4.3 Fundamentals of algorithms** | **4.3.1 Graph-traversal** | **4.3.1.1 Simple graph-traversal algorithms** | Be able to trace breadth-first and depthfirstsearch algorithms and describe typicalapplications of both |  |  |  |
| **4.3.2 Tree-traversal** | **4.3.2.1 Simple tree-traversal algorithms** | Be able to trace the tree-traversal algorithms:* pre-order
* post-order
* in-order
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to describe uses of tree-traversal algorithms |  |  |  |
| **4.3.3 Reverse Polish** | **4.3.3.1 Reverse Polish – infix transformations** | Be able to convert simple expressions in infix form to Reverse Polish notation (RPN) form and vice-versa. Be aware of why and where it is used |  |  |  |
| **4.3.4 Searching algorithms** | **4.3.4.1 Linear search** | Know and be able to trace and analyse the complexity of the linear search algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.3.4.2 Binary search** | Know and be able to trace and analyse the time complexity of the binary search algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.3.4.3 Binary tree search** | Be able to trace and analyse the time complexity of the binary tree search algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.3.5 Sorting algorithms** | **4.3.5.1 Bubble sort** | Know and be able to trace and analyse the time complexity of the bubble sort algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.3.5.2 Merge sort** | Be able to trace and analyse the time complexity of the merge sort algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.3.6 Optimisation algorithms** | **4.3.6.1 Dijkstra’s shortest path algorithm** | Understand and be able to trace Dijkstra’s shortest path algorithm |  |  |  |
| Be aware of applications of shortest path algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.4 Theory of computation** | **4.4.1 Abstraction and automation** | **4.4.1.1 Problem-solving** | Be able to develop solutions to simple logic problems |  |  |  |
| Be able to check solutions to simple logicproblems |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.2 Following and writing algorithms** | Understand the term algorithm |  |  |  |
| Be able to express the solution to a simple problem as an algorithm using pseudo-code, with the standard constructs:* sequence
* assignment
* selection
* iteration
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to hand-trace algorithms |  |  |  |
| Be able to convert an algorithm from pseudocode into high level language program code |  |  |  |
| Be able to articulate how a program works, arguing for its correctness and its efficiency using logical reasoning, test data and user feedback |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.3 Abstraction** | Be familiar with the concept of abstraction as used in computations and know that:* representational abstraction is a representation arrived at by removing unnecessary details
* abstraction by generalisation or categorisation is a grouping by common characteristics to arrive at a hierarchical relationship of the 'is a kind of' type
 |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.4 Information hiding** | Be familiar with the process of hiding all details of an object that do not contribute to its essentialcharacteristics |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.5 Procedural abstraction** | Know that procedural abstraction represents a computational method |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.6 Functional abstraction** | Know that for functional abstraction the particular computation method is hidden |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.7 Data abstraction** | Know that details of how data are actuallyrepresented are hidden, allowing new kinds ofdata objects to be constructed from previouslydefined types of data objects |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.8 Problem abstraction/ reduction** | Know that details are removed until the problem is represented in a way that is possible to solve, because the problem reduces to one that has already been solved |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.9 Decomposition** | Know that procedural decomposition means breaking a problem into a number of sub-problems, so that each sub-problem accomplishes an identifiable task, which might itself be further subdivided |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.10 Composition** | Know how to build a composition abstractionby combining procedures to form compoundprocedures |  |  |  |
| Know how to build data abstractions by combining data objects to form compound data, for example tree data structure |  |  |  |
| **4.4.1.11 Automation** | Understand that automation requires putting models (abstraction of real world objects/ phenomena) into action to solve problems. This is achieved by:* creating algorithms
* implementing the algorithms in program code
* (instructions)
* implementing the models in data structures
* executing the code
 |  |  |  |
| **4.4.2 Regular languages** | **4.4.2.1 Finite state machines (FSMs) with and without output** | Be able to draw and interpret simple state transition diagrams and state transition tables for FSMs with no output and with output (Mealy machines only) |  |  |  |
