

Response to School of Mathematics PPR

The School of Mathematics would like to thank the panel for its very positive report on the programmes it runs. In particular for their acknowledgement of the important role that is played by the part A personal tutoring system and the Maths Learning Support Centre in supporting student learning. Furthermore for acknowledging the work that members of the School have invested in developing material for the University's VLE.

The panel made six recommendations as to areas that the School needs to address. Addressing the first two points first, the School through its Teaching and Learning Committee (TALC) has initiated a review of its degree programmes so that it can understand the implications that recent changes to modules have made. This will be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the degree programmes and will form the basis for a review of the intended learning outcomes of the degree programmes. Mechanisms will also be put in place so that whenever changes to modules are considered at TALC the implication of the changes for the programmes is considered.

With regards to induction of part B and C students we have a number of mechanisms in place for dealing with this issue. These were perhaps not articulated well enough in our documentation for PPR. For students on the Loughborough-Shandong programme we have a dedicated induction process to introduce these students to Loughborough and to explain their options. We follow a similar procedure for any student that is inducted directly into our second year; in this case their personal tutor performs this process. All other part B and part C students choose their options at the end of the previous semester, with the opportunity of meeting their personal tutor to discuss their options, as many students in fact do. It is not possible for students to make their options choices on return to the University as the choices shape the timetable.

The lack of student engagement in lectures and its link to the availability of material on LEARN will be the focus of a study in the second semester of this academic year. Specifically the attendance at one of our core modules, Calculus, will be monitored as will access of the LEARN pages. This will provide us with important insight into this crucial issue.

The School's primary mechanism for ensuring quality enhancement of its degree programmes is the work of its TALC. The TALC reviews all external examiners' reports as well as student feedback and the results of annual programme review. As a direct result of these feedback mechanisms the School has modified both the content of individual modules and the structure of its degree programmes in recent years. There are also a series of seminars run by the Maths Education Centre on how we teach mathematics, which are open to anyone from the School to attend. Furthermore the School as a whole has been involved in a number of projects looking at the use of novel teaching techniques in the delivery of mathematics.

The final point raised is the involvement of partner Departments in the shaping of joint honours degree programmes. In many ways this is something that we have already started to address through the way we worked in further developing the Financial Mathematics programme. We aim to use our experience of this work in shaping our other degree programmes.