



BUSINESS SCHOOL  
Te Kura Pakihi

School of Computing

Fundamentals and practice of spreadsheets  
INFO 130

COURSE OUTLINE

Semester One 2025

## Contents

Paper Description and Aims .....	1
Learning Outcomes .....	1
Teaching Staff .....	1
Course Delivery.....	2
Availability of lecture recordings as per School of Business recommendation.....	2
Locations and Times .....	2
Expectations and Workload .....	2
Course Learning Resources .....	3
Blackboard.....	3
Student Webmail (IMPORTANT - DO THIS NOW) .....	3
Assessment.....	3
Course Requirements.....	4
Late Assignments and Special Consideration.....	4
Quality Assurance .....	4
Grading System .....	4
Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism).....	4
Course Calendar.....	5
Student Learning Support and Information .....	6
Student Charter .....	6
Guidelines for Learning at Otago .....	6
Student Learning Development .....	6
Library Support.....	6
Disability Information and Support .....	6
Kaiāwhina – Māori Student Support.....	7
Student Feedback.....	8
Class Representatives .....	8
Concerns about the Course .....	8
Disclaimer .....	8

## Paper Description and Aims

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The ability to competently handle spreadsheets like Microsoft Excel is probably the most versatile skill a business student can acquire. Organising, analysing, and interpreting data are techniques found in virtually every organisational environment one can think of: small and medium enterprises, corporate environments, accounting, legal, and consulting firms, governmental agencies, academic institutions, not-for-profit organisations, etc.—all base their decision making processes on data.

INFO 130 will teach the fundamentals and practice for the effective and productive use of spreadsheets and will prepare you for more advanced data handling methods taught in other papers.

INFO 130 operates under a traditional model of lectures and labs which will be used to present and discuss material relevant to the paper. Within these sessions, there will be opportunities for discussion, and classes may draw on more interactive techniques to support the content, or refer to relevant online content. Labs are essential to solidify and practice the concepts covered in the lectures.

INFO 130 is a new paper introduced in 2020 – we hope that you find the paper both enlightening and enjoyable. Being a rather new paper, your feedback is vital. In case you encounter small issues throughout the semester, please let us know and we will attempt these issues as quickly as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of INFO 130, students should be able to:

1. work with spreadsheets to organise, analyse and visualise data
2. use functions and complex formulae to automate calculations and build basic models
3. automate simple tasks using macros and integrate error checking and data protection into spreadsheets using best practices.

## Teaching Staff

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### Paper Coordinator and Lecturer

Name: Claudia Ott  
Office: 3.44, 3rd Floor, OBS  
Email: claudia.ott@otago.ac.nz  
Office Hours: by appointment

*You should contact Claudia with questions regarding lectures, and any administrative enquiries about the paper such as requests for late submission of assignments due to illness assessment.*

### Lab Coordinator and Teaching Support

Name: Gary Burrows  
Office: 3.23, 3rd Floor, OBS  
Email: gary.burrows@otago.ac.nz  
Office Hours: by appointment

*You should contact Gary with any administrative enquiries, and questions related to the practical lab sessions and the practical tests.*

## Course Delivery

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Each week, you are expected to attend one 2-hour lecture and one 2-hour practical lab.

- **Lectures (2 hours)** present the key conceptual material through discussion and interaction between teaching staff and students. Multimedia and class exercises will be used to supplement the presentation. Lectures are occasionally supported by online tutorials.
- **Labs (2 hours)** are interactive, collaborative sessions in which students attempt to cement concepts presented at lectures with their peers in a supportive environment. Labs will be used to discuss and work on the weekly assignment tasks.

The Course Calendar (page 5) details semester dates, lecture topics, labs, and assessment related scheduling information. Note that this calendar may change as the course proceeds. These will be announced at lectures and detailed on Blackboard.

*Students are required to prepare for and attend all classes to gain full benefit from the course.*

Lectures and labs should be prepared for by reviewing information detailed on Blackboard and completing suggested online material. Students unable to attend a lecture are expected to catch up on missed material. Unless stated otherwise, all aspects of the course are examinable.

### Availability of lecture recordings as per School of Business recommendation

We believe strongly in the importance of attending lectures and tutorials to maximise your engagement with the course content. Attending lectures and tutorials is important—it allows you to work with your peers, and provides the opportunity to develop discussion of key elements of the subject. However, we recognise illness, Covid and other significant unforeseen events do occur. We also appreciate that some students benefit from having the recordings to review again later in their own study time. For these reasons, lecture recordings will be released two to three weeks after the lecture, or when a specific topic has been concluded, and accessible on Blackboard from that point onward.