| **4.4.2.2 Maths for regular expressions** | Be familiar with the concept of a set and thefollowing notations for specifying a set:A = {1, 2, 3, 4, 5 }or set comprehension:A = {x | x ∈ ℕ ∧ x ≥ 1 }where A is the set consisting of those objects x such that x ∈ ℕ and x ≥ 1 is true.Know that the empty set, {}, is the set with no elements.Know that an alternative symbol for the empty set is Ø |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the compact representation of a set, for example, the set {0n1n | n ≥ 1}. This set contains all strings with an equal number of 0 sand 1s |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the concept of:* finite sets
* infinite sets
* countably infinite sets
* cardinality of a finite set
* Cartesian product of sets
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the meaning of the term:* subset
* proper subset
* countable set
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the set operations:* membership
* union
* intersection
* difference
 |  |  |  |
| **4.4.2.3 Regular expressions** | Know that a regular expression is simply a way of describing a set and that regular expressions allow particular types of languages to be described in a convenient shorthand notation |  |  |  |
| Be able to form and use simple regular expressions for string manipulation and matching |  |  |  |
| Be able to describe the relationship between regular expressions and FSMs |  |  |  |
| Be able to write a regular expression to recognise the same language as a given FSM and vice-versa |  |  |  |
| **4.4.2.4 Regular language** | Know that a language is called regular if it can be represented by a regular expression |  |  |  |
| **4.4.3 Context-free languages** | **4.4.3.1 Backus-Naur Form (BNF)/syntax diagrams** | Be able to check language syntax by referring to BNF or syntax diagrams and formulate simple production rules |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain why BNF can represent some languages that cannot be represented using regular expressions |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4 Classification of algorithms** | **4.4.4.1 Comparing algorithms** | Understand that algorithms can be compared by expressing their complexity as a function relative to the size of the problem. Understand that the size of the problem is the key issue |  |  |  |
| Understand that some algorithms are moreefficient:* time-wise than other algorithms
* space-wise than other algorithms
 |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.2 Maths for understanding Big-0 notation** | Be familiar with the mathematical concept of a function as a mapping from one set of values, the domain, to another set of values, drawn from the co-domain, for example ℕ → ℕ |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the concept of:* a linear function, for example y = 2x
* a polynomial function, for example y = 2x2
* an exponential function, for example y = 2x
* a logarithmic function, for example y = log10 x
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the notion of permutation of a set of objects or values, for example, the letters of a word and that the number of permutations of *n* distinct objects is *n* factorial (*n*!) |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.3 Order of complexity** | Be familiar with Big-O notation to express time complexity and be able to apply it to cases where the running time requirements of the algorithm grow in:* constant time
* logarithmic time
* linear time
* polynomial time
* exponential time
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to derive the time complexity of an algorithm |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.4 Limits of computation** | Be aware that algorithmic complexity and hardware impose limits on what can be computed |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.5 Classification of algorithmic problems** | Know that algorithms may be classified as being either:* tractable – problems that have a polynomial (or less) time solution are called tractable problems
* intractable – problems that have no polynomial (or less) time solution are called intractable problems
 |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.6 Computable and non-computable problems** | Be aware that some problems cannot be solvedalgorithmically |  |  |  |
| **4.4.4.7 Halting problem** | Describe the Halting problem (but not prove it), that is the unsolvable problem of determining whether any program will eventually stop if given particular input |  |  |  |
| Understand the significance of the Haltingproblem for computation |  |  |  |
| **4.4.5 A model of computation** | **4.4.5.1 Turing machine** | Be familiar with the structure and use of Turingmachines that perform simple computations |  |  |  |
| Know that a Turing machine can be viewed as a computer with a single fixed program, expressed using:* a finite set of states in a state transition diagram
* a finite alphabet of symbols
* an infinite tape with marked-off squares
* a sensing read-write head that can travel along
* the tape, one square at a time.

