MSc Data Science online chat session

This online chat session is for students interested in studying our MSc Data Science course. The session will be run by academic staff, giving you the opportunity to ask questions about your chosen course at City, University of London. As this is a typed chat group session, you will be able to see the answers to questions asked by other applicants.

Thank you for joining us for today’s CityChat session. This session is for students interested in studying our MSc Data Science course. This session runs from 16:30 - 17:30 (BST). This is an open chat session for you to ask any questions you have regarding these courses and life at City, University of London. During the session, we may also share videos, polis or documents related to your course. To ask a question, please type it in the chat box. Your question will not post straight away - it will be sent to our Moderators who will type an answer back. Once their answer is complete, it will be published with your question. Please make sure you say which course you have applied to when you post your question. You are also welcome to post just saying hi and introducing yourself!

Hi, I’m Aidan, the Programme Director. Looking forward to answering your questions.

Hi. With the current lockdown situation, how are you planning to give coaching for 2020/21 session?

Good question! We’re not sure sure yet - it will depend on government advice. But we have been delivering online for the past month or so, using a mixture of recorded lectures, live webcasts and online chats. We'll be planning accordingly over the summer

See (current) university guidance here: https://www.city.ac.uk/study/coronavirus-info-for-prospective-students

Coronavirus information for prospective students

Information for prospective students on the impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic on activities at City, University of London.

1. I understand in this course the programming will not at a building software level but will it be at the /level of coding expected for web development or less? Seeing that scripting languages will be used for the course.

That's right. You’ll be manipulating data and running analysis in data by writing code (mostly Python but some Matlab). But there’s scope for doing more coding later if you like (your dissertation)
Hello, I appreciate this is a jarring question, however as things stand, should we expect that the MSc will taught online?

I think it’s quite likely at least for Autumn term, but there may be some face-to-face activities too, we’ll have to see.

Hi Aidan and Aathavan, my name is Y and I applied to the MSC Data Science course in March. I’m very keen on studying this degree at City. Could you advise when I should expect to hear back from you with a decision? Many thanks

We’re a bit behind with processing applications, but will get to you. Please email the Programmes Office if you’ve got specific queries.

Hi, I’m J and I’ve applied for the Msc Data Science. I noticed that the deadline for applications was moved from May to August, does that also mean responses to our applications will also be delayed? Under the current circumstances, what do you foresee in terms of the future e.g. responses to applications and term start dates?

I don’t know why the deadline appears to have changed because there’s technically no deadline until the course begins. However, in practice, we’re full before then (July). So I advise to apply asap.

Hello there, I have a question regarding IELTS. Due to Corona, the test is online available online. It is not a standard academic test [https://www.ielts.org/what-is-ielts/ielts-indicator](https://www.ielts.org/what-is-ielts/ielts-indicator) Would it be accepted?

I believe we accept "TOEFL at home solution test" (online English language test),

Right now, I can think of three scenarios. 1. September start full time on campus. 2. First semester online and january on campus. 3. full online. Which of this is the most likely?

Hi K, the honest response to this is that we’re not sure. Our provision is dependent on government advice and whether the UK will continue to be in lockdown for the foreseeable future. Safe to say we endeavour to reopen our campus as soon as it is seemed safe enough to do so. Which scenario this leads to, we simply have to wait and see.

Thank you. What is the percentage of coding based content in the course? Do all modules involve a coding element or are some theory based?
Not all modules require python/matlab, but if you're uncomfortable with coding, this is probably not the course for you. Most of the core modules use python/matlab, but some of the electives don’t require any coding.

Alright, thanks Aathavan

You're welcome, do you have any further questions?

Hi, will the internship opportunities be found by the University or do students have to secure internships themselves?

We advertise internships internally. Some are specific to us and some are offered to students from other universities too. But you can find your own if you like as long as it meets our requirements and timescales.

Hi, I'm [Name] Until when can I submit my IELTS score?

You can apply before you have your test results and we can give you a conditional offer.

Hi, just a quick question regarding the internship option. Is the internship interchangeable with the dissertation, or does the internship happen first then the dissertation?

The internship is NOT interchangeable with the dissertation. You are correct in thinking that the internship precedes the dissertation, more info here: https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/mathematics-computer-science-engineering/placements-and-internships/placement-internship-schemes/computer-science/postgraduate-internships

**Postgraduate internships**

Postgraduate internships for IT graduates at City, University of London

Hi, just a quick question regarding the internship option. Is the internship interchangeable with the dissertation, or does the internship happen first then the dissertation?

