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# Teaching Statistics in Higher Education - A Day Workshop

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For some time a statistics team, working on behalf of the LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network and based at the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) Centre for Statistical Education at Nottingham Trent University, has been planning a day workshop, initially intended as an induction for new lecturers.

The team had to recognise, however, that there are relatively few new lecturers in statistics. Thus the aim of the workshop was widened to also encourage experienced lecturers to share their expertise and ideas. The combination made sense in that any new staff attending could hear of best practice from many sources, and not just from the LTSN team. During September two pilot workshops were held at Sheffield Hallam University and at Coventry University, both with an attendance of around a dozen. The programme consisted of four sessions:

- An introduction to the LTSN and the issues facing statistics teaching in HE by Neville Davies, Director of the RSS Centre for Statistical Education;
- A bird's eye view of what was reasonably known about the learning of statistics, by Warren Gilchrist, an LTSN Consultant;
- A discussion of the teaching of statistics, led by Neville Hunt of Coventry University for the Sheffield Hallam-based workshop and Margaret Rangelcroft of Sheffield Hallam University for the Coventry-based workshop;
- The final session looked at issues of assessment and was led by Peter Holmes, also an LTSN Consultant.

All four sessions involved a valuable sharing of ideas from the participants as well as those from the team. The workshop also included an exhibition of teaching materials of many types that had been collected from a number of universities. The feedback from both pilot workshops was very encouraging. The team is now examining the comments in detail and seeking ways to improve the course for the future. The next stage is to run the workshop at strategic centres around the UK, so that all those who teach statistics might have an opportunity to attend. The first of these will take place at the RSS offices in London on 14 November - see programme overleaf.

As a further development, the materials of the workshop are being developed for web use. This will provide a resource for lecturers and also a distance learning form of the workshop. The materials for the workshops are reaching the stage that they may well be developed into a number of more specialised versions. The RSS policy is that it is moving towards facilitating a system of continuing professional development (CPD), and these LTSN workshops will help to provide contributions to CPD for both Chartered Statisticians, fellows of the Society and lecturers of statistics at UK Higher Education Institutions.

The life of a lecturer these days is one of many pressures. The feedback from the pilot workshops emphasised the value to lecturers of just spending a day standing back and reflecting with colleagues on our teaching. When the Workshop is down your way do try and join us.