



Mathematical Sciences HE Curriculum Innovation Project Update

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On the web: You can get updates from this project by visiting <http://mathstore.ac.uk/hestem>, by reading Peter Rowlett's blog at <http://mathshe.wordpress.com> or by listening to audio updates, including project leaders speaking about their projects, via a podcast at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/mathshe>



In January 2011 we ran a Mathematics HE Summit at the University of Birmingham. This brought together Heads of Mathematics or their representatives from 25 universities offering mathematics degrees (about half of those in England and Wales) as well as Education representatives from the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, the Royal Statistical Society, the Operational Research Society, the Council for the Mathematical Sciences and others. The Summit provided a day of debate, provocative presentations and discussion which was captured by a group of volunteer notetakers. The findings will be written into a published report and used when planning the third call for funding from the Mathematical Sciences HE Curriculum Innovation Project (see page 17).

Projects funded by the first Mathematical Sciences HE Curriculum Innovation funding call have now submitted their interim reports and all five are on track. Second call projects are getting underway. Here I describe two first call projects which seem relevant to this issue of Connections and address flexible learning.

A Pilot for a Shared On-line Statistics Advisory Service.

Project Leader: Dr. Alun Owen, Loughborough University.

Some HE institutions provide an appointments-based Statistics Advisory Service (SAS) targeted at final year and postgraduate students. However, many HE institutions do not provide a SAS, possibly due to lack of statistically qualified personnel, financial resources or lack of direct evidence of demand. Where resourcing is an issue, an alternative that institutions could consider is a shared SAS resource, which could be provided via an on-line learning space, such as Elluminate (see www.illuminate.com). This project would pilot such a shared SAS resource, in order to assess the practical and pedagogical issues involved, and the potential demand for such a service. Appointments started in January and data collection and plans for dissemination of findings are underway.

If you want to learn more about how this can be done, we are offering a workshop "Providing a mathematics and statistics support service using Elluminate (a virtual teaching and learning environment)" on 30 June 2011 at Loughborough University.

The Internet Librarian and Curator for Mathematics Videos.

Project Leader: Trevor Hawkes, Coventry University.

Confronted with the huge unstructured collection of such videos now on the internet, it is hard for students to find what they are looking for and then to know whether it is relevant and reliable. As a small-scale, proof-of-concept pilot, this project will focus on a single topic (first-order ordinary differential equations) and organise the available resources into a structured and annotated repository that is quickly accessible through a user-friendly interface. It will target first-year undergraduates studying a number of STEM disciplines. A comprehensive search for online video material related to first-order differential equations has been carried out and the resources have been evaluated. The team are now working on the technical framework for presenting this information.