

MEC403 Computational Analysis

School: School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2026 | Trimester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

Computer aided engineering (CAE) is now a common step in the design of engineering structures. This course builds on the knowledge and skills gained in Mechanics of Materials and Engineering Dynamics. You will gain knowledge of the operation and limitations of CAE systems and develop the skills required to design such structures and systems. The material presented includes a brief discussion on the architecture of CAE systems, numerical methods and finite element methods. Considerable emphasis is placed on the appropriate use of the finite element method in the design process.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Asynchronous weekly learning material	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Laboratory 1 – On campus	3hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Topics may include:

- Matrix algebra
- Finite element method
- Discretisation and other approximations
- Stiffness and displacement methods
- Bars beams, truss and linear statics analysis
- Plane stress and plane strain
- Frame and grids
- Thermal stress

2. What level is this course?

400 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	Engineers Australia Stage 1 Professional Engineer Competency Standards
1 Develop comprehensive knowledge of the mathematical representation and principles of computational modelling techniques.	Knowledgeable	1, 1.2.a, 1.2
2 Investigate new developments and/or applications of various computational techniques in engineering problem solving.	Knowledgeable	1, 1.4.a, 1.4
3 Formulate simple computational analysis models and fluently apply them to problem solving.	Creative and critical thinker	2, 2.1.a, 2.1
4 Construct computational analysis models to solve engineering problems and assess and justify the reliability of simulated results.	Creative and critical thinker	2, 2.1.a, 2.1.b, 2.1
5 Apply computational analysis as a tool to synthesise optimal design solutions for real engineering applications.	Empowered	2, 2.3.a, 2.3
6 Effectively and professionally communicate literature review findings and problem solving outcomes of computational analysis through written reports.	Engaged	3, 3.2.b, 3.2

* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA STAGE 1 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER COMPETENCY STANDARDS	
1	Elements of competency: Knowledge and Skill Base
1.2.a	Knowledge and Skill Base - Conceptual understanding of the mathematics, numerical analysis, statistics, and computer and information sciences which underpin the engineering discipline: Develops and fluently applies relevant investigation analysis, interpretation, assessment, characterisation, prediction, evaluation, modelling, decision making, measurement, evaluation, knowledge management and communication tools and techniques pertinent to the engineering discipline.
1.4.a	Knowledge and Skill Base - Discernment of knowledge development and research directions within the engineering discipline: Identifies and critically appraises current developments, advanced technologies, emerging issues and interdisciplinary linkages in at least one specialist practice domain of the engineering discipline.
1.2	Knowledge and Skill Base: Conceptual understanding of the mathematics, numerical analysis, statistics, and computer and information sciences which underpin the engineering discipline.
1.4	Knowledge and Skill Base: Discernment of knowledge development and research directions within the engineering discipline.
2	Elements of competency: Engineering Application Ability
2.1.a	Engineering Application Ability - Application of established engineering methods to complex engineering problem solving: Identifies, discerns and characterises salient issues, determines and analyses causes and effects, justifies and applies appropriate simplifying assumptions, predicts performance and behaviour, synthesises solution strategies and develops substantiated conclusions.

CODE	COMPETENCY
2.1.b	Engineering Application Ability - Application of established engineering methods to complex engineering problem solving: Ensures that all aspects of an engineering activity are soundly based on fundamental principles - by diagnosing, and taking appropriate action with data, calculations, results, proposals, processes, practices, and documented information that may be ill-founded, illogical, erroneous, unreliable or unrealistic.
2.3.a	Engineering Application Ability - Application of systematic engineering synthesis and design processes: Proficiently applies technical knowledge and open ended problem solving skills as well as appropriate tools and resources to design components, elements, systems, plant, facilities and/or processes to satisfy user requirements.
2.1	Engineering Application Ability: Application of established engineering methods to complex engineering problem solving.
2.3	Engineering Application Ability: Application of systematic engineering synthesis and design processes.
3	Elements of competency: Professional and Personal Attributes
3.2.b	Professional and Personal Attributes - Effective oral and written communication in professional and lay domains: Prepares high quality engineering documents such as progress and project reports, reports of investigations and feasibility studies, proposals, specifications, design records, drawings, technical descriptions and presentations pertinent to the engineering discipline.
3.2	Professional and Personal Attributes: Effective oral and written communication in professional and lay domains.

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

[(Enrolled in SC405; SC410 or SC411) AND (ENG221 or MEC221) AND MTH203] or [Enrolled in GC002, GD002, MC002, GC003, GD003, MC003, GC006, GD006, MC006]

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

MEC303 or ENG303

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Early feedback will be provided through the completion of weekly activities in the laboratories. Furthermore, feedback on each assessment will be provided which will be used to help with the following assessment.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Quiz/zes	Individual	30%	1 hour for each quiz	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	30%	1500 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Report	Individual	40%	2000 words	Week 12	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: In-tutorial Quizzes

GOAL:	The goal of this task is to demonstrate your understanding of discretisation and finite elements and use this knowledge to solve structural problems.		
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Quizzes. Submission weeks: Week 4, week 8, week 12.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Formulation of simple computational analysis models and fluent application of them to problem solving.	2 3 4
	2	Construction of computational analysis models to solve engineering problems and assessment and justification of the reliability of simulated results.	1 3 4
	3	Development of comprehensive knowledge of the mathematical representation and principles of computational modelling techniques.	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 2: FEA Problems with simple systems

GOAL:	The goal is to apply engineering theory to evaluate simple systems and propose and justify solutions to structural problems.																			
PRODUCT:	Written Piece																			
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:																				
FORMAT:	You will be given a set of problems representing a system of static structure. You will analyse the system using the finite element method and a CAE tool. This includes the accurate use of discretisation and analysis of stress and strain. The analysis will assist you to formulate possible solutions for improvement to the structure																			
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GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy																			

All - Assessment Task 3: Mini Project

GOAL:	The goal is to evaluate the performance of an existing design using computer-aided engineering software to evaluate the validity of the model and solution in relation to the original problem specification													
PRODUCT:	Report													
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:														
FORMAT:	You will provide a written report detailing: Solid computer model application of stress and thermal stress design specification													
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7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

7.1. Schedule

PERIOD AND TOPIC	ACTIVITIES
1	Revising mechanics of materials concepts
2	Review of Matrix notation
3	Finite element methods
4	Stiffness and displacement
5	Stiffness and displacement
6	Adapting problems for computer solution
7	Truss analysis using stiffness method
8	Beam analysis using stiffness method
9	Frame and Grid equations
10	Plane stress and plane strain stiffness equations
11	FEM of plane stress and plane strain
12	Thermal stress and FEM
13	Review

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the [Library](#) at no additional cost.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Recommended	Daryl L. Logan	2016	A First Course in the Finite Element Method, SI Edition	6th Ed	Cengage Learning

8.2. Specific requirements

N/A

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)