One of the states is called a start state and states that have no outgoing transitions are called halting states |  |  |  |
| Understand the equivalence between a transition function and a state transition diagram |  |  |  |
| Be able to:* represent transition rules using a transition function
* represent transition rules using a state transition diagram
* hand-trace simple Turing machines
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the importance of Turing machines and the Universal Turing machine to the subject of computation |  |  |  |

# Assessed in Paper 2 (4.5-4.13)

|  |  |  |  | **Knowledge & Understanding Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit** | **Topic** | **Sub-Topic** | **Subject Content** | **Insecure** | **Intermediate** | **Secure** |
| **4.5 Fundamentals of data representation** | **4.5.1 Number systems** | **4.5.1.1 Natural numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of a natural numberand the set ℕ of natural numbers (including zero) |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.2 Integer numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of an integer and theset ℤ of integers |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.3 Rational numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of a rational number and the set ℚ of rational numbers, and that this set includes the integers |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.4 Irrational numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of an irrationalnumber |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.5 Real numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of a real number and the set ℝ of real numbers, which includes the natural numbers, the rational numbers and the irrational numbers |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.6 Ordinal numbers** | Be familiar with the concept of ordinal numbers and their use to describe the numerical positions of objects |  |  |  |
| **4.5.1.7 Counting and measurement** | Be familiar with the use of:* natural numbers for counting
* real numbers for measurement
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.2 Number bases** | **4.5.2.1 Number base** | Be familiar with the concept of a number base, in particular:* decimal (base 10)
* binary (base 2)
* hexadecimal (base 16)
 |  |  |  |
| Convert between decimal, binary and hexadecimal number bases |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with, and able to use, hexadecimal as a shorthand for binary and to understand why it is used in this way |  |  |  |
| **4.5.3 Units of information** | **4.5.3.1 Bits and bytes** | Know that:* the bit is the fundamental unit of information
* a byte is a group of 8 bits
 |  |  |  |
| Know that the 2n different values can be represented with *n* bits |  |  |  |
| **4.5.3.2 Units** | Historically the terms kilobyte, megabyte, etc. have often been used when kibibyte, mebibyte, etc. are meant.Know that quantities of bytes can be described using binary prefixes representing powers of 2 or using decimal prefixes representing powers of 10, e.g. one kibibyte is written as 1KiB = 210 B and onekilobyte is written as 1kB = 103 B.Know the names, symbols and corresponding powers of 2 for the binary prefixes:* kibi, Ki - 210
* mebi, Mi - 220
* gibi, Gi - 230
* tebi, Ti - 240

Know the names, symbols and correspondingpowers of 10 for the decimal prefixes: * kilo, k - 103
* mega, M - 106
* giga, G - 109
* tera, T - 1012
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4 Binary number system** | **4.5.4.1 Unsigned binary** | Know the difference between unsigned binary andsigned binary |  |  |  |
| Know that in unsigned binary the minimum and maximum values for a given number of bits, *n*, are 0 and 2n -1 respectively |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.2 Unsigned binary arithmetic** | Be able to:* add two unsigned binary integers
* multiply two unsigned binary integers
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.3 Signed binary using two’s complement** | Know that signed binary can be used to representnegative integers and that one possible codingscheme is two’s complement |  |  |  |
| Know how to:* represent negative and positive integers in two’s complement
* perform subtraction using two’s complement
* calculate the range of a given number of bits, *n*
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.4 Numbers with a fractional part** | Know how numbers with a fractional part can be represented in:* fixed point form in binary in a given number of bits
* floating point form in binary in a given number of bits
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to convert for each representation from:* decimal to binary of a given number of bits
* binary to decimal of a given number of bits
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.5 Rounding errors** | Know and be able to explain why both fixed point and floating point representation of decimal numbers may be inaccurate |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.6 Absolute and relative errors** | Be able to calculate the absolute error of numerical data stored and processed in computer systems |  |  |  |
| Be able to calculate the relative error of numerical data stored and processed in computer systems |  |  |  |