### Locations and Times

Lectures and labs are held in the following locations:

- Lecture – The weekly 2-hour lecture is held on Mondays 4pm (Mellor Laboratories, ME215)
- Labs – The three lab streams are available on Wednesdays 9am (OBS3.20), 11am (OBS3.20) and 2pm (OBS3.20)

## Expectations and Workload

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You are expected to complete approximately 180 hours of work over the semester. This encompasses all activities in the paper (attending lectures and labs) along with any additional work to complete assessments and any necessary preparation for classes.

## Course Learning Resources

There is no required text for this paper. Where appropriate, we will make use of the online *GoSkills* courses ([www.goskills.com](http://www.goskills.com)). Go to [www.goskills.com/coupon](http://www.goskills.com/coupon) and enter code OU2025. Then sign up or log in to your account. The email address for your account must end in otago.ac.nz.

### Blackboard

*Blackboard* <https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz/> provides you with access to course materials, class notices, and resources. Blackboard is used to email the whole class so it is important that you check your student email and *Blackboard* regularly.

### Student Webmail (IMPORTANT - DO THIS NOW)

Forward your University email address to an email address that you use regularly as follows:

1. [Log into your StudentMail account](#) using your student username and password
2. Click **Cog button (top right corner)** > **Options**
3. Under **Account**, select the **Forward your email** shortcut under the **Short Cuts** menu on the right side of the screen.
4. Under the Forwarding heading, type in the email address you want your email to be forwarded to. You can also choose to have a copy of these emails kept on your StudentMail account, so please check the box if you would like this.
5. Click the **Start forwarding** button.

## Assessment

All material presented in classes is assessed through lab assignments and practical tests. Assessment information such as due dates and times, content, guidelines and so on will be discussed at lectures and, where appropriate, detailed on Blackboard. *Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of this information, keeping track of their own progress, and catching up on any missed classes.*

There are 10 lab assignments that are worth 40%. Each week you must complete a lab assignment. During the lab sessions your assignment will be marked for 4% ( $10 * 4 = 40\%$ ). The two practical tests are worth 60% in total (30% and 30% respectively). See details about the due dates for these assessments below.

Assessment	Description	Deliverable on Fridays
Lab Assignment 1	Basics of Excel and Formulae	5pm, 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb
Lab Assignment 2	Formulas, Functions and Basic Charts	5pm, 7 <sup>th</sup> March
Lab Assignment 3	Lookups, Errors, Goals and Macros	5pm, 14 <sup>th</sup> March
Lab Assignment 4	Import, Present, Validate and Deploy	5pm, 21 <sup>st</sup> March
Lab Assignment 5	Pivot Table Review and Web Queries	5pm, 28 <sup>th</sup> March
Lab Assignment 6	Introduction to Dashboards	5pm, 11 <sup>th</sup> April
Lab Assignment 7	Pivots, Charts, Functions	5pm, 25 <sup>th</sup> April
Lab Assignment 8	Macros and VBA	5pm, 2 <sup>rd</sup> May
Lab Assignment 9	Coding VBA and Debugging	5pm, 9 <sup>th</sup> May
Lab Assignment 10	Create an Application using VBA	5pm, 15 <sup>th</sup> May
Test 1	Topics covered in lectures 1-5 and corresponding labs	During lab, 2 <sup>nd</sup> April (Venue: In the lab)
Test 2	Topics covered in lectures 6-11 and corresponding labs	During lab, 28 <sup>th</sup> May (Venue: In the lab)

## Course Requirements

INFO 130 has the following process to pass the paper.

1. Submit your lab solutions to at least 8 out of 10 lab assignments in two steps:

**Step 1** – Submission based on files uploaded via Blackboard:

- quality of submitted solutions

**Step 2** – In-lab individual discussion:

- correctness of filled-in answers (lab book)
- questions discussed

2. Take both the tests and score at least 40% average across the two tests. In other words, a student must score at least 24 out of 60 in the tests.

*Failure to achieve the above means that you will not be able to pass the paper independent of your overall score in the course.*

## Late Assignments and Special Consideration

*Late assignments are penalised at the rate of 50% per week* – for every week that your assignment is late, your raw mark for the assignment is scaled accordingly.

