

## LTC15D006

**Title:** Update on the number of modules delivered with low student enrolment  
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**Date:** 12-10-15  
**Circulation:** LTC – 21 October 2015  
**Agenda:** LTC15A001  
**Version:** Final  
**Status:** Open

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### Issue

An update on the number of modules running with low module enrolment, and to consider the appropriateness of the strategy to reduce this further.

### Recommendation

To receive a summary of the number of small modules delivered and consider what further action is required. In particular, members are asked whether the policy of requiring Faculty approval, based on the six categories listed, should continue in its present form, or with further refinement.

### Resource Implications

None

### Risk Implications

Low

### Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

### Timing of decisions

The outcome from the Committee will be reported to Senate in November and feed into the annual course and module update process.

### Further Information

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### Background

Work started in 2013/4 to identify those modules with low student enrolment. This was first raised as part of the Timetabling Group, where teaching of modules with a small number of

students enrolled on them was considered to be adding to the complexities of timetabling and demands on rooms.

Senate discussed this in June 2014 and approved:

“a strategy for reducing the number of modules running with small student numbers by:

- reviewing all modules due to run in 2014/5 with 5 or fewer students enrolled with a view to wherever possible not running them and promoting alternative choices to students.
- commencing the 2014/5 course and module update exercise immediately working on the presumption that any module which ran in 2013/14, or runs in 2014/15 with 10 or fewer students should not be offered in 2015/16 and re-designing courses accordingly.”

2013/4 data were circulated to Schools via Associate Deans (LTQ) in Autumn 2014 with a remit that only those small modules which were approved by the Associate Deans would continue. Reasons why the modules were permitted to continue fell into one of the following six categories:

- a) A new course has been established and is in the first three years of running and there is a credible business plan which will ensure that enrolments will have reached at least 11 students on all modules by its third year.
- b) A particular, but time-limited, issue affected recruitment to a course which has meant a dip below 11 enrolments on some modules, but there is a clear and convincing explanation of how the numbers will be returned to above the threshold within two years.
- c) The module is part of a specialist research training Masters programme that is currently part of doctoral training provision accredited by a research council
- d) The module is a compulsory part of a course that is currently accredited by a professional body (and there are more than 20 students enrolled overall on the course)
- e) A robust business case can be made for the viability of the module. For example a specialist course that shares 80% of their teaching in well-populated modules and where there are two less well attended course-specific modules that create the specialist course. Ceasing those two modules would thus cause the loss of the course, the students and entire course fee.
- f) The module is commissioned and has been priced accordingly.

## **Discussion**

The tracking of ‘small’ modules across years is not straightforward, as modules dip in and out of the low-enrolment banding, and new modules come on stream with the introduction of new courses. In order to get an overview of the situation, the attached document shows modules which are recorded on SITS as having timetabled events and have between 1 and 10 students enrolled on them.

The data for 2013/4 and 2014/5 are actual enrolments, whereas the data for 2015/6 consist of current enrolments *to date*. There may be further enrolments for Semester 2 to come,

particularly for PG modules, which may decrease the number of small modules. However, those modules with no students currently enrolled on them are excluded, but some of these may enrol a small number of students for Semester 2, thereby adding to the number of small modules. Therefore the enrolments for this year should be considered as provisional and are still subject to a small amount of fluctuation.

The reduction in the number of small modules across the University has not been as high as envisaged. Members are asked to consider whether a continuation of the current strategy is likely to yield further reductions, or whether some refinements are necessary. For example, the small module banding could be raised to 15 students and below, rather than the current 10.

### **Attachments**

A table showing the number of modules with 10 or less students, by School, level and year, is attached.

**TABLE: Summary of modules with a student enrolment of 10 or less.**

SSF	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6		
							Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
DEV	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
ECO	0	3	3	0	4	4		6	6
EDU	4	9	13	1	11	11	3	11	14
LAW	4	11	15	4	13	17	3	10	13
NBS	0	3	3	0	6	6			0
PSY	1	0	1	0	3	3		4	4
SWK	0	2	2	0	6	6		7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>

HUM	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6		
							Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
AMA	12	21	33	18	21	39	9	15	24
HIS	9	12	21	11	13	24	7	15	22
HUM	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	3
LDC	4	15	19	9	22	31	8	21	29
PPL	23	21	44	24	18	42	24	20	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>122</b>

SCI	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6		
							Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
BIO	2	6	8	0	5	5	0	8	8
CHE	3	2	5	0	2	2	0	2	2
CMP	3	6	9	2	3	5	0	5	5
ENG		0	0	0	2	2	2	1	3
ENV	3	5	8	1	3	4	0	2	2
MTH		4	4	0	1	1	0	0	0
NAT			0	2	1	3	3	0	3
PHA			0	1	0	1	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>

FMH	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6		
							Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
HSC	18	23	41	15	13	28	13	12	25
MED		6	6		5	5		4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>

**NOTES**

1. Excludes Modules with no timetabled teaching events  
Small modules which are co-taught and in combination are greater than 10  
Modules with 0 students enrolled on them
2. For 2015/6, some enrolments for Sem 2 may not yet be recorded.
3. Current School structures used for each year.
4. NBS London ( 3 modules) removed from 2013/4 data