| Compare absolute and relative errors for large and small magnitude numbers, and numbers close to one |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.7 Range and precision** | Compare the advantages and disadvantages of fixed point and floating point forms in terms of range, precision and speed of calculation |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.8 Normalisation of floating point form** | Know why floating point numbers are normalised and be able to normalise un-normalised floating point numbers with positive or negative mantissas  |  |  |  |
| **4.5.4.9 Underflow and overflow** | Explain underflow and overflow and describe thecircumstances in which they occur |  |  |  |
| **4.5.5 Information coding systems** | **4.5.5.1 Character form of a decimal digit** | Differentiate between the character code representation of a decimal digit and its pure binary representation |  |  |  |
| **4.5.5.2 ASCII and Unicode** | Describe ASCII and Unicode coding systems for coding character data and explain why Unicode was introduced |  |  |  |
| **4.5.5.3 Error checking and correction** | Describe and explain the use of:* parity bits
* majority voting
* checksums
* check digits
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6 Representing images, sound and other data** | **4.5.6.1 Bit patterns, images, sound and other data** | Describe how bit patterns may represent other forms of data, including graphics and sound |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.2 Analogue and digital** | Understand the difference between analogue and digital:* data
* signals
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.3 Analogue/digital conversion** | Describe the principles of operation of:* an analogue to digital converter (ADC)
* a digital to analogue converter (DAC)
 |  |  |  |
| Know that ADCs are used with analogue sensors |  |  |  |
| Know that the most common use for a DAC is to convert a digital audio signal to an analogue signal |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.4 Bitmapped graphics** | Explain how bitmaps are represented |  |  |  |
| Explain the following for bitmaps:* resolution
* colour depth
* size in pixels
 |  |  |  |
| Calculate storage requirements for bitmapped images and be aware that bitmap image files may also contain metadata |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with typical metadata |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.5 Vector graphics** | Explain how vector graphics represents imagesusing lists of objects |  |  |  |
| Give examples of typical properties of objects |  |  |  |
| Use vector graphic primitives to create a simplevector graphic |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.6 Vector graphics versus bitmapped graphics** | Compare the vector graphics approach with thebitmapped graphics approach and understand theadvantages and disadvantages of each |  |  |  |
| Be aware of appropriate uses of each approach |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.7 Digital representation of sound** | Describe the digital representation of sound interms of:* sample resolution
* sampling rate and the Nyquist theorem
 |  |  |  |
| Calculate sound sample sizes in bytes |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.8 Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI)** | Describe the purpose of MIDI and the use ofevent messages in MIDI |  |  |  |
| Describe the advantages of using MIDI files forrepresenting music |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.9 Data compression** | Know why images and sound files are often compressed and that other files, such as text files, can also be compressed |  |  |  |
| Understand the difference between lossless and lossy compression and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each |  |  |  |
| Explain the principles behind the following techniques for lossless compression:* run length encoding (RLE)
* dictionary-based methods
 |  |  |  |
| **4.5.6.10 Encryption** | Understand what is meant by encryption and be able to define it. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with Caesar cipher and be able to apply it to encrypt a plaintext message and decrypt a ciphertext.Be able to explain why it is easily cracked. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with Vernam cipher or one-time padand be able to apply it to encrypt a plaintextmessage and decrypt a ciphertext.Explain why Vernam cipher is considered as acypher with perfect security |  |  |  |
| Compare Vernam cipher with ciphers that depend on computational security. |  |  |  |
| **4.6 Fundamentals of computer systems** | **4.6.1 Hardware and software** | **4.6.1.1 Relationship between hardware and software** | Understand the relationship between hardwareand software and be able to define the terms:* hardware
* software
 |  |  |  |
| **4.6.1.2 Classification of software** | Explain what is meant by:* system software
* application software
 |  |  |  |
| Understand the need for, and attributes of, different types of software |  |  |  |
| **4.6.1.3 System software** | Understand the need for, and functions of the following system software:* operating systems (OSs)
* utility programs
* libraries
* translators (compiler, assembler, interpreter)
 |  |  |  |
| **4.6.1.4 Role of an operating system (OS)** | Understand that a role of the operating system isto hide the complexities of the hardware |  |  |  |
| Know that the OS handles resource management,managing hardware to allocate processors,memories and I/O devices among competingprocesses |  |  |  |