For full time students, you get 3 months to do your dissertation. If you are doing an internship, you get 3 months extra but you do a dissertation during this period, based on your internship.
What sort of computing hardware/resource is needed for the course? Do we need to use on campus labs for some of the modules?

(Assuming we're on-campus) we use computer labs. You don't need to bring a laptop, but many do. All the software we use is free or we give you licences to use it on your own computers.

Yes. As far as my knowledge goes, there is one aspect related to C++, Java, Javascript, cloud. Do we need to brush these also before attending? Any assignment specific to other languages?

We recommend you brush up on Python, some maths concept, and matlab if you can. See [https://www.city.ac.uk/postgraduate-applicants-smcse/technical-skills-required-for-citys-msc-in-data-science](https://www.city.ac.uk/postgraduate-applicants-smcse/technical-skills-required-for-citys-msc-in-data-science)

Yes. As far as my knowledge goes, there is one aspect related to C++, Java, Javascript, cloud. Do we need to brush these also before attending? Any assignment specific to other languages?

We plan some optional preparation sessions before term. We also hope to give applicants who accept their plans free datacamp accounts, but this depends on whether we get them this year (we did for the past couple of years).

thanks!

If we end up studying the majority of the course remotely, without access to the various computer facilities, will there be any compensation or substitution? E.g. reduced fees or more access to online content?
There are no plans to, but we'll have to see. We are putting lots of measures in place to ensure that people are not disadvantaged during this situation, including lots of additional help and reduced assessment.

I understand. Will the coding be taught from scratch? Or would we be expected to come with some beginner knowledge?

We expect some basic knowledge - see https://www.city.ac.uk/postgraduate-applicants-smese/technical-skills-required-for-citys-msc-in-data-science

Technical skills required for City's MSc in Data Science

City, University of London: Campus tour

https://youtu.be/yFIx0Wxrg

Are there more information about the electives and their content? I couldn’t find further details about optimization/deep learning, Information Retrieval etc...

You can email the office if you need more information. Or I can answer some specific questions here.

How were the placements for the graduating batch of 2020? What were some of the companies and what were the lowest, average and highest offers like?

Last year around 25% of students did internship. I’ll need to check the companies, but some are listed on the website.

In view of the current situation and the worldwide lockdown especially for international travel, would the University allow deferrals to the next academic year?
Yes (assuming that the current situation doesn't change the policy). You can apply to entry in the following year.

Another question, should I be given an offer, would it be possible to defer it next year? I'm asking because of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation.

Yes, that's allowed under our current policy.

Hi, do we get any scholarship?

Hi, more information on fees and funding can be found here: [https://www.city.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding](https://www.city.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding). And a full list of our scholarships/bursaries can be found here: [https://www.city.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/scholarships-and-bursaries?level=postgraduate&school=%22School%20of%20Mathematics%20and%20Computer%20Science%20and%20Engineering%22](https://www.city.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/scholarships-and-bursaries?level=postgraduate&school=%22School%20of%20Mathematics%20and%20Computer%20Science%20and%20Engineering%22). We will be posting a video about this later in the chat.

**Fees and funding**

Find out about fees at City, as well as the range of funding options.

**Scholarships and bursaries**

Funding support available for students studying at City, University of London.

Thanks Aidan.

Are you planning to introduce new subjects for 2020/21? Is the course structure going to be as presented on your website? Thank you.

Mainly, but we do try and improve the programme. Next year, we're offering an additional elective: "Semantic web technologies and knowledge graphs" and there are some more likely offered in the following year.

Thank you.
I've noticed other universities have created Facebook groups for Offer holders from certain programmes. Is there one for this course? If not, is there any other platform for prospective students to meet?

No, but that's an interesting idea. We can have a think about that.

Just in case the course has to be made 100% online. Can I defer to next year?

Yes you should be able to assuming that the current climate hasn’t changed the University policy.

City, University of London: Funding postgraduate study

https://youtu.be/s_Y42EjPq9k

What is the typical batch size? How many % are fresh graduates and how many % come with work experience?

It's a big cohort. We take 120 students (and turn away many). I'd say that a bigger share are not straight from their undergraduate degree, but many are. It is nice that our cohort is very broad with masses of collective experience and knowledge. It makes it much more interesting for everyone! Lectures can be quite big, but labs are split into smaller groups. And we'll have three dedicated teaching assistants.

Also how many students do you generally have from India?

Quite a few!

Are we going to use C++, Java and Javascript?

Not in any of the modules. But you'd be free to use them for some coursework and for your dissertation. For example, you could build a tool/software/website to help with some data science tasks if you wanted.

