



University of
South Australia

Master of Science (Information Assurance)

Experience. The Difference.

Program Learning Guide

26 January 2010

Division of Information Technology
Engineering and the Environment (ITEE)
University of South Australia
Mawson Lakes Campus
MAWSON LAKES SA 5095
Telephone: (08) 8302 3301
Email: elena.sitnikova@unisa.edu.au
URL: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/itee/IA>

INTRODUCTION	3
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	4
WHAT IS THE INFORMATION ASSURANCE (IA) PROGRAM?.....	4
WHAT ARE THE IA PROGRAM COURSES DELIVERY OPTIONS?.....	6
HOW IS THE PROGRAM STRUCTURED?	6
WHAT DOES A COURSE CONSIST OF?	7
WHAT COURSES WILL I STUDY?	7
WHAT PATHWAY OPTIONS DO I HAVE?.....	7
WHAT DOES A MODULE CONSIST OF?.....	8
HOW ARE MODULES AND COURSES MADE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS?	8
WILL MY ASSIGNMENT RESULTS DEPEND ON THE STUDY DELIVERY MODE I CHOOSE?.....	9
WHEN DO COURSES/MODULES TAKE PLACE?.....	9
WHAT ARE THE FEES FOR THE IA PROGRAM?.....	11
HOW DO I GAIN ENTRY TO THE PROGRAM?.....	11
ARE THERE ANY PRE-REQUISITE CONSTRAINTS IN THE IA PROGRAM?.....	11
COURSE NAMES AND UNIVERSITY COURSE DETAILS.....	13
GLOSSARY.....	14
E-LEARNING READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT.....	15

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Information Assurance (IA) program. The IA program offers students the opportunity to undertake post-graduate study in the field of forensic computing and information assurance.

Drawing on a variety of approaches to learning, coupled with 'state of the art' e-learning technology we aim to maximise flexibility, availability and convenience, while maintaining a focus on achieving high quality learning outcomes.

Students can apply for entry to the IA program and have the option of undertaking a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters Degree in Information Assurance.

During recent enrolment months we have received number of inquiries from our students about the program and courses offered. To help answer your questions about course structures, delivery and time frames for awards completion we have prepared this document – A Learning Guide - that captures these FAQ.

Please take some time and read through this booklet. Do not hesitate contact me if you have any further questions about the program and the study options that are available.

Dr Elena Sitnikova
Program Director – Information Assurance
Telephone: (08) 8302 5442
Email: elena.sitnikova@unisa.edu.au
URL: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/itee/IA/>

What is the Information Assurance (IA) Program?

The Information Assurance ('IA') program is a nested program of forensic computing and information assurance courses designed for the professional development of IT practitioners within Australian Law Enforcement to be recognised as a Forensic Computing/Electronic Evidence specialist in the Australian courts. The program is also providing post-graduate qualifications in both forensic computing and information assurance to meet the high demands of Australian Defence and banking industries for professional qualified IT security staff who have undergraduate qualifications in IT or engineering.

We offer a program that allows you to have a pathway from Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters to PhD in forensic computing and information assurance. Students undertaking this program apply for entry to the appropriate study stream and must meet the University's entry requirements for postgraduate study.

The program is 'nested' as there are exit points after the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma phases. (Refer Figure 1)