| **4.6.2 Classification of programming languages** | **4.6.2.1 Classification of programming languages** | Show awareness of the development of types ofprogramming languages and their classificationinto low-and high-level languages. |  |  |  |
| Know that low-level languages are considered to be:* machine-code
* assembly language
 |  |  |  |
| Know that high-level languages includeimperative high-level language. |  |  |  |
| Describe machine-code language and assemblylanguage. |  |  |  |
| Understand the advantages and disadvantagesof machine-code and assembly languageprogramming compared with high-level languageprogramming |  |  |  |
| Explain the term ‘imperative high-level language’and its relationship to low-level languages. |  |  |  |
| **4.6.3 Types of program translator** | **4.6.3.1 Types of program translator** | Understand the role of each of the following:* assembler
* compiler
* interpreter

Explain the differences between compilation andinterpretation. Describe situations in which eachwould be appropriate. |  |  |  |
| Explain why an intermediate language such asbytecode is produced as the final output by somecompilers and how it is subsequently used. |  |  |  |
| Understand the difference between source codeand object (executable) code. |  |  |  |
| **4.6.4 Logic gates** | **4.6.4.1 Logic gates** | Construct truth tables for the following logic gates:* NOT
* AND
* OR
* XOR
* NAND
* NOR
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with drawing and interpreting logicgate circuit diagrams involving one or more of theabove gates. |  |  |  |
| Complete a truth table for a given logic gatecircuit. |  |  |  |
| Write a Boolean expression for a given logic gatecircuit. |  |  |  |
| Draw an equivalent logic gate circuit for a givenBoolean expression. |  |  |  |
| Recognise and trace the logic of the circuits of ahalf-adder and a full-adder. |  |  |  |
| Construct the circuit for a half-adder. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the use of the edge-triggeredD-type flip-flop as a memory unit. |  |  |  |
| **4.6.5 Boolean algebra** | **4.6.5.1 Using Boolean algebra** | Be familiar with the use of Boolean identities andDe Morgan’s laws to manipulate and simplifyBoolean expressions. |  |  |  |
| **4.7 Fundamentals of computer organisation and architecture** | **4.7.1 Internal hardware components of a computer** | **4.7.1.1 Internal hardware components of a computer** | Have an understanding and knowledge of thebasic internal components of a computer system. |  |  |  |
| Understand the role of the following componentsand how they relate to each other:* processor
* main memory
* address bus
* data bus
* control bus
* I/O controllers
 |  |  |  |
| Understand the need for, and means of,communication between components. Inparticular, understand the concept of a bus andhow address, data and control buses are used. |  |  |  |
| Be able to explain the difference between von Neumann and Harvard architectures and describe where each is typically used. |  |  |  |
| Understand the concept of addressable memory. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.2 The stored program concept** | **4.7.2.1 The meaning of the stored program concept** | Be able to describe the stored program concept: machine code instructions stored in main memory are fetched and executed serially by a processor that performs arithmetic and logical operations. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3 Structure and role of the processor and its components** | **4.7.3.1 The processor and its components** | Explain the role and operation of a processor and its major components:* arithmetic logic unit
* control unit
* clock
* general-purpose registers
* dedicated registers, including:
* program counter
* current instruction register
* memory address register
* memory buffer register
* status register
 |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.2 The Fetch-Execute cycle and the role of registers within it** | Explain how the Fetch-Execute cycle is used toexecute machine code programs including thestages in the cycle (fetch, decode, execute) anddetails of registers used. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.3 The processor instruction set** | Understand the term ‘processor instruction set’and know that an instruction set is processorspecific. |  |  |  |
| Know that instructions consist of an opcode and one or more operands (value, memory address or register). |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.4 Addressing modes** | Understand and apply immediate and direct addressing modes. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.5 Machine-code/assembly language operations** | Understand and apply the basic machine-codeoperations of:* load
* add
* subtract
* store
* branching (conditional and unconditional)
* compare
* logical bitwise operators (AND, OR, NOT,
* XOR)
* logical
	+ shift right
	+ shift left
* halt

Use the basic machine-code operations abovewhen machine-code instructions are expressedin mnemonic form- assembly language, usingimmediate and direct addressing. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.6 Interrupts** | Describe the role of interrupts and interrupt service routines (ISRs); their effect on the Fetch-Execute cycle; and the need to save the volatile environment while the interrupt is being serviced. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.3.7 Factors affecting processor performance** | Explain the effect on processor performance of:* multiple cores
