

SEC602 Ethics in Digital Investigation and Cyber Security

School: School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Adelaide

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

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

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.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

How should digital investigators and cyber security specialists conduct themselves in their profession? How might moral philosophy inform ethical practice in this arena? What does ethical practice in this arena look like? In this online course you will examine ethical challenges for cyber security and digital investigations in the digital environment. You will examine different ethical frameworks that underpin critical decision-making in digital environment investigations and examine ethical issues relating to information management and obligations in respect of managing risks. You will learn to recognise conflict of interests, and how to manage them.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Asynchronous learning material.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Synchronous on campus workshop	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Seminar – On campus seminar	1hr	Week 1	2 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Asynchronous learning material.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Synchronous Zoom workshop	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Seminar – Online seminar	1hr	Week 1	2 times

1.3. Course Topics

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO CYBERSECURITY ETHICS

An Introduction to Ethics

The Effects of Cyber Harm

Applied Ethics in Cyber Security

Case Studies: Ethics of Spyware and Encryption

MODULE 2: A BACKGROUND TO ETHICAL THEORY

Ethical Decision Making and Utilitarian ethics

Moral Duties and Rights of Personhood (deontological ethics)

Virtue Ethics and Ethical Principles

Case Studies: Privacy and Professional Ethics

MODULE 3: PRIVACY AND DATA

Is There a Right to Privacy?

Information Management – Privacy and Dataveillance

Information Management – Data Integrity

Future of Ethics in Technology and Cybersecurity

2. What level is this course?

600 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

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
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Explain, apply, and justify ethical frameworks and decision-making in cybersecurity and digital investigations.	Knowledgeable Ethical
2	Reflect and recognise differing ethical perspectives in cybersecurity and digital investigations.	Empowered Ethical
3	Identify harms, conflicts, and risks in cybersecurity and digital investigations.	Knowledgeable Ethical
4	Undertake and communicate research, analysis, and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Engaged

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 Program SC509, SC517, SC705, BU708, ED508 or ED705

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

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

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

This course will have weekly check-ins via zoom chats to ensure you are managing the content and expectations of the course.

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	Written Piece	Individual	20%	approx 1000 words or equivalent	Week 4	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	40%	2000 words	Week 8	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Oral	Group	40%	5 mins per student	Week 12	In Class

All - Assessment Task 1: Literacy Skill Task

GOAL:	You will develop and apply information literacy skills.		
PRODUCT:	Written Piece		
FORMAT:	Individual report submitted online.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Identification of 5 different sources, at least 4 of which are scholarly academic works. Compliance with APA7 referencing style. Accuracy & content of summaries satisfy task criteria.	2 4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 2: Ethics Essay

GOAL:	You will develop and apply ethical skills in the consideration and critiquing of a given cyber ethics scenario		
PRODUCT:	Written Piece		
FORMAT:	An in-depth essay applying ethical frameworks and concepts learnt during the course. Appropriate references and citations to be used.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Different ethical perspectives are recognised and identified. Ethical frameworks are explained and applied within the scenario. Ethical frameworks are used to evaluate and justify decision-making.	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 3: Ethics Case Study

GOAL:	To present various perspectives on a supplied ethical issue, fostering critical thinking and informed discussion.		
PRODUCT:	Oral		
FORMAT:	In a team of 3 - 4 students, students will present on a supplied ethics topic. Presented in class in week 12. Slides and peer review document to be uploaded to LMS		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Quality and accuracy of identified ethical issues and concerns for assigned perspective	2 3
	2	Appropriateness and research-based justification of argument supporting assigned perspective	1
	3	Professional communication: including dress, tone, timing and audibility	4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy		

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.

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

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Recommended	Mary Manjikian	2022	Cybersecurity Ethics	1st	Routledge
Recommended	HERMAN T. TAVANI	2015	ETHICS AND TECHNOLOGY	n/a	Wiley
Recommended	Paul Cornish	2021	The Oxford Handbook of Cyber Security	n/a	Oxford University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

This is an online course therefore access to a computer and stable internet connection for at least 10 hours a week is essential. For synchronous online tutorial classes, access to a computer equipped with in-built or peripheral webcam and microphone is necessary.

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. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. 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>

10.9. 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.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au