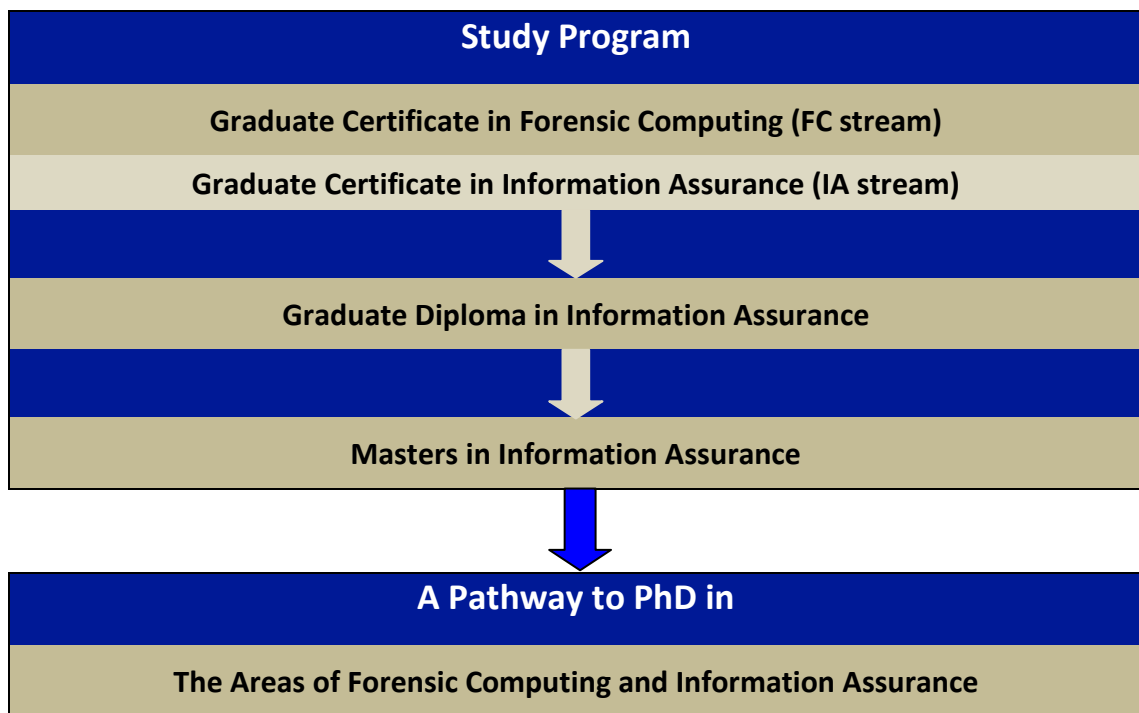


Figure 1: The Study Program

The full Masters in Information Assurance program consists of eight courses and a substantial Minor Thesis project. (Refer Figure 2)

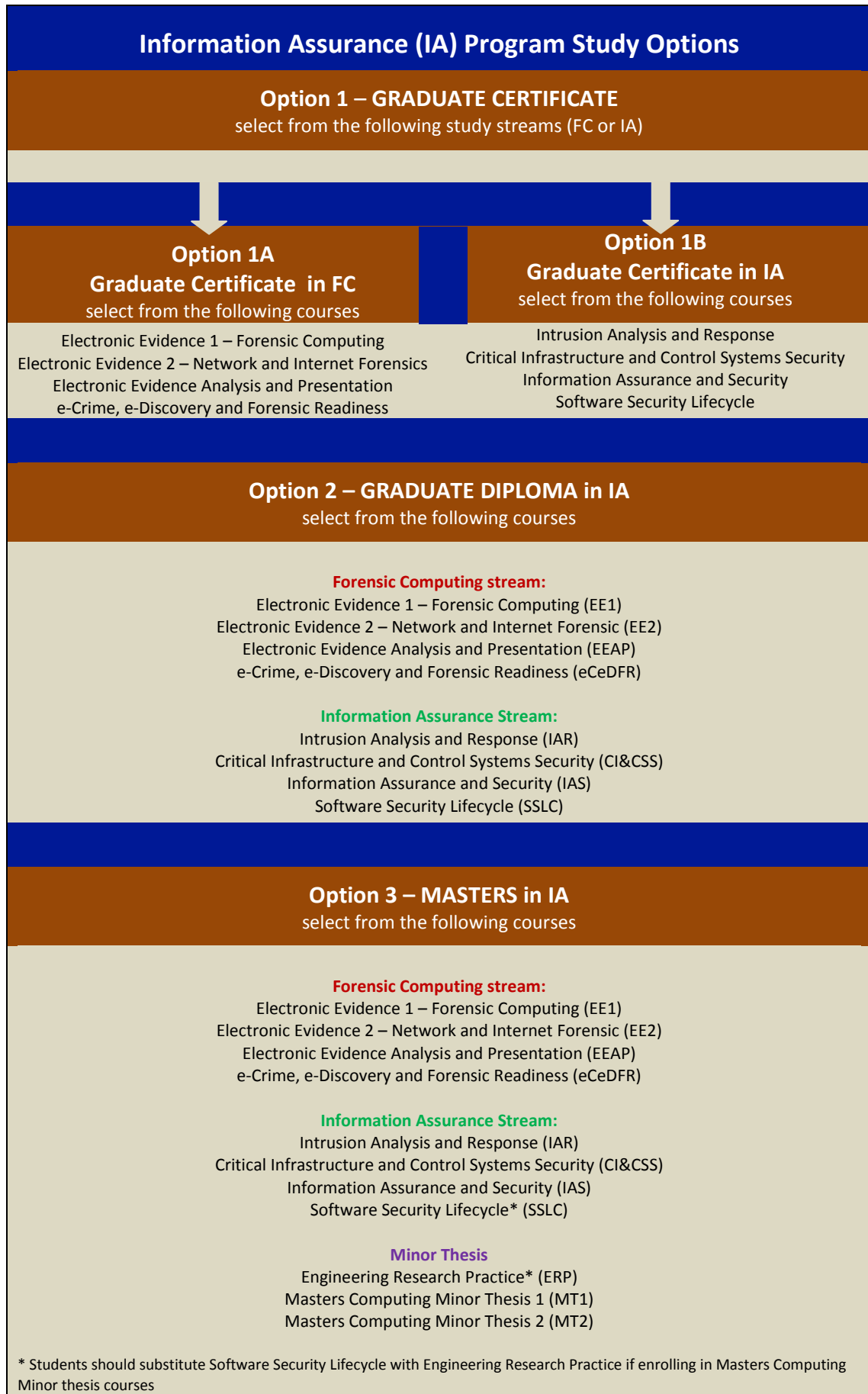


Figure 2: The IA Program Study Options

What Are the IA Program Courses Delivery Options?