* cache memory
* clock speed
* word length
* address bus width
* data bus width
 |  |  |  |
| **4.7.4 External hardware devices** | **4.7.4.1 Input and output devices** | Know the main characteristics, purposes and suitability of the devices and understand their principles of operation. |  |  |  |
| **4.7.4.2 Secondary storage devices** | Explain the need for secondary storage within a computer system. |  |  |  |
| Know the main characteristics, purposes,suitability and understand the principles ofoperation of the following devices:* hard disk
* optical disk
* solid-state disk (SSD)
 |  |  |  |
| Compare the capacity and speed of access of various media and make a judgement about their suitability for different applications. |  |  |  |
| **4.8 Consequences of uses of computing** | **4.8.1 Individual (moral), social (ethical), legal and cultural issues and opportunities** | Show awareness of current individual (moral),social (ethical), legal and cultural opportunitiesand risks of computing.Understand that:* developments in computer science and the digital technologies have dramatically altered the shape of communications and information flows in societies, enabling massive transformations in the capacity to:
	+ monitor behaviour
	+ amass and analyse personal information
	+ distribute, publish, communicate and disseminate personal information
* computer scientists and software engineers therefore have power, as well as the responsibilities that go with it, in the algorithms that they devise and the code that they deploy
* software and their algorithms embed moral and cultural values
* the issue of scale, for software the whole world over, creates potential for individual computer scientists and software engineers to produce great good, but with it comes the ability to cause great harm.
 |  |  |  |
| Be able to discuss the challenges facing legislators in the digital age. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  | **Knowledge & Understanding Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit** | **Topic** | **Sub-Topic** | **Subject Content** | **Insecure** | **Intermediate** | **Secure** |
| **4.9 Fundamentals of communication and networking** | **4.9.1 Communication** | **4.9.1.1 Communication methods** | Define serial and parallel transmission methods and discuss the advantages of serial over parallel transmission. |  |  |  |
| Define and compare synchronous and asynchronous data transmission. |  |  |  |
| Describe the purpose of start and stop bits in asynchronous data transmission. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.1.2 Communication basics** | Define:* baud rate
* bit rate
* bandwidth
* latency
* protocol
 |  |  |  |
| Differentiate between baud rate and bit rate. |  |  |  |
| Understand the relationship between bit rate and bandwidth. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.2 Networking** | **4.9.2.1 Network topology** | Understand:* physical star topology
* logical bus network topology and:
	+ differentiate between them
	+ explain their operation
 |  |  |  |
| **4.9.2.2 Types of networking between hosts** | Explain the following and describe situations where they might be used:* peer-to-peer networking
* client-server networking
 |  |  |  |
| **4.9.2.3 Wireless networking** | Explain the purpose of WiFi. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the components required for wireless networking. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with how wireless networks are secured. |  |  |  |
| Explain the wireless protocol Carrier Sense Multiple Access with Collision Avoidance (CSMA/ CA) with and without Request to Send/Clear to Send (RTS/CTS). |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the purpose of Service Set Identifier (SSID). |  |  |  |
| **4.9.3 The Internet** | **4.9.3.1 The Internet and how it works** | Understand the structure of the Internet. |  |  |  |
| Understand the role of packet switching and routers. |  |  |  |
| Know the main components of a packet |  |  |  |
| Define:* router
* gateway

Consider where and why they are used. |  |  |  |
| Explain how routing is achieved across the Internet. |  |  |  |
| Describe the term 'uniform resource locator' (URL) in the context of internetworking |  |  |  |
| Explain the terms ‘fully qualified domain name’ (FQDN), ‘domain name’ and ‘IP address’. |  |  |  |
| Describe how domain names are organised. |  |  |  |
| Understand the purpose and function of the domain service and its reliance on the Domain Name Server (DNS) system. |  |  |  |
| Explain the service provided by Internet registries and why they are needed. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.3.2 Internet security** | Understand how a firewall works (packet filtering, proxy server, stateful inspection). |  |  |  |
| Explain symmetric and asymmetric (private/public key) encryption and key exchange. |  |  |  |
| Explain how digital certificates and digital signatures are obtained and used. |  |  |  |
| Discuss worms, trojans and viruses, and the vulnerabilities that they exploit. |  |  |  |
| Discuss how improved code quality, monitoring and protection can be used to address worms, trojans and viruses. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4 The Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) protocol** | **4.9.4.1 TCP/IP** | Describe the role of the four layers of the TCP/IP stack (application, transport, network, link). |  |  |  |