Will term start in September or October?
Hi, teaching typically starts in late September. For 2020 entry this is scheduled for the Monday 21st Sept. However this may be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, but I can assure you that the University will be in touch with you in advance if these dates are to change. More info on term dates here: https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-year

**Academic year (term dates)**
City, University of London for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years.

Hi there, I am interested in attending the course part-time. Being a professional, I wonder about a) which days of the week are the lessons? b) duration of lesson c) what time of the day? (morning/afternoon). Thank you!

Good question! We try our very hardest to only have part time student come to come in one day a week (but they are very full days!) In the final term this is not possible as it depends on your elective choices, but this is true of core modules. We don’t guarantee it, but we have so far managed every year since we started the programme around 8 years ago. So hopefully one day a week in your first year and the first half of your second year.

Only joining now, do you need to have a Maths background or Stats background in order to do or be excepted in the Data Science program?

Some. See our advice here: https://www.city.ac.uk/postgraduate-applicants-smcse/technical-skills-required-for-citys-msc-in-data-science

**Technical skills required for City’s MSc in Data Science**

![City University of London logo]

When is the latest you can request to defer to the following year?

Hi, this isn’t something that Aidan or I can answer so could you please take this questions forward with our Programmes Office via smcsepg@city.ac.uk.
Only joining now, do you need to have a Maths background or Stats background in order to do or be excepted in the Data Science programme?

But we accept people without very technical backgrounds too, as long as they can demonstrate their knowledge and quantitative abilities.

To be specific I was thinking about deep learning and reinforcement learning?

What is the percentage of exam and coursework assessments?

Depends on the modules. Around half (depending on your elective choices) are coursework only, maybe even less than half. Of those with both, it’s 70% or 50% exam. But half (or more than half) will be 0% exam.

Thanks Aidan, but I was asking about final placements after graduation. The website only has details about the companies for internships.

Ah, I see. We don’t organise placements after the course, only internships during the course. Some students are offered jobs by the company they interned at. Students who succeed on this course have no problem getting jobs.

If I defer the study to the next academic year as EU student, does the fees change as well for me?

Hi, it is likely that you will need to pay the fees outlined for 2021/22 if you defer your entry. If you are referring to the impact of Brexit on your fee status, then I suggest contacting the Programmes Office via smcsepg@city.ac.uk.

What is the maximum class capacity for each term?

Core modules are big (110-150), but labs will be in 4 or 5 smaller terms. Some of the electives will have many fewer students.
Hi, can you give a brief overview of Semantic web elective? This is one of the areas I am interested in.

It's a new module, so we've never taught it! It's an elective. Description is: "Semantic Web technologies and Knowledge Graphs form the basis of the current development of the Web. At the same time, they have gained significant attention in industry to address use-cases that require exploiting and exchanging heterogeneous and large-scale collections of data. For example, adding semantic understanding to tabular data will be very valuable for data integration, data cleaning, data mining, machine learning and knowledge discovery tasks. In this module, we aim to train the new generation of data scientists with the necessary skills in semantic technologies to meet today's demands from industry, where data (and knowledge) scientists are expected to semantically orchestrate diverse types of data sources. This module gives a practical combination of web-technology".

Do we also work with R, Spark, SAS and Tableau in this program?

Yes, R, Spark and Tableau, but these less than python/matlab.

Thank you Aidan.

OK thanks.

Would you say that this degree is more research oriented or is it more of a professional course?

The overwhelming majority of graduating students get jobs in industry. But you have the chance to work with cutting-edge research in your dissertation and some people go on to research jobs and degree afterwards.
Would you say that this degree is more research oriented or is it more of a professional course?

We plan to run this throughout the whole of term.

Is there a tentative date by which we can expect application results?

Hi, we are doing everything we can to limit any impact coronavirus may have on applicants. Our Admissions teams are working hard to process all applications and provide decisions as soon as possible. We can't provide a tentative date for you but rest assured we will be in communication with you soon.

Reposting: I've noticed other universities have created Facebook groups for Offer holders from certain programmes. Is there one for this course? If not, is there any other platform for prospective students to meet?

I (answered by saying) not currently, but it's a good idea that we'll think about.

Thanks for the description!

No problem Mitchell, do you have any other questions?

Can we take additional electives from MSc AI? Apart from 180 ECTS requirement?

No, it won't be possible. The only elective that's shared with AI is Deep Learning Optimisation which is about reinforcement learning.
How about the placement, post completion of the course? Can you please share some placement stats for the subject course for last 2-3 years? How many are getting placed directly during the course completion?

I don't have the stats on this to hand, but students get jobs very easily afterwards.

alright, thanks Aidan

I understand. So does the majority of core modules involve coding? I'm trying to get a sense of how much of the course will be spent coding. If you can provide me with a rough percentage split it would be great!