On certain grounds (e.g., illness or bereavement), special consideration on assignments may be given. Special consideration is given on a case-by-case basis and *must be requested from the course coordinator prior to the assessment deadline*.

## Quality Assurance

At the Otago Business School, we monitor the quality of student learning and your learning experience. Your assessed work may be used for assurance of learning processes, such as evaluating the level of achievement of learning outcomes, with the aim of improving the quality of our programmes. All material used for quality assurance purposes will be treated as confidential and the outcome will not affect your grades.

## Grading System

The grading scheme used at Otago is:

<b>A+</b>	90-100	<b>B+</b>	75-79	<b>C+</b>	60-64	<b>D</b>	40-49
<b>A</b>	85-89	<b>B</b>	70-74	<b>C</b>	55-59	<b>E</b>	<40
<b>A-</b>	80-84	<b>B-</b>	65-69	<b>C-</b>	50-54		

## Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism)

**Students should ensure that all submitted work is their own.** Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct (cheating). It is defined as copying or paraphrasing another's work and presenting it as one's own. Any student found responsible for academic misconduct in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations, which may result in serious penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases, exclusion from the University. The University of Otago reserves the right to use plagiarism detection tools.

Students are advised to inform themselves about University policies concerning dishonest practice and take up opportunities to improve their academic and information literacy. If necessary, seek advice from academic staff, or the Student Learning Centre. The guideline for students is available at this link: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity/index.html>

# Course Calendar

Block	Date	Lecture	Lab	Assessment
<i>Block 1</i> <b>Basics Concepts:</b> Formulas, Function and Charts	24 Feb	<b>1</b> Excel Basics, Formulas & Functions		
	26 Feb		<b>1</b> Basics of Excel and Formulae	Lab Assessment 1 (4%)
	3 Mar	<b>2</b> More Basics, Charts, Validation		
	5 Mar		<b>2</b> Formulas, Functions and Basic Charts	Lab Assessment 2 (4%)
<i>Block 2</i> <b>Advanced Concepts:</b> Optimising and Analysing Data	10 Mar	<b>3</b> Lookup Methods, Pivot Tables, Macros		
	12 Mar		<b>3</b> Lookups, Errors, Goals and Macros	Lab Assessment 3 (4%)
	17 Mar	<b>4</b> Security, Data Types, Errors		
	19 Mar		<b>4</b> Import, Present, Validate and Deploy	Lab Assessment 4 (4%)
<i>Block 3</i> <b>Data Management:</b> Working with Pivot Tables	24 Mar	<b>5</b> Data Models, SQL Queries		
	26 Mar		<b>5</b> Pivot Table Review and Web Queries	Lab Assessment 5 (4%)
	31 Mar	<b>6</b> Web Queries, Review for Test I		
	2 Apr		Practical Test I (during lab)	Practical Test I (30%)
<i>Block 4</i> <b>Data Visualisation:</b> Charts & Dashboards	7 Apr	<b>7</b> Data Visualisation, Intro to Dashboards		
	9 Apr		<b>6</b> Introduction to Dashboards	Lab Assessment 6 (4%)
	14 Apr	<b>8</b> Dashboard Design Best Practice		
	16 Apr		<b>7</b> Pivots, Charts, Functions	Lab Assessment 7 (4%)
<b>Mid-semester break</b>				
<i>Block 5</i> <b>Automation:</b> Macros and Programs	28 Apr	<b>9</b> VBA Editor, OOP, VBA Object Model		
	30 Apr		<b>8</b> Macros and VBA	Lab Assessment 8 (4%)
	5 May	<b>10</b> VBA Error, Debugging & VBA Functions		
	7 May		<b>9</b> Coding VBA and Debugging	Lab Assessment 9 (4%)
	12 May	<b>11</b> User Interaction		
	14 May		<b>10</b> Create an Application using VBA	Lab Assessment 10 (4%)
<i>Block 6</i> <b>Advanced Data Handling Techniques</b>	19 May	<b>12</b> Excel Limitations & Alternatives		
	21 May		Catch-up lab session	
	26 May	<b>13</b> PowerBI & R, Review for Test II		
	28 May		Practical Test II (during lab)	Practical Test II (30%)

## Student Learning Support and Information

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### Student Charter

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/otago0005275.html>

### Guidelines for Learning at Otago

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/hedc/otago616123.pdf>

<http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/learning/>

### Student Learning Development

The Higher Education Development Centre (<https://www.otago.ac.nz/hedc/students/index.html>), provides learning support, free of charge, to ALL enrolled students. Their services include:

- a workshop programme designed to help students to improve their learning strategies and their generic skills;
- individual assistance with learning issues;
- on-line study skills advice;
- a student leadership programme
- a student-led peer support programme for students of all ages and backgrounds.
- conversational English groups for students from a non-English speaking background

The Centre also provides two very helpful study guides, "Guidelines for Writing and Editing" and "Writing University Assignments" and these are available on the SLC website.

