

LTC14D097

Title: Moving to a 4 week Exam Season in 2015/16
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Issue

The move to a 4 week exam period is a central element of the New Academic Model. This paper, drawing on data from AQO, sets out the current numbers of exams (and Course Tests), and identifies the likely reductions in number of exams required to conform to either a 4 week or 5 week exam season in 2015/16.

Recommendation

LTC members are invited to consider the ADTP's report, and to discuss whether UEA should aim to move to a 4 or 5 week period in 2015/16.

Resource Implications

There are constraints on the number of exams which can be squeezed into a given period, and these need to be taken into consideration in any decision, along with the challenges in redesigning assessment regimes on courses that will be necessary to produce the kind of reductions required to fit into a 4 or 5 week exam season.

Risk Implications

There are risks associated with the move to 4/5 weeks which are outlined in the attached paper.

Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics. However, any move to a 4/5 week period will need to take into account the capacity to include 'individual arrangements' for students with SpLDs.

Timing of decisions

This is an update for LTC – the report contains no recommendations for approval, but the decision on whether to move to a 4 or 5 week exam period in 2015/16 needs to be made as soon as possible, and LTC may wish to take a view on when this decision can/should be made.

Further Information

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Background

The paper provides an insight into the challenges associated with a move to a 4 or 5 week exam period and LTC should take this data into account when making a decision about whether to move to 4 or 5 week exam season in 2015/16.

Discussion

The paper is intended to inform LTC discussion around the move to a 4/5 week exam period. LTC may wish to defer a final decision until its next meeting in March 2015.

Update on the move to a 4 week Exam Period

This is intended to provide University LTC with an update on the move to a 4 week exam period as part of the drive to free-up 2 extra weeks for other activities that have a more positive impact on the student experience and employability. The data contained in this update has been provided by colleagues in the LTS Assessments Office. The ADTP wishes to thank AQO staff for their assistance.

AQO estimate that we will have 27,783 sittings in the Main Series of exams in summer 2015, including exam resits. Based on last year's average of 400 sittings a slot this gives us one spare day in the schedule (for contingency). If we compressed the schedule to 450 sittings a slot (the best estimate of our capacity with currently available rooms without impacting on Individual Arrangements) we almost fit into 5 weeks. Looking at the trend in reduction of sittings, the first year of BIM led to a **6.9%** reduction and this year looks like yielding a **4%** reduction (See Figure 1).

In order to reduce the sittings further in 2015-6 to schedule them into 4 weeks, with the maximum of 450 sittings a slot, we would require a further 19% reduction in sittings.

In 2014's main exam series we ran **137** different exams in the last week and **258** in the last two weeks of the series out of the total of **595** exams run overall. The number of exams held are not even over the weeks of the exam series because we put most of the large modules at the start of the series, so we ran less in the earlier weeks (less modules but a roughly equal number of sittings).

If we had wanted to reduce last year's exams to fit a 5 week period, this corresponds to 23% (137/595) of exams needing to have been decommissioned or 43% (258/595) to fit to 4 weeks.

Last year (2013/14) we ended up not running venues at full capacity. This was partially a conscious decision to try to ensure the first days of the series ran more smoothly, by purposely not filling every room, but also as a result of new developments in SITS that allowed a more even distribution within the available weeks. It was also a result of attempting not to schedule more than one exam a day for students, which naturally spread out clashing modules through the available days. Obviously a reduction in exam days will challenge this target for students' timetables.

We averaged 400 students sitting in each of the 72 slots that we ran in summer 2014 (29,000 in total). This could comfortably rise to 450 per slot before problems with resources start to affect delivery. Above this figure and we start to have problem housing our IAs. With approximately 60 slots available for a 5 week series and around 50 for a 4 week one, this means capacity for 27,000 and 22,500 sittings respectively.

Of the 595 exams run in 2013/4, 181 (30.4%) were Semester 1 taught modules, so if these were targeted, most of the reductions could be made just from these modules. The challenge, however, lies in ensuring that a reduction in exams for autumn semester modules does not result in a corresponding rise in Course Tests.

In Summary

Based on this year's projected figures for sittings and keeping the current level of room usage and intensity of the exam series would require a further reduction of 13.6% in sittings to fit a 5 week series and 28% for a 4 week series. Pushing capacities and increasing risk, this could be reduced to a reduction of 2.8% for a 5 week series or 19% in sittings for a 4 week series.

