Engineering Tripos Part IIB, 4C5: Design Case Studies, 2026-27

Module Leader

Prof. N Crilly [1]

Lecturers

Prof. J Clarkson and Prof. N Crilly [2]

Timing and Structure

Lent term. 16 lecture slots, including lectures, group discussion and time for coursework. Assessment: 100% coursework. Lectures and discussions will be recorded.

Aims

The aims of the course are to:

- illustrate the multi-disciplinary nature of engineering design
- explore this multi-disciplinarity through diverse case studies.

Objectives

As specific objectives, by the end of the course students should be able to:

- demonstrate the skills and knowledge listed under each coursework element.

Content

Design approaches and systems approaches are central to invention and innovation. This is true not only in engineering, but also across a broad range of sectors and roles, including management, strategy and policy. The course supports students develop design and systems skills related to identifying requirements, developing solutions and demonstrating the value of those solutions.

The focus is on stakeholder engagement, with students working to understand what key stakeholders require and how designs can be developed to satisfy those requirements. Such stakeholder-focussed activities are central to many professional roles, including consulting practices.

The course is based on two projects. Each project will occupy eight lecture slots, with approximately two slots for each project being used for coursework activities. Notes or slides summarising the main points for each project will be made available.

Coursework

There will be a coursework exercise linked to each project.

Coursework	Format	Due date & marks
Consumer Product The purpose of this project is to expose students to a research and development process for a design concept focussed on recreational use (sports, hobbies and pastimes). Learning objectives: After completing this coursework, students should be able to • research, analyse and describe the needs of users in specific product usage scenarios • analyse, develop and justify decisions about product form and function in relation to user preferences and branding constraints • analyse, develop and justify decisions about product form and function in relation to principles of physical and cognitive ergonomics.	One individual report, anonymously marked	Approximatel date TBD) [30/60]
Industrial System The purpose of this project is to expose students to the complete design process for an inhaler test machine. Learning objectives: After completing this coursework, students should be able to • analyse and develop functional requirements for multi-disciplinary systems • identify solution principles and components from catalogues, and combine them to fulfil system requirements • identify and analyse risks associated with the development and delivery of multi-disciplinary systems.	Two individual reports. Anonymously marked	Approximatel (exact date T [30/60]

Booklists

Please refer to the Booklist for Part IIB Courses for references to this module, this can be found on the associated Moodle course.

Examination Guidelines

Please refer to Form & conduct of the examinations [3].

UK-SPEC

This syllabus contributes to the following areas of the UK-SPEC [4] standard:

Toggle display of UK-SPEC areas.

GT1

Develop transferable skills that will be of value in a wide range of situations. These are exemplified by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Higher Level Key Skills and include problem solving, communication, and working with others, as well as the effective use of general IT facilities and information retrieval skills. They also include planning self-learning and improving performance, as the foundation for lifelong learning/CPD.

IA1

Apply appropriate quantitative science and engineering tools to the analysis of problems.

IA2

Demonstrate creative and innovative ability in the synthesis of solutions and in formulating designs.

KU1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of essential facts, concepts, theories and principles of their engineering discipline, and its underpinning science and mathematics.

KU2

Have an appreciation of the wider multidisciplinary engineering context and its underlying principles.

D1

Wide knowledge and comprehensive understanding of design processes and methodologies and the ability to apply and adapt them in unfamiliar situations.

D2

Understand customer and user needs and the importance of considerations such as aesthetics.

D4

Ability to generate an innovative design for products, systems, components or processes to fulfil new needs.

D6

Manage the design process and evaluate outcomes.

E1

Ability to use fundamental knowledge to investigate new and emerging technologies.

E3

Ability to apply mathematical and computer based models for solving problems in engineering, and the ability to assess the limitations of particular cases.

E4

Understanding of and ability to apply a systems approach to engineering problems.

P3

Understanding of contexts in which engineering knowledge can be applied (e.g. operations and management, technology, development, etc).

P4

Understanding use of technical literature and other information sources.

US1

A comprehensive understanding of the scientific principles of own specialisation and related disciplines.

US3

An understanding of concepts from a range of areas including some outside engineering, and the ability to apply them effectively in engineering projects.

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Links
[1] mailto:nc266@eng.cam.ac.uk
[2] mailto:pjc10, nc266
[3] https://teaching26-27.eng.cam.ac.uk/content/form-conduct-examinations
[4] https://teaching26-27.eng.cam.ac.uk/content/uk-spec