To maximise flexibility, availability and convenience, the IA program courses are delivered in different Study Modes:

- **Face to face study mode** (Internal class) – 1 class per course per week over 12 weeks plus one week half day intensive study in-class per subject (15 hours).
- **Online distance study mode** (External class) - over 12 weeks online plus one week half day intensive study in-class per subject (15 hours).

As specified above, students from both external and internal classes are required to attend an intensive week study in Adelaide where external lecturers and guest speakers from industry, police, and the law enforcement will provide the majority of the course materials and practicals in class. Practical are based on the specific tools (for example EnCase) with the licences available only at the computer lab at the University of South Australia.

For part-time study students we understand their work commitments and try to make their study as flexible as possible. We suggest an online distance study mode as students get the majority of the course materials and practicals in class during intensive mode teaching, and the rest via online study. The part-time students are highly recommended to attend the intensive classes. However, if for some reason a student cannot attend the intensive class, as an exception, we provide students with an online synchronous environment. We use two e-Learning tools to facilitate online learning for external students – the Moodle Learning Management System and the Adobe Connect Pro System. These tools allow us to facilitate online connect meetings, virtual classrooms and other synchronous online activities in a seamless and integrated environment. Students will be able to hear online presentations, and participate in live class discussions. However, students might experience difficulties with poor connections from their ends using videos if they have bandwidth implications or some technological challenges (no USB ports for their Head phones/microphones).

To overcome this and avoid difficulties we suggest all our internal and external students attend the face-to-face intensive mode class at the University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes Campus, Adelaide

How is the Program Structured?

The basic unit of study for students enrolled in the IA program is the Course (refer Figure 3). The program has a higher degree of structure in terms of the sequence of courses that must be undertaken; however there is still some flexibility to accommodate students who wish to proceed through the program at different speeds.

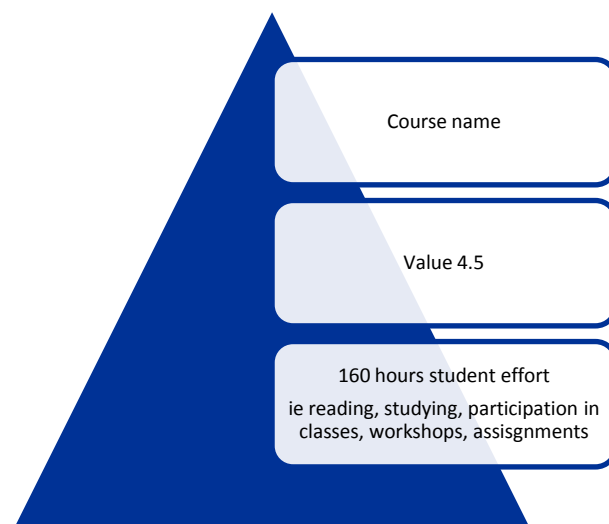


Figure 3: A Unit of Study

What Does a Course consist of?

A Course will consist of a mix of asynchronous online modules, student assignments, synchronous online interaction and face-to-face (synchronous) interaction during intensive teaching classes in Adelaide. While the proportions of these activities might vary from course to course, we are mindful of the need to ensure that the courses are offered in as flexible a manner as possible (refer Figure 4).