It's probably not helpful to think of it this way. You're not coding for coding's sake. You're doing analysis using code. This gives you massive flexibility and lets you use a the widest variety of techniques. It's integral to the data science we teach and gives you essential skills that data scientists are expected to have.

For more detailed questions concerning the electives should I write the email to smcsep@city.ac.uk, isn't that right?

Yes!

There are 5 minutes left of this chat session. Please post any final questions now.

Is there a tentative date by which we can expect application results?

Not really - we're just doing through them as fast as we can, but we've had around over 400 applications so far, probably more by now.

Would it be realistic to have a productive time in this degree with professional background in non-tech business analysis and product management? I currently work for a Big Data Project with substantial data science component. My Bachelor's was in Econometrics with 3 years of Maths and Statistics (some years ago). I would like to move into a data science field, e.g. as a career change. I know SQL and Python just a little bit, but eager to learn programming. Should I consider applying?

Thank you for all the responses. Could you give a brief overview of Deep learning (optimization) elective? I'm really interested in that one.

It's about reinforcement learning. Email for more details

Do City students have access to the resources of Cass business school, for example Bloomberg Terminals?

I don't think so, but drop us an email and we can try to find out.
What’s the rough percentage of group-based to individual coursework?

Mostly individual, but some groupwork.

Are the dissertation topics provided by professors or student has to come up with a topic on their own?

You come up with your own, with help/ideas/advice from lecturers. Some lecturers have lists of topics.

Do we get stipend during the internship?

Usually, but not already. We encourage it, but some companies may not.

Do City students have access to the resources of Cass business school, for example Bloomberg Terminals?

Hi, access to resources are shared between our students. You may not have access to the main Cass Building, but the main City library has bookable Bloomberg terminals on site.

Also can one change the application from 12 mth course to 12 mth+ internship easily after getting conditional offer?

You don’t decide before, but you’d decide during the course at the - usually in May-June. Internships only really open to full time students.

Does the signal processing elective require preliminary knowledge in DSP? Is this still available as an elective?

No previous knowledge required and it will almost certainly be offered.

Are you guys going to email us this whole chat?
Hi, a transcript of this chat will be made available on our website by the end of next week. You should be able to access it at the bottom of this webpage: [https://www.city.ac.uk/study/visit-us/online-events](https://www.city.ac.uk/study/visit-us/online-events)

**Online events**

Interested in finding out more about City, University of London’s courses but unable to attend our open days? Register now for one of our online events.

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Thanks for the responses Aidan and Aathavan, really appreciate it!

Alao, can one change the application from 12 mth course to 12 mth+ internship easily after getting conditional offer?

You decide during the course, usually May-June

Can we get the entire chat transcript mailed to us?

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Thank a lot

You’re welcome, all the best.

Marketing background how will it fit we data science in terms of career prospects?

It certainly can, but depends on your interested. Data-based approaches to marketing
Regarding calculus. Is multivariable calculus ok or do we need to brush stochastic calculus also?

We don’t require advanced knowledge of calculus, but the more you know, the easier

How would be expected to participate in group work if working remotely?

We’ll figure out a way! Everyone will be in the same boat. We will plan/adapt our teaching as we know more.

Is assessment going to be cumulative (i.e. new coursework every week) or all-in-one by the middle/end of the term?

Each module will have one or two, usually middle and just after

Does the advanced databases elective require prior knowledge of SQL? Can I take the database elective instead if I have no SQL knowledge?

No, it’s wouldn’t be suitable. It’s more about optimising database design

Are we giving the flexibility to choose the domain for coursework? (E.g. if i want to focus on business issues rather than bioinfo, gis etc)

Depends on the module. Some core modules let you choose what you do (Principles of DS and Visual Analytics) and some have more prescribed tasks.

Alright, thanks Aidan and Aathavan. This was helpful. Hope to see you in London

No problem. Nice to “meet” you all!

Thanks for the info!

Pleasure! Hope it was useful

We will not be taking any further questions now. We endeavour to respond to all questions that have been asked up until this point. If you have any further questions, please direct them to smcsepp@city.ac.uk and we will get back to you soon.
"Aidan Slingsby
No, it's wouldn't be suitable. It's more about optimising database design" Sorry I didn't quite understand. Does that mean I can still pick the elective without SQL knowledge?

I guess you could, but you'd be strongly advised not to - it wouldn't be suitable for you.

By the elective I mean advanced databases*

Yes, this assumes basic SQL knowledge

This session has now ended. Thank you for joining us for today's chat. If you have any questions, please email smcsepg@city.ac.uk.