<http://slc.otago.ac.nz/>

### Library Support

The Library website <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library> provides access to resources and services, including group room bookings, library hours and locations, past exam papers, subject guides, article databases and more.

If you need assistance either check out the self-help guides <http://otago.libguides.com/selfhelp>, or ask Library staff at the ground floor service desks, or email [ask.library@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ask.library@otago.ac.nz)

### Disability Information and Support

Students are encouraged to seek support if they are having difficulty with their studies due to disability, temporary or permanent impairment, injury or chronic illness. It is important to seek help early, through one of the contacts below:

Website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities>

65 Albany St, West Lane, ISB, Student Services

Tel: +64 3 479 8235 Email: [disabilities@otago.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@otago.ac.nz)

### **Kaiāwhina – Māori Student Support**

Ben is the Kaiāwhina Māori (Māori student support) for Te Kura Pākihi | Otago Business School. He is able to answer any questions you may have about studying here at the University of Otago. He can provide information about scholarships, campus services, pastoral and financial care. Ben is also here to support those students who are studying away from their whānau, hapū and iwi, to ensure they feel safe and supported. He has a passion for the development of Rangatahi and understands the struggles that can come with academic life.

Tel +64 27 513 6991

Email [ben.sommerville@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ben.sommerville@otago.ac.nz)



### **Pacific Islands' Student Academic Advisor (Part-time)**

*Malo e lelei*

Falaviena Faiva works part-time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce. Falaviena is of Tongan descent and one of our two Pacific Student Support Facilitators. She is responsible for all second-year Pacific students within the division.

Falaviena is a University of Otago, Humanities and Commerce graduate and is currently completing a Postgraduate Commerce degree in International Business.

Deans Office, Otago Business School

Division of Commerce

Email: [viena.faiva@otago.ac.nz](mailto:viena.faiva@otago.ac.nz)

Cell Phone: 021 279 0914



*Bula Vinaka*

Jekope Ramala Maiono also works part time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce.

Maiono is of Fijian descent and our other Pacific Student Support Facilitator. He is responsible for all first-year Pacific students in the division.

Maiono is a University of Otago Commerce graduate, also studying a PHD degree in the Division of Humanities.

Deans Office, Otago Business School

Division of Commerce

Email: [jekope.maiono@otago.ac.nz](mailto:jekope.maiono@otago.ac.nz)

Cell Phone: 021 279 0871



## Student Feedback

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We encourage your feedback. This can be in the form of contacting staff, participating in course evaluation surveys and communicating with class representatives. Continual improvements will be made to this course based in part on student feedback.

### **Class Representatives**

The class (or student) representative system is an avenue for encouraging communication and consultation between staff and students. It provides you with a vehicle for communicating your views on the teaching and delivery of the paper and provides staff with an opportunity to communicate information and gain constructive feedback from students. It contributes to the development of a sense of community within a department and it adds a further dimension to the range of support services offered to students.

Volunteers for the role of class representatives will be called early in the semester. The OUSA invites all class representatives to a training session, conducted by OUSA, about what it means to be a class representative and some of the possible procedures for dealing with issues that arise. They also provide information on the services that OUSA offers and the role OUSA can play in solving problems that may occur. The OUSA provides support to class representatives during the semester. Departmental staff will also meet with class representatives during the semester to discuss general issues or matters they wish to have considered.

Your class representative's name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard early in the semester.

### **Concerns about the Course**

We hope you will feel comfortable coming to talk to us if you have a concern about the course. The Course Co-ordinator will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have. Alternatively, you can report your concerns to the Class Representative who will follow up with departmental staff. If, after making approaches via these channels, you do not feel that your concerns have been addressed, there are University channels that may aid resolution. For further advice or more information on these, contact the departmental administrator or head of department.

## Disclaimer

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While every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified in class and via Blackboard. Students are encouraged to check Blackboard regularly. It is the student's responsibility to be informed.