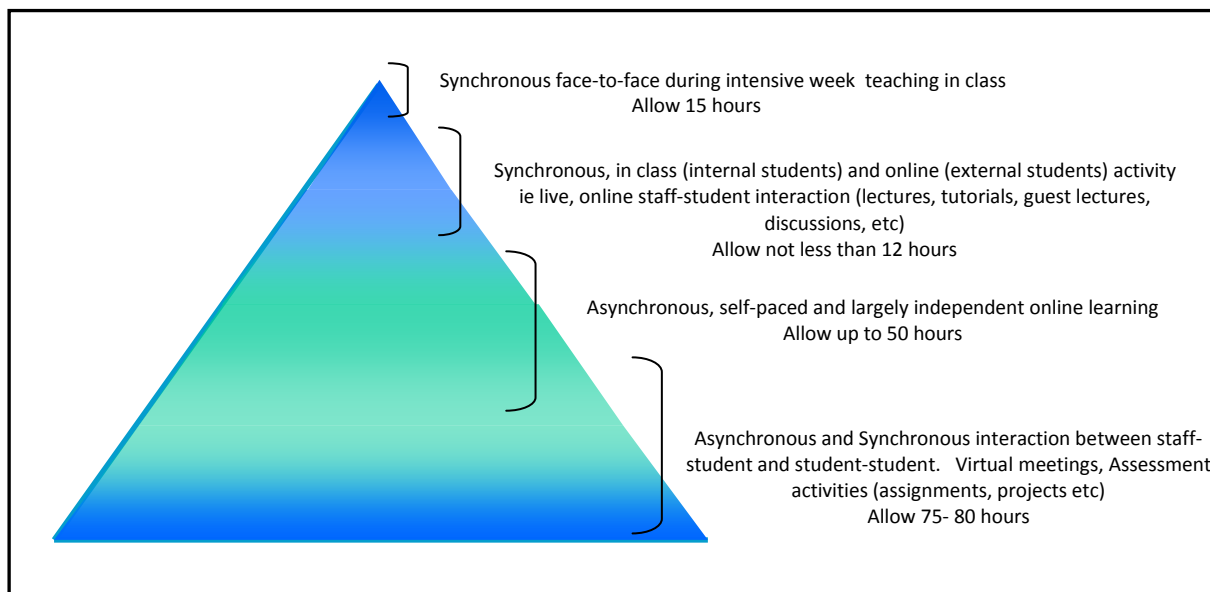


Figure 4: The Course Learning Model

What Courses will I study?

The courses are designed to develop knowledge in core information assurance and forensic computing, and to extend these into higher level knowledge of information awareness and security. Figure 2 shows the full list of courses that comprise the Masters in Information Assurance program. These are listed in detail with further University information relating to the Course (refer Page 13).

What Pathway Options Do I Have?

There are two basic pathways through the Masters in Information Assurance program:

1. Full time equivalent.

You undertake four courses per semester (18 units). Following this path you will complete the Masters in 1.5 years. If you started the Masters in Study Period 2 (SP), 2010, your pathway would be as follows:

Study Period	2 : 2010	5 : 2010	2 : 2011
Courses	EE1 EE2 IAR CI&CSS	EEAP eCeDFR IAS SSLC	MT1 MT2 ERP

Table 1 Full Time Pathway

Note that on the fast-track, the courses in any given semester will run sequentially, not in parallel. Regardless of your study mode (internal or external) your study activities take place within a 12 week time frame plus one week intensive teaching in class for any given course.

2. Part-time equivalent (Fast-Track).

You undertake two courses per semester (9 units). Following this path you will complete the Masters in 3 years. If you started the Masters in Study Period 2 (SP), 2010, your pathway would be as follows:

Study Period	2 : 2010	5 : 2010	2 : 2011	5 : 2011	2 : 2012	1 : 2012
Courses	EE1 EE2	EEAP eCeDFR	IAR CI&CSS	IAS SSLC	MT1 ERP	MT2

Table 2 Part-Time (Fast-Track) Pathway

3. **Part-time equivalent (Slow-Track):** You undertake one course per semester (4.5 units) for the majority of the program. Following this path you will complete the Masters in 5 years. If you started the Masters in SP 2, 2010, your pathway would be as follows:

SP	2 : 2010	5 : 2010	2 : 2011	5 : 2011	2 : 2012	5 : 2012	2 : 2013	5 : 2013	2 : 2014	5 : 2014
Courses	EE1	EE2	EEAP	eCeDFR	IAR	CI&CSS	IAS	SSLC	MT1 ERP	MT2

Table 3: Part-time (Slow-Track) Pathway

Note that in the slow-track, the final year requires that you undertake minor Thesis (9 units) per study period.

Not every combination of fast and slow-track options is possible without introducing some breaks. It is therefore best to try and plan in advance for any breaks.

4. **Other** pathways for part-time are possible. Another option is to complete the Graduate Certificate on the fast-track, then have a break for one year, then re-enter the Graduate Diploma fast-track, and so on. For example, the following table shows starting on the fast-track, having a semester break at some point, and then rejoining on either the fast or slow-track:

SP	2 : 2010	5 : 2010	2011	2 : 2012	5 : 2012		2013		2 : 2014	5 : 2014
Courses	EE1 EE2	EEAP eCeDFR	Break	IAR CI&CSS	IAS SSLC		Break		MT1 ERP	MT2

Table 4: Other Pathway

What Does a Module consist of?

Study Modules are exclusively asynchronous, online, self-paced learning activities that develop your knowledge of particular topics. These will vary in size depending on the topic. A number of modules (usually 12 modules plus a course revision), coupled with synchronous activities and assessment make up a full course.

How are Modules and Courses Made Available to Students?

An important feature of the IA program is its flexibility. To the greatest extent possible we have tried to make the courses and modules available in a flexible format that frees students from geographical and time constraints. It is important to remember, however, that not all of the desired learning outcomes can be achieved in a fully flexible environment. Some outcomes are **only possible** with a degree of face-to-face interaction (see answer to the question “What Are the IA Program Courses Delivery Options?” on

p.6), and some can only be achieved through synchronous interaction (even if this takes place online). For this reason the IA program has been built around a mix of three types of activity:


1. **Asynchronous, Online** activity – a large proportion of the learning content for the program has been captured in the form of self-paced, asynchronous, online learning modules and assessment. Asynchronous means that these modules are available at your convenience, unconstrained by time and geography. Provided you have access to the Internet and a computer, you are able to undertake these modules. Assessment includes assignments and may involve peer interaction. The learning content in these modules has been created using Adobe tools and is available to you in standard, widely supported formats.
2. **Synchronous, Online** activity – some learning outcomes are suited to a more flexible online environment. Synchronous online activities include some ‘live’ lectures, feedback and discussion sessions, peer-peer interaction and teamwork. We use two e-Learning tools to facilitate this mode of learning – the Moodle **Learning Management System**, and the **Adobe Connect Pro** system. These tools enable us to schedule and facilitate online meetings, virtual classrooms and other synchronous online activities in a seamless and integrated environment.
3. **Synchronous, Face-to-Face** activity – some learning outcomes can only be achieved through direct, face-to-face interaction. Each course within the program has a week intensive teaching face-to-face class that brings together all IA students (external and internal), external lecturers and guest speakers. During this week students will be introduced to Teaching and Learning Advisors who will run sections on referencing, academic writing and explain their involvement with student support when writing assignments.

Will my assignment results depend on the study delivery mode I choose?

Student Assessment is qualitative in nature and does not depend on the study mode. Regardless of whether you are an external or an internal student, many of your activities that require assignments preparation are wrapped around the mix of three types of activities described above. Many of these involve collaboration with other students (both synchronous and asynchronous), and you are encouraged to take full advantage of the e-Learning tools that support peer-peer interaction.

When Do Courses/Modules Take Place?

The IA program courses, which add synchronous elements and assessment activities to the asynchronous modules, are more structured in style and delivery. Table 5 provides Study Period 2 and Study Period 5 dates.



<i>Study Period</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>Intensive weeks</i>	<i>Finish</i>	<i>Semester Break</i>
2 : 2010	1 March 2010	15 – 19 Mar 2010 FC 22-29 Mar 2010 - IA	2 July 2010	12 Apr 2010 – 23 Apr 2010
5 : 2010	26 July 2010	9-13 Aug 2010 – FC 16-20 Aug 2010 -IA	26 Nov 2010	20 Sep 2010 – 1 Oct 2010
2 : 2011	31 January 2011	TBA	1 July 2011	TBA
5 : 2011	25 July 2011	TBA	27 Nov 2011	TBA
2 : 2012	30 January 2012	TBA	29 June 2012	TBA
5 : 2012	23 July 2012	TBA	25 Nov 2012	TBA
2 : 2013	28 January 2013	TBA	28 June 2013	TBA

Table 5: SP2 and SP5 Dates for the IA Program

Schedule for SP2, 2010

Students can commence their study online from Week 1 (1-5 March). Asynchronous, self-paced, online modules are available at any time. You start with Module 1, then as the course progresses, more modules will be open for your study.

You have to be in Adelaide for a week block mode face-to-face intensive teaching class and then you continue online study until the end of SP2 on 2nd July 2010.

The intensive block modes for 2010 have been scheduled for SP 2 in Week 3 and Week 4 respectively:

Graduate Certificate in Forensic Computing:

- Electronic Evidence 1 - Forensic Computing (15-19 March 2010) – 5 days 3.5 hours per day
- Electronic Evidence 2 - Network and Internet Forensics. (15-19 March 2010) 5 days 3.5 hours per day

Graduate Certificate in Information Assurance:

- Intrusion Analysis and Response (22-26 March 2010) 5 days 3.5 hours per day
- Critical Infrastructure and Control System Security (22-26 March 2010) 5 days 3.5 hours per day

The breaks that are scheduled have been aligned with UniSA teaching breaks and set to ensure that students are free of any synchronous commitments over two weeks period of each study period, and also during at least part of the mid-year school holiday period. The break periods do not preclude students from undertaking asynchronous, self-paced activities.

All synchronous (online and face-to-face) activities are scheduled to take place within defined study periods. Synchronous, online activities vary from course to course. Individual lecturers work with students to schedule these activities, as far as possible, at mutually convenient times. Some synchronous, online activities may be scheduled during working hours, and some may be scheduled out of hours. The Moodle Learning Management System provides tools to assist with this scheduling.

What Courses are Available and When?

Not every course in the program is made available every semester. The following table (Table 6) indicates when each course is available.

Study Period and Year	2 : 2010 2 : 2011 2 : 2012	5 : 2010 5 : 2011 5 : 2012	2/5 : 2010 2/5 : 2011 2/5 : 2012
Courses	EE1 EE2 IAR CI&CSS	EEAP eCeDFR IAS SSLC	MT1 MT2 ERP

Table 6 Schedule of courses – The IA Program (2009-2013)

What Hardware and Software do I Need?

As the program evolves we may need to alter the hardware and software requirements. We endeavour to keep additional requirements as simple as possible, and to advise students of any particular, non-standard, requirements well before they are required.