| Describe the role of sockets in the TCP/IP stack. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the role of MAC (Media Access Control) addresses. |  |  |  |
| Explain what the well-known ports and client ports are used for and the differences between them. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.2 Standard application layer protocols** | Be familiar with the following protocols:* FTP (File Transfer Protocol)
* HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)
* HTTPS (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure)
* POP3 (Post Office Protocol (v3))
* SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)
* SSH (Secure Shell)
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with FTP client software and an FTP server, with regard to transferring files using anonymous and non-anonymous access. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with how SSH is used for remote management. |  |  |  |
| Know how an SSH client is used to make a TCP connection to a remote port for the purpose of sending commands to this port using application level protocols such as GET for HTTP, SMTP commands for sending email and POP3 for retrieving email. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with using SSH to log in securely to a remote computer and execute commands. |  |  |  |
| Explain the role of an email server in retrieving and sending email. |  |  |  |
| Explain the role of a web server in serving up web pages in text form. |  |  |  |
| Understand the role of a web browser in retrieving web pages and web page resources and rendering these accordingly. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.3 IP address structure** | Know that an IP address is split into a network identifier part and a host identifier part. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.4 Subnet masking** | Know that networks can be divided into subnets and know how a subnet mask is used to identify the network identifier part of the IP address. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.5 IP standards** | Know that there are currently two standards of IP address, v4 and v6. |  |  |  |
| Know why v6 was introduced. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.6 Public and private IP addresses** | Distinguish between routable and non-routable IP addresses. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.7 Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP)** | Understand the purpose and function of the DHCP system. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.8 Network Address Translation (NAT)** | Explain the basic concept of NAT and why it is used. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.9 Port forwarding** | Explain the basic concept of port forwarding and why it is used. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.10 Client server model** | Be familiar with the client server model. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the Websocket protocol and know why it is used and where it is used. |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the principles of Web CRUD Applications and REST:* CRUD is an acronym for:
	+ C – Create
	+ R – Retrieve
	+ U – Update
	+ D – Delete
* REST enables CRUD to be mapped to database functions (SQL) as follows:
	+ GET → SELECT
	+ POST → INSERT
	+ DELETE → DELETE
	+ PUT → UPDATE
 |  |  |  |
| Compare JSON (Java script object notation) with XML. |  |  |  |
| **4.9.4.11 Thin- versus thick-client computing** | Compare and contrast thin-client computing with thick-client computing. |  |  |  |
| **4.10 Fundamentals of databases** | **4.10.1 Conceptual data models and entity relationship modelling** | Produce a data model from given data requirements for a simple scenario involving multiple entities. |  |  |  |
| Produce entity relationship diagrams representing a data model and entity descriptions in the form: Entity1 (Attribute1, Attribute2, .... ). |  |  |  |
| **4.10.2 Relational databases** | Explain the concept of a relational database. |  |  |  |
| Be able to define the terms:* attribute
* primary key
* composite primary key
* foreign key
 |  |  |  |
| **4.10.3 Database design and normalisation techniques** | Normalise relations to third normal form. |  |  |  |
| Understand why databases are normalised. |  |  |  |
| **4.10.4 Structured Query Language (SQL)** | Be able to use SQL to retrieve, update, insert and delete data from multiple tables of a relational database |  |  |  |
| Be able to use SQL to define a database table. |  |  |  |
| **4.10.5 Client server databases** | Know that a client server database system provides simultaneous access to the database for multiple clients. |  |  |  |
| Know how concurrent access can be controlled to preserve the integrity of the database. |  |  |  |
| **4.11 Big Data** | **4.11.1 Big Data** | Know that 'Big Data' is a catch-all term for datathat won't fit the usual containers. Big Data canbe described in terms of:* volume – too big to fit into a single server
* velocity – streaming data, milliseconds to seconds to respond
* variety – data in many forms such as structured, unstructured, text, multimedia
 |  |  |  |
| Know that when data sizes are so big as not to fiton to a single server:* the processing must be distributed across more than one machine
* functional programming is a solution, because it makes it easier to write correct and efficient distributed code.