The DUS LTS is coordinating a Learning and Teaching Strategy meeting scheduled for 25 February, which will include the PVC Academic, the ADTP/ADLTE, Assoc Deans, and School Directors of Learning and Teaching. The agenda for this meeting will include:

- Discussion around the move to a four week assessment period and ideas on how to reduce the number of exams to get there.
- Discussion around the related issue of the number of course tests happening in Autumn week 12.
- How to maximise the value of the two weeks released back into the teaching timetable by having a shortened assessment period.

Main Exam Series - Planning of Duration of Series				
Total estimated first sits	27610			
Total estimated resits	173			
Total estimated sittings in main series	27783			
Number of slots needed based on last year's room usage (400 sittings a slots)	69.5			
Number of slots needed based on compressed room usage (450 sittings a slot)	61.7			
72 slots = 6 weeks				
60 = 5 weeks				
50 = 4 weeks				
Therefore, based on current enrolments, if we schedule based on room usage last year, we will have a spare day in the timetable.				
If we compressed room usage, we could almost fit the exams into 5 weeks.				
		Change	Change%	
Total sittings 2012-3	31107			
Total sittings 2013-4	28954	2153	6.92%	
Est sittings 2014-5	27783	1171	4.04%	
				Slots Slots compressed
Projected sittings 2015-6 (-4%)	26659	1124		66.65 59.24
Projected sittings 2015-6 (-6.92%)	25860	1923		64.65 57.47
Projected sittings 2015-6 (to make 4 weeks)	22504	5279	19.00%	56.26 50.01

Figure 1
Estimates for Room Usage for Main Exam Series 2014-15

Note:

See appendices for more detailed data on number of Exams and Course Tests and the number of sittings of both.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Number of exams in 2013 & 2014
- Appendix 2: Exam Sittings in 2013 and 2014
- Appendix 3: Number of Course Tests 2012/13 and 2013/14
- Appendix 4: Course Test Sittings 2012/13 and 2013/14

Adam Longcroft (ADTP)
January 2015

Appendix 1
Number of exams in 2013 & 2014

Count of Exams - 2013	Level of Module					Grand Total
	0	1	2	3	M	
AMS		3	11	10		24
ART		6	7	7		20
BIO		7	12	18		37
CHE	5	4	8	7	5	29
CMP	2	6	18	12	8	46
DEV		3	7	3	14	27
ECO		5	13	5	13	36
EDU		5	6	8		19
ENV		10	20	13	16	59
FTM		2	1	2		5
HIS		2	27	11		40
LAW		1	19	8	2	30
LCS		14	7	2		23
LDC		2	5	5		12
MED	1	2		2		5
MTH	1	7	11	10	10	39
NBS		5	14	14	22	55
PHA		9	15	15	4	43
PHI		2	10	5		17
PSI		2	13	12	2	29
PSY		2	3	5		10
SWK		1		1		2
<i>Grand Total</i>	9	100	227	175	96	607

Count of Exams - 2014	Level of Module						Grand Total
	0	1	2	3	4*	M	
AMS			11	9	3		23
ART			6	9	7		22
BIO		2	12	17	6		37
CHE	7	3	8	7	4	5	34
CMP	2	2	19	15	6	8	52
DEV			6	3	4	14	27
ECO			10	5	4	16	35
EDU			7	9	4		20
ENG					2		2
ENV		1	16	12	7	9	45
FTM				1	2		3
HIS			29	12	2		43
LAW			15	8	4	3	30
LCS			6	2	7		15
LDC			5	1	1		7
MED	1	2		3	2		8
MTH	1		12	10	7	11	41
NBS		1	14	14	5	27	61
NSC			4				4
PHA		1	14	17	4	4	40

<i>PHI</i>			9	2	2		13	
<i>PSI</i>			11	11	2	3	27	
<i>PSY</i>			3	3	2		8	
<i>SWK</i>				1	1		2	
<i>Grand Total</i>		11	12	217	171	88	100	599

Count of Exams - 2013	Level of Module					<i>Grand Total</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>M</i>	
Faculty						
<i>HUM</i>	0	33	81	54	2	170
<i>FMH</i>	1	2	0	2	0	5
<i>SCI</i>	8	43	84	75	43	253
<i>SSF</i>	0	22	62	44	51	179
<i>Grand Total</i>	9	100	227	175	96	607

Count of Exams - 2014	Level of Module					<i>M</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>		
Faculty							
<i>HUM</i>	0	0	77	47	26	3	153
<i>FMH</i>	1	2	4	3	2	0	12
<i>SCI</i>	10	9	81	78	36	37	251
<i>SSF</i>	0	1	55	43	24	60	183
<i>Grand Total</i>	11	12	217	171	92	100	599