To undertake the current program you need, as a minimum, the following (refer Figure 5)

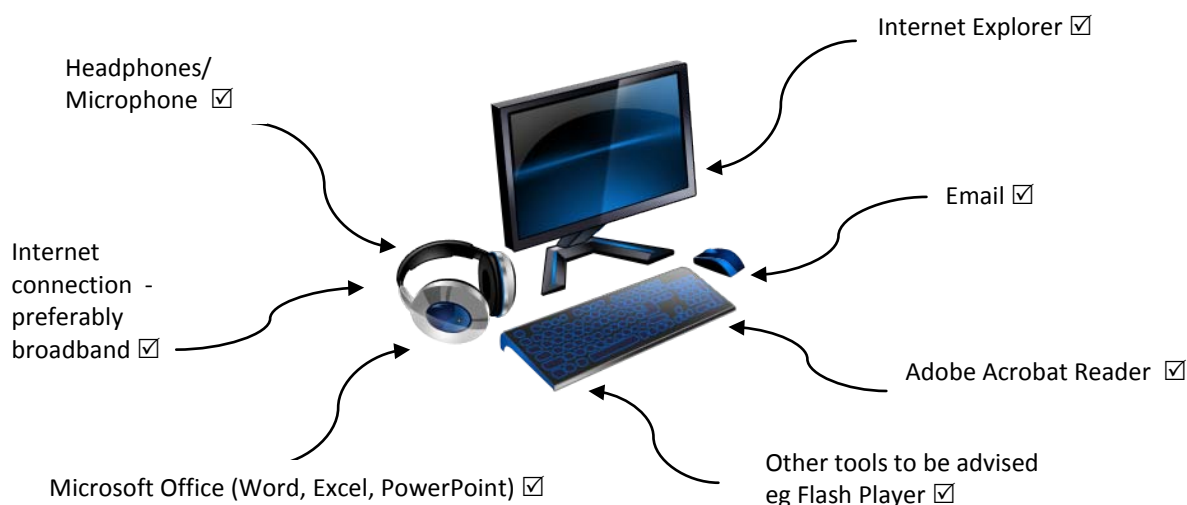


Figure 5: Hardware and Software needed at Student's end.

What Are the Fees for the IA Program?

Domestic students are Commonwealth Supported Fees for Commonwealth Supported Students are calculated at the course level. You can click on individual courses in the schedule program to determine total program fees from IA program web pages. <http://www.unisa.edu.au/itee/IA/default.asp> A student contribution will be around \$900 per 4.5 unit course.

Fees for International students: \$AU 11,750 per 0.5 EFTSL for students commencing in 2011.

Fees are calculated on a per Unit basis with 1.0 EFTSL = 36 Units.

Fees for International students are determined one year in advance and are subject to variation.

University tuition fees are adjusted each calendar year. Fees for calendar year 2010 have not yet been set; however a reasonable estimate is that they will be somewhere in the range \$2,165 - \$2,300 per 4.5 unit course.

How Do I Gain Entry to the Program?

If you are an IT professional practicing within Australian Law Enforcement, cyber security or a professional qualified IT security staff member working in Australian Defence and banking industries and are interested in seeking entry to the program we recommend that your first step is to talk to your training manager. Typically your employer will endorse participation as part of your Professional Development program and to meet the needs of the business. In addition, you must meet the University's normal entry requirements.

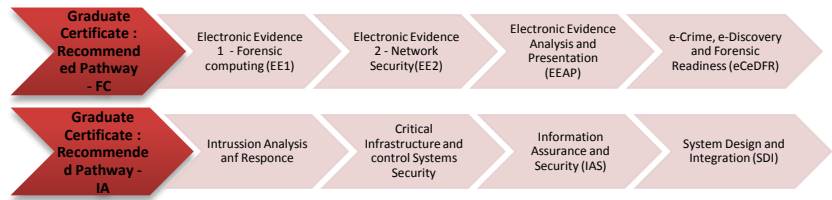
Some students may seek to undertake study without direct employer sponsorship. In these cases, the normal University entry requirements apply.

Are There any Pre-requisite Constraints in the IA Program?

We have tried to minimise pre-requisites in the program; however there are a few that will ensure smooth progression through the program.

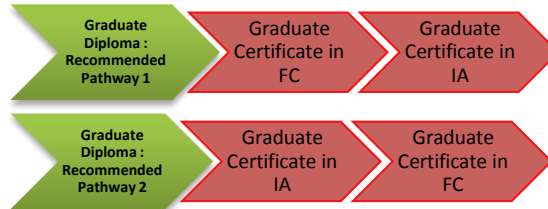
Graduate Certificate

- You must start with either Forensic Computing (FC) or Information Assurance (IA) courses.
- We recommend to do courses in that order.



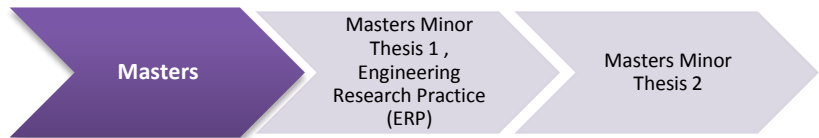
Graduate Diploma

- For Graduate Diploma you have to complete all 8 Graduate Certificate courses
- It does not matter which 4 courses you do first.