Know what features of functional programmingmake it easier to write:* correct code
* code that can be distributed to run across more than one server
 |  |  |  |
| Be familiar with the:* fact-based model for representing data
* graph schema for capturing the structure of the dataset
* nodes, edges and properties in graph schema
 |  |  |  |
| **4.12 Fundamentals of functional programming** | **4.12.1 Functional programming paradigm** | **4.12.1.1 Function type** | Know that a function, f, has a function typef: A → B (where the type is A → B, A is theargument type, and B is the result type). |  |  |  |
| Know that A is called the domain and B is calledthe co-domain. |  |  |  |
| Know that the domain and co-domain are alwayssubsets of objects in some data type. |  |  |  |
| **4.12.1.2 First-class object** | Know that a function is a first-class object in functional programming languages and in imperative programming languages that support such objects. This means that it can be an argument to another function as well as the result of a function call. |  |  |  |
| **4.12.1.3 Function application** | Know that function application means a function applied to its arguments. |  |  |  |
| **4.12.1.4 Partial function application** | Know what is meant by partial function application for one, two and three argument functions and be able to use the notations shown opposite. |  |  |  |
| **4.12.1.5 Composition of functions** | Know what is meant by composition of functions. |  |  |  |
| **4.12.2 Writing functional programs** | **4.12.2.1 Functional language programs** | Show experience of constructing simple programs in a functional programming language. |  |  |  |
| Higher-order functions. |  |  |  |
| Have experience of using the following in afunctional programming language:* map
* filter
* reduce or fold
 |  |  |  |
| **4.12.3 Lists in functional programming** | **4.12.3.1 List processing** | Be familiar with representing a list as a concatenation of a head and a tail. |  |  |  |
| Know that the head is an element of a list and the tail is a list. |  |  |  |
| Know that a list can be empty. |  |  |  |
| Describe and apply the following operations:* return head of list
* return tail of list
* test for empty list
* return length of list
* construct an empty list
* prepend an item to a list
* append an item to a list
 |  |  |  |
| Have experience writing programs for the list operations mentioned above in a functional programming language or in a language with support for the functional paradigm. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  | **Knowledge & Understanding Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit** | **Topic** | **Sub-Topic** | **Subject Content** | **Insecure** | **Intermediate** | **Secure** |
| **4.13 Systematic approach to problem solving** | **4.13.1 Aspects of software development** | **4.13.1.1 Analysis** | Be aware that before a problem can be solved, it must be defined, the requirements of the system that solves the problem must be established and a data model created. Requirements of system must be established by interaction with the intended users of the system. The process of clarifying requirements may involve prototyping/ agile approach. |  |  |  |
| **4.13.1.2 Design** | Be aware that before constructing a solution, the solution should be designed and specified, for example planning data structures for the data model, designing algorithms, designing an appropriate modular structure for the solution and designing the human user interface. |  |  |  |
| Be aware that design can be an iterative process involving a prototyping/agile approach. |  |  |  |
| **4.13.1.3 Implementation** | Be aware that the models and algorithms need to be implemented in the form of data structures and code (instructions) that a computer can understand. |  |  |  |
| Be aware that the final solution may be arrived at using an iterative process employing prototyping/ an agile approach with a focus on solving the critical path first. |  |  |  |
| **4.13.1.4 Testing** | Be aware that the implementation must be tested for the presence of errors, using selected test data covering normal (typical), boundary and erroneous data. |  |  |  |
| It should also undergo acceptance testing with the intended user(s) of the system to ensure that the intended solution meets its specification. |  |  |  |
| **4.13.1.5 Evaluation** | Know the criteria for evaluating a computer system. |  |  |  |