Appendix 2
Exam Sittings in 2013 and 2014

Count of Sittings - 2013	Level (of Module)					<i>Grand Total</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>M</i>	
School						
<i>AMS</i>		289	267	99		655
<i>ART</i>		101	85	84		270
<i>BIO</i>		827	1006	544	5	2382
<i>CHE</i>	440	489	653	258	49	1889
<i>CMP</i>	117	551	865	318	41	1892
<i>DEV</i>		210	240	84	127	661
<i>ECO</i>		835	1570	433	994	3832
<i>EDU</i>		240	112	121		473
<i>ENV</i>		945	800	306	84	2135
<i>FTM</i>		89	39	21		149
<i>HIS</i>		372	836	153		1361
<i>LAW</i>		153	1036	240	8	1437
<i>LCS</i>		145	117	71		333
<i>LDC</i>		414	298	65		777
<i>MED</i>	75	342		282	12	711
<i>MTH</i>		566	904	327	68	1865
<i>MUS</i>		3	3	2		8
<i>NAT</i>		170	101	12		283
<i>NBS</i>		956	2398	1198	871	5423
<i>PHA</i>		462	769	856	396	2483
<i>PHI</i>		77	269	46	4	396
<i>PSI</i>		288	334	155	16	793
<i>PSY</i>		237	300	242		779
<i>SCI</i>		2	26	49	3	80
<i>SWK</i>		18		17		35
<i>Grand Total</i>	632	8781	13028	5983	2678	31102

Count of Sitzings - 2014	Level (of Student)							Grand Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	M	
AMS		293	218	102				613
ART		112	66	86			2	266
BIO		891	1063	585			11	2550
CHE	274	432	580	413	102			1801
CMP	140	557	651	495	9		42	1894
DEV		236	153	141			166	696
ECO		583	1223	833			895	3534
EDU		158	146	244				548
ENV		740	374	328	11		60	1513
FTM		124	14	20				158
HIS		299	834	165			3	1301
LAW		534	389	455			105	1483
LCS		155	128	69				352
LDC		220	360	27				607
MED	48	338				145	8	539
MTH		558	543	535	80		8	1724
MUS				1				1
NAT		126	134	89				349
NBS		911	1750	1651			722	5034
NSC		2	174					176
PHA		555	426	783	444			2208
PHI		99	134	7			2	242
PSI		272	282	140			20	714
PSY		242	341	127				710
SWK		18		23				41
Grand Total	462	8455	9983	7319	646	145	2045	29055

Appendix 3

Number of Course Tests 2012/13 and 2013/14

Count of CTs - 2012-3		Count of CTs - 2013-4	
School	CTs	School	CTs
AHP	6	BIO	31
BIO	25	CHE	38
CHE	55	CMP	28
CMP	32	DEV	5
DEV	6	ECO	29
ECO	32	ENG	3
EDU	1	ENV	13
ENG	1	HIS	2
ENV	20	HSC	3
HIS	2	HUM	1
LAW	8	LAW	8
LCS	116	LCS	136
MED	3	LDC	1
MTH	2	MED	2
MUS	2	MTH	2
NBS	17	NAT	5
PHA	23	NBS	32
PHI	5	NSC	18
PSI	11	PHA	27
PSY	2	PHI	6
SCI	6	PSI	13
SWK	4	PSY	2
Grand Total	379	RSC	9
		SWK	4
		Grand Total	418

Count of CTs - 2012-3

Faculty	CTs
HUM	136
FMH	9
SCI	164
SSF	70
Grand Total	379

Count of CTs - 2013-4

Faculty	CTs
HUM	159
FMH	32
SCI	147
SSF	80
Grand Total	418

Appendix 4
Course Test Sitzings 2012/13 and 2013/14

Sittings of CTs			
School	2012-3 Numbers	School	2013-4 Numbers
AHP	322	BIO	1845
BIO	1560	CHE	1203
CHE	3686	CMP	757
CMP	748	DEV	202
DEV	278	ECO	2385
ECO	2666	ENG	43
EDU	33	ENV	574
ENG	17	HIS	19
ENV	1001	HSC	156
HIS	18	HUM	104
LAW	238	LAW	264
LCS	2215	LCS	2360
MED	203	LDC	14
MTH	209	MED	32
MUS	21	MTH	194
NBS	3082	NAT	50
PHA	1366	NBS	4072
PHI	115	NSC	769
PSI	259	PHA	1710
PSY	238	PHI	259
SCI	53	PSI	386
SWK	104	PSY	181
Grand Total	18432	RSC	473
		SWK	77
		Grand Total	18129