Masters

- You cannot commence the Masters phase until you have completed the Graduate Diploma courses.
- You must study Engineering Research Practice (ERP).



COURSE NAMES AND UNIVERSITY COURSE DETAILS

This is a post graduate program offered by the Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment, School of Computer and Information Science (CIS)

You may see the program referenced as **LMIA** where L is the Mawson Lakes Campus and MIA refers to Masters in Information Assurance.

The Area Code and Catalogue number refers to a particular course and is used for administration purposes eg when enrolling in a course; or for information about each course, you can search on the Area Code/Catalogue number. The site will provide course details, any pre-requisites, fee information, learning resources, support resources.

The course name (acronym) is primarily used within the school as an easy reference guide.

Every program has a Program Director overseeing the program; every course has a Course Co-ordinator and a External Lecturer or a guest speaker with industry experience.

Area Code & Catalogue No	Course Name	Course Name Acronym	Course Co-ordinator/ External Lecturer	Units	EFTS L
COMP 5064	Electronic Evidence 1 Forensic Computing	EE1	Robert Taylor	4.5	0.125
COMP 5065	Electronic Evidence 2 Network and Internet Forensics	EE2	Michael Wilkinson	4.5	0.125
COMP 5067	Intrusion Analysis and Response	IAR	David Guo	4.5	0.125
COMP 5062	Critical Infrastructure and Control System Security	CI&CSS	Ron Southworth	4.5	0.125
COMP 5066	Electronic Evidence Analysis and Presentation	EEAP	TBA	4.5	0.125
COMP 5063	e-Crime, e-Discovery and Forensic Readiness	eCeDFR	TBA	4.5	0.125
COMP 5068	Information Assurance and Security	IAS	Jill Slay	4.5	0.125
COMP 5069	Software Security Lifecycle	SSLC	Elena Sitnikova	4.5	0.125
COMP 5005	Masters Computing Minor Thesis 1	MT1	TBA	9.0	0.250
COMP 5003	Masters Computing Minor Thesis 2	MT2	TBA	9.0	0.250

Table 7 LMIA Program Courses

GLOSSARY

Asynchronous	Asynchronous refers to activities in the IA program that do not take place in real time. Learning modules that students can access and study at any time, at their own pace, are examples of asynchronous activities. Online discussion boards, where participants post messages for others to see and comment on, are another example of an asynchronous activity.
The LMIA Program	The Masters in Information Assurance (LMIA) program offers three levels of enrolment: Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters. Entry to the program requires that students meet specified University entry requirements. This normally includes the completion of a four-year engineering or IT degree or 6 or more years of working experience in relevant industry
Graduate Certificate	A Graduate Certificate is a formal University award that requires completion of 18 units of study (normally four courses) at postgraduate level. The Graduate Certificate in Forensic Computing and the Graduate Certificate in Information Assurance are part of the IA program.
Graduate Diploma	A Graduate Diploma is a formal University award that requires completion of 36 units of study (normally eight courses) at postgraduate level. The Graduate Diploma in Information Assurance is part of the IA program.
Masters	A Masters is a formal University award that requires completion of 54 units of study (normally twelve courses, or equivalent) at postgraduate level. The Master of Science (Information Assurance) is part of the IA program.
Course	A course is a collection of teaching and learning activities, including readings, lecture materials, assignments and discussion, which together address a related topic. In the flexible, blended (hybrid) learning environment of the LMIA program, a course consists of a number of asynchronous modules, various synchronous, online activities, and a synchronous, face-to-face, one week day intensive teaching in class. Together these activities develop the relevant knowledge and skills in students.
Learning Management System	This is a computerised system that acts as the focal point for flexible, online learning. Typically such a system provides students with a web interface, through which the student can access asynchronous learning modules, chat-rooms, virtual classrooms, discussion boards and the like. Good Learning Management Systems also provide administrative functions, such as a course calendar, that help students to track their progress, plan various study activities and communicate with staff and other students. The IA program will make use of Moodle – probably the world’s de facto standard for Learning Management Systems.
Module	A module is a sub-unit of a course. In the IA program, a large proportion of the content of the program is delivered through asynchronous modules. Modules capture smaller, discrete topics in more manageable chunks. Together, these modules build into courses.
Synchronous	Synchronous refers to activities in the IA program that take place in real time, whether face-to-face, or online. The key characteristic is the “live” nature of the activity.

E-LEARNING READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Below are six categories of statements which are designed to provide you with a self assessment of your willingness and preparedness to undertake on-line study. The decision to undertake study is a personal choice; the assessment may give you some understanding of potential risks/issues and provide you with some ideas to incorporate into your approach to learning.

- Indicate your agreement with the statement by marking the corresponding value.
 - 1 = Strongly Disagree
 - 2 = Somewhat Disagree
 - 3 = Not Sure
 - 4 = Somewhat Agree
 - 5 = Strongly Agree
- For each category of statements, calculate your average response by dividing the total score of your responses by the number of statements.
- After completing the e-learning Readiness Self-Assessment and calculated your average response for each category, transfer these averages to the table provided at the end of the self-assessment.

