
Recent activities and future plans

Invitation to tender for learning and teaching projects in Mathematics

The LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network offers funding for a limited number of projects investigating learning and teaching in mathematics to commence in February 2004. Up to £5000 is available for any one project, and collaborative applications are welcome. Project proposals will be expected to:

- summarise the aims, timescale and expected outcomes of the project;
- have relevance to a wide cross-section of practitioners in the discipline;
- include plans showing collaboration with the Network in the dissemination of the results of the project.

The Network is also keen to enlarge its portfolio of materials, rooted in the discipline, for staff development. It is looking to develop a range of paper/electronic materials for its induction course for new lecturers and as a support for Mathematics departments. Additionally there is a growing need for formalised CPD in HE teaching generally. Although the LTSN Generic Centre has recently produced a series on this, subject-specific materials are needed to support CPD in mathematics. The Network, therefore, would also be happy to consider proposals on the design and development of such materials.

Applications, on no more than four sides of A4, should be submitted by Friday 12 December. Successful applicants will be notified in January 2004.

Update on projects and workshops

The website www.mathcentre.ac.uk is now live and provides a range of services designed to support any student, no matter what their subject or discipline, in their learning of mathematics. For staff, there are links to individual MathsTEAM case studies and downloadable worksheets for maths support centres. A preview edition of a new CD-ROM to help students making the transition from school to university is now available. Would you like to be among the first to see it and give your views? **mathtutor Algebra** is part of the FDTL4 project run by the University of Leeds with Loughborough and Coventry Universities and the EBS Trust, and is closely linked with the mathcentre website offering a complementary service to students and staff. If you would like to help with piloting the disk, or if you would like to know more about it and the project, please contact Janice Gardner on 020 7613 5082.

See opposite for news of the *Day Break* project.

The *staff development project* is publishing distance learning material on the teaching of statistics – this is described on later pages, as are the results of two operational research projects. Members of the *Mathematicians as Educational Co-Researchers project* met as a working party within the Undergraduate Mathematics Teaching Conference. Their deliberations will be written up as part of the proceedings of that conference as well as in their final report.

A series of guides and briefings on *Sharing Good Practice in Assessment* in Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research are on course to be completed at the end of November and copies will be circulated to all departments after that. Two new publications are already available in our occasional papers series – see 04/03 and 05/03 in the list below. They have already been sent to your departmental contact.

Almost 40 people attended our induction course for new lecturers in September, and the resources from this can be found at <http://ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk/workshops/induction2003/>. Look out also for resources from the *Sharing Projects Practice* workshop which will have taken place by the time you read this.

Publications

The following publications can be ordered at any time. There is no charge for the leaflets or for individual copies of the booklets. Full details can be found at <http://ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk/publications>

Facts and Formulae leaflet: bulk copies available free of charge for distribution to students

Algebra Refresher, and Calculus Refresher: Bulk copies can be purchased for distribution to students. The current cost is £125 for 100 copies, payable in advance.

Learning and Teaching in Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research

Occasional series ISSN 1476-1378.

- 2/01 Guidelines for Introducing Groupwork in Undergraduate Mathematics
- 3/01 Good Practice in the Provision of Mathematics Support Centres (second edition)
- 4/03 Flexible Learning in Statistics (NEW)
- 5/03 Widening Participation in Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research (NEW)

LTSN MathsTEAM publications	ISBN no.
Diagnostic testing for mathematics	07044 23731
Maths support for students	07044 23758
Maths for engineering and science	07044 2374X

Note from the Director

Since the advent of the White Paper on Higher Education, a number of important developments have, or will have, an impact on our activities. One of the most important developments for the MSOR community is the proposal to set up new HEFCE-funded Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), with around £350 million being available for distribution over the next 5 or so years. A large CETL will receive £500,000 per year for five years together with the opportunity to bid for capital funds of up to £2 million (this funding represents nearly twice the budget for the LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network!)

Depending on size each university will be able to submit 1-3 bids for these funds. For the health of our discipline it is imperative that colleagues prepare bids to be considered by their internal university review panels. Bids may range from thematic to discipline based. It would appear that some universities are already at an advanced stage in preparing bids, while others are barely aware of this opportunity. There has been wide consultation on CETLs, with the LTSN expressing serious concerns about some aspects. Colleagues should therefore follow the final report carefully for variations from our current understanding - see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tinits/cetl>

My colleagues and I would be very willing to discuss any planned proposals with you.

The second development is the new Higher Education Academy (HEA), which will incorporate among other groupings the LTSN, ILT and FDTL. Professor Leslie Wagner, former Vice-chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University, is the interim Chair. The HEA will be legally owned by UUK and SCOP, is due to be formally incorporated in the near future, and will seek charity status. Over the next year we expect a review to take place but the expectation is that an enhanced LTSN will develop with a continuing focus on discipline-based support. Future developments will be reported in this newsletter, on our website and on <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>

We at the LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network very much look forward to working with you as part of our Network in these new developments.

John Blake, November 2003

More about the Day Break Programme



Throughout the year, Vic Barnett and Brad Payne have designed and put into operation for the LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network the first phase of the **Day Break Programme** of full-day regional courses and workshops for University staff in Mathematics, Statistics and OR – with the aims of

- bringing new research developments into teaching
- reinforcing basic technical knowledge and skills
- improving classroom practice and technique

Following a nationwide enquiry to determine areas of interest, this *first phase* of the Day Break programme consisted of courses on the following themes:

- Risk-Based Decision Analysis with Applications in Industry, Healthcare, the Environment, etc
- Teaching Finance as a Statistics Course
- Teaching Multivariate Analysis; What are Lectures for?
- Virtual Learning Environments: Potential & Pitfalls

The courses each attracted about 12-15 participants who widely acclaimed the courses in the follow-up appraisals.

Accordingly a *second phase* of about 4-6 Day Break courses is planned: the first five agreed courses are:

- **Undergraduate Mathematics Teaching and Research Frontiers** - John Blake and Chris Budd, University of Birmingham, 28 January
- **Service Teaching Principles, Practice and Politics:**

Teaching Statistics to Non-mathematicians – Neville Hunt and Sidney Tyrrell at Coventry University, 18 February

- **Teaching OR in Business Courses** – University of Southampton, 30 March
- **Teaching Time Series Analysis** – Chris Chatfield at the RSS Offices in London, 14 April
- **Teaching Undergraduate Statistics using 'R'** – Charles Taylor, University of Leeds, 19 May

To help in the quest to mount courses which are of relevance and interest, **please continue to let us know** your needs and interests. In particular **let us have an early indication** if you wish to register for any of the above *second phase* courses.

You can contact Vic Barnett <vic.barnett@ntu.ac.uk> or Brad Payne <bradley.payne@ntu.ac.uk> phone 0115 848 4713 or you can register directly online at <http://ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk/daybreak>