

LTC16D041

Title: Update on the number of modules delivered with low student enrolment
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Issue

To receive an update on the number of modules running with low module enrolment, adding the following new data to last year's report:

- a) Actual enrolments for 2015/6 and
- b) Provisional enrolments for 2016/7

Recommendation

This paper is for report only, to update LTC on the progress in reducing the number of modules with low enrolments, thereby increasing teaching efficiency.

To note

1. This information has been considered by Senate (9/11/16), where members welcomed the reduction in the overall number of modules with low enrolments, and endorsed the criteria for considering any approval of the continued delivery of small modules.
2. Associate Deans have been provided with a detailed list of low- enrolling modules for their Faculty for consideration/approval using the criteria outlined below.

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

This is for report only; actions arising from consideration of the data are already in train, in particular the review of 2016/7 modules as part of the module and course update process for 2017/8.

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; the data also feeds into Schools' consideration of their teaching strategies and efficiencies and in particular informs the annual course and module update process.

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.”

Since 2013/4 data have been provided to Associate Deans for consideration, with only those meeting the following criteria being approved:

- 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.

The Learning and Teaching Committee, at its [October 2015](#) meeting, resolved to retain the policy of requiring Faculty approval based on the six categories outlined in the paper.

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. It excludes those that have no students enrolled on them, or look to be largely non-classroom based (going by their titles), but these modules are included in the full list of modules supplied to Faculties.

The data for 2013/4, 2014/5 and 2015/6 are actual enrolments, whereas the data for 2016/7 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, and 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.** Also included are the provisional enrolments for 2015/6, along with the actual enrolments. For SSF, there was an increase in the number of 'small' modules from provisional to actual, and in the other Faculties there was a decrease between the provisional and actual enrolments. This may serve as a guide for this year's provisional data.

The data show a downward trend in the number of modules delivered with less than 11 students enrolled on them at a University level, but this masks increases in individual Schools. More could be done by Faculties, in particular HUM and SSF, in reducing these numbers further using initiatives such as combining content into larger modules and more team teaching. Associate Deans are encouraged to test the robustness of the arguments put forward for the continuation of modules, particularly those in categories (b) and (e) above.

Attachments

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

Summary of modules with a student enrolment of 10 or less from 2013/4 to 2016/7															
SSF	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6			2015/6			2016/7		
							Provisional			Actual			Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
DEV	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	3	1	0	1
ECO	0	3	3	0	4	4	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6
EDU	4	9	13	1	11	11	3	11	14	3	10	13	5	6	11
LAW	4	11	15	4	13	17	3	10	13	3	14	17	2	9	11
NBS	0	3	3	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	12	12	1	13	14
PSY	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	3	3
SWK	0	2	2	0	6	6	0	7	7	0	3	3	0	8	8
Total	9	28	37	5	43	47	7	39	46	6	52	58	9	45	54
HUM	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6			2015/6			2016/7		
							Provisional			Actual			Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
AMA	12	21	33	18	21	39	9	15	24	8	13	21	7	13	20
HIS	9	12	21	11	13	24	7	15	22	4	14	18	3	10	13
HUM	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	3	2	0	2	1	0	1
LDC	4	15	19	9	22	31	8	21	29	9	20	29	4	8	12
PPL	23	21	44	24	18	42	24	20	44	16	16	32	11	13	24
Total	49	70	119	63	76	139	50	72	122	39	63	102	26	44	70
SCI	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6			2015/6			2016/7		
							Provisional			Actual			Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
BIO	2	6	8	0	5	5	0	8	8	0	6	6	0	1	1
CHE	3	2	5	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	2
CMP	3	6	9	2	3	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	1	4	5
ENG		0	0	0	2	2	2	1	3	2	0	2	1	0	1
ENV	3	5	8	1	3	4	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	3	3
MTH		4	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
NAT			0	2	1	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	0
PHA			0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2
Total	11	23	34	6	17	23	5	19	24	5	17	22	3	12	15
FMH	2013/4			2014/5			2015/6			2015/6			2016/7		
							Provisional			Actual			Provisional		
School	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total	UG	PGT	Total
HSC	18	23	41	15	13	28	13	12	25	26	9	35	10	6	16
MED		6	6		5	5	0	4	4	0	3	3		3	3
Total	18	29	47	15	18	33	13	16	29	26	12	38	10	9	19
Total	87	150	237	89	154	242	75	146	221	76	144	220	48	110	158
Language													23		23
NOTES															
1 Excludes	a) Modules with no timetabled teaching events;														
	b) Small modules which are co-taught and in combination are greater than 10														
	c) Modules with 0 students enrolled on them														
	d) Modules which were on the 'timetabled event' list, but are assumed to be largely non-classroom based (eg dissertations, placements) by their title.														
2 For 2016/7	Language modules have been reported separately at the bottom of the table														