Technology Access

I have access to a computer with an Internet connection.	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to a fairly new computer (enough RAM, speakers, CD-ROM etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to a computer with adequate software (Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Average response (total score ÷ 3)					

Technology Relationship Skills

I have the basic skills to operate a computer (saving files, creating folders, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I have the basic skills for finding my way around the Internet (using search engines, entering passwords, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I can send an email with a file attached.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be comfortable using a computer several times a week to participate in a course.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to communicate effectively with others using online technologies (email, chat, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to express myself clearly through my writing (mood, emotions, humor, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to use online tools (email, chat, etc.) to work on assignments with learners who are in different time zones.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to schedule time to provide timely responses to other learners and/or the instructor.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to ask questions and make comments in clear writing.	1	2	3	4	5
Average response (total score ÷ 9)					

Motivation

I think that I would be able to remain motivated even though the instructor is not online at all times.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to complete my work even when there are online distractions (friends sending emails, websites to surf, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to complete my work, even when there are distractions in my home	1	2	3	4	5

(television, children, and such).					
Average response (total score ÷ 3)					

Online Video/Audio					
I think that I would be able to relate the content of short video clips (1 to 3 minutes typically) to the information I have read online or in books.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to take notes while watching a video on the computer.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to understand course-related information when it's presented in video format.	1	2	3	4	5
Average response (total score ÷ 3)					

Internet Discussions					
I think that I would be able to carry on a conversation with others using the Internet (Internet chat, instant messenger, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be comfortable having several discussions taking place in the same online chat, even though I may not be participating in all of them.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I would be able to follow along with an online conversation (Internet chat, instant messenger, etc.) while typing.	1	2	3	4	5
Average response (total score ÷ 3)					

Success Factors					
Regular contact with the instructor is important to my success in online coursework.	1	2	3	4	5
Quick technical and administrative support is important to my success in online coursework.	1	2	3	4	5
Frequent participation throughout the learning process is important to my success in online coursework.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that prior experiences with online technologies (email, Internet chat, online readings, etc.) are important to my success with an online course.	1	2	3	4	5
The ability to immediately apply course materials is important to my success with online courses.	1	2	3	4	5
Average response (total score ÷ 5)					

SCORING AND INTERPRETATION

4. If your average score for any category is 3 or less you are encouraged to spend time analysing your results. If necessary, talk to your employer and or family and friends. The more reflection on your own circumstances, the better prepared and equipped you will be.
5. For scores higher than 3, you will gain further knowledge and understanding by reviewing the interpretations.

Category	Average Score	Interpretation
Technology Access		Without adequate access to the technology required in an online course, completing course assignments and engaging with other learners in the course can be challenging. If you have limited access to technology, you should examine alternative resources (such as public libraries, Internet cafes, or local schools) and establish a technology contingency plan just in case you have to complete an online assignment quickly if your technology fails. In addition, contact your instructor at the beginning of the course to verify which software and hardware will be required and what technology resources are provided.
Technology Relationship Skills		Developing positive online relationships is central to an interactive online course. If your scores in this area were low, you will likely want to develop some strategies for addressing those concerns early in the course (for example, making a good first impression online, adding personal touches to online messages, developing online study groups, staying organized and on schedule). Each of the skills that you develop can be helpful in creating a positive online environment where you can work effectively with your peers.
Motivation		Staying motivated is challenging in almost any course: online or in the classroom. For those learners who have not established good study habits and positive support systems, staying motivated can be even more challenging. Identify friends, family, and peers who can provide you with the motivational support that you may require in completing current and future courses. In addition, try to identify those learners in the course with a positive attitude; their positive outlook can be much more useful to you as the course goes on than the negative attitudes that some learners may bring to every online conversation.
Online Video/Audio		If your course utilises streaming audio or video, then having the necessary study skills to be successful with this technology is essential. If you scored low in this area, and your course facilitator plans to use the technology, you should practice using the technology, taking notes, and studying from the audio/video before your first lesson using the technology. You don't want to waste time or miss any essential points because you didn't develop good study habits for the times when these technologies were in use (just as you wouldn't want to miss taking notes in a traditional lecture because you weren't prepared).
Internet Discussions		Most of the interactions that you will have with your facilitator and peers in an online course will be through Internet discussions (email, asynchronous discussion boards, synchronous chats, and so on). You should develop useful skills for effectively communicating through each type of technical media used in your online course. Have strategies for getting your point across, gaining the attention of others, archiving the conversation, discussing challenging topics without offending other learners, and so forth.
Success Factors		Many factors lead to success in online courses. Your individual study preferences, expectations, and previous experiences will all play a role in your success in current and future online courses. If you have concerns in any of these areas, you should discuss those with your facilitator before committing to a course.

Used with permission, Watkins and Corry, 2005.