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Evaluation of Skills Training at the University of Bath: *starting from scratch!*

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Multiple approaches

- Skills programme planning survey/
consultation
- Input – monitoring provision
- Outputs – attendance, workshop evaluations,
non-attendance
- Outcomes – survey looking at change since
attending workshops



Planning survey/consultation

- Baseline survey – Feb 2008
- Questionnaire sent to all students (BOS)
- Focus groups
- Telephone Interviews with part time/distance
- 'Interviews' with Directors of Studies



Survey aims

- Provide a quantitative and qualitative baseline on:
 - Awareness of JSS/skills agenda
 - Awareness of provision at Bath
 - Perceived quality and quantity of provision
 - Current take-up of provision
 - Requirements/ gaps in provision
- Benchmark – both internally and externally
- Identify training needs and use results to inform the development of generic skills provision at Bath
- Promote awareness of generic skills training for RPGs



Survey findings

- 14% response rate (n=140)
- 56% had not discussed development needs with supervisor
- 29% were aware of JSS prior to survey
- 69% felt they needed more training – particularly in Career Management (81% had not taken up existing careers workshops)
- JSS and skills agenda should be made more accessible
- Requirements of part time students should be better met
- Careers sessions should be more focussed on PGRs



Survey findings

- All major conclusions have had action against them, e.g.:
 - New centralised skills programme from 08/09
 - Bespoke careers courses
 - Training Needs Analysis materials and promotion
 - Promotion among academic staff
 - Specific provision for part timers



Evaluating the skills programme

- Inputs/attendance rates
- Standard workshop evaluations
- Long term evaluation
- Non attendance survey



Inputs – courses offered

Table A – Number of sessions offered, by JSS Skills Category

Most courses address more than one topic, so allocations to topic in this table are very general

Skills Category	Distinct sessions		All sessions, incl. repeats	
	No.	%	No.	%
A. Research Skills And Techniques	6	4%	11	4%
B. Research Environment	9	6%	13	5%
C. Research Management	37	26%	76	31%
D. Personal Effectiveness	18	13%	30	12%
E. Communication Skills	36	26%	69	28%
F. Networking And Team working	14	10%	14	6%
G. Career Management	20	14%	34	14%
All courses	140	100 %	247	100 %

Table B - Attendance at skills development sessions by Faculty/School 2008/9

Statistics reflect departmental structure prior to the division of the DEID. A description of the PGR population data is given in the Annex on the final page.

Outputs: attendance		PGR population at time of reporting		Total attendances						PGRs attending at least one event/course			
				No of places taken				% of all places taken					
		No.	%	Work- shops /events	e- Learning modules	all events /courses	ave no. per PGR	Work- shops /events	e- Learning modules	No.	%	% of dept's PGRs	ave no of sessions attended
Faculty of Engineering & Design	Architecture & Civil Engineering	44	3%	132	18	150	3.4	6%	12%	24	4%	55%	6
	Chemical Engineering	47	4%	152	6	158	3.4	7%	4%	28	5%	60%	5
	Electronic & Electrical Engineering	60	5%	252	21	273	4.6	11%	14%	36	7%	60%	7
	Mechanical Engineering	150	11%	430	25	455	3.0	19%	17%	80	15%	53%	5
	Faculty total	301	23%	966	70	1036	3.4	43%	46%	168	31%	56%	6
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Economics & International Development	44	3%	83	4	87	2.0	4%	3%	19	4%	43%	4
	Education	178	14%	71	21	92	0.5	3%	14%	25	5%	14%	3
	European Studies & Modern Languages	37	3%	63	3	66	1.8	3%	2%	16	3%	43%	4
	Psychology	26	2%	69	10	79	3.0	3%	7%	14	3%	54%	5
	Social & Policy Sciences	41	3%	77	1	78	1.9	3%	1%	18	3%	44%	4
	Faculty total	326	25%	363	39	402	1.2	16%	26%	92	17%	28%	4
Faculty of Science	Biology & Biochemistry	97	7%	110	11	121	1.2	5%	7%	51	9%	53%	2
	Chemistry	94	7%	113	2	115	1.2	5%	1%	37	7%	39%	3
	Computer Science	55	4%	55	4	59	1.1	2%	3%	28	5%	51%	2
	Mathematical Sciences	56	4%	203	0	203	3.6	9%	0%	43	8%	77%	4
	Pharmacy & Pharmacology	53	4%	122	3	125	2.4	5%	2%	29	5%	55%	4
	Physics	44	3%	105	5	110	2.5	5%	3%	25	5%	57%	4
	Faculty total	399	31%	708	25	733	1.8	32%	17%	213	40%	53%	3
School for Health		77	6%	57	5	62	0.8	3%	3%	27	5%	35%	2
School of Management		202	15%	145	12	157	0.8	6%	8%	37	7%	18%	4

Table C - Attendance by key targeted diversity groups 2006/7

		PGR population at time of reporting		Total attendances						PGRs attending at least one event/course			
				No of places taken			ave no. per PGR	% of all places taken		No.		% of group's PGRs	
		No.	%	Workshops /events	e- Learning modules	all events /courses		Workshops /events	e- Learning modules				
Funding body	Research Council Funded	337	26%	890	58	948	2.8	40%	38%	215	40%	64%	4
	Other funding source	968	74%	1349	93	1442	1.5	60%	62%	322	60%	33%	4
Year of study	1	349	27%	1230	85	1315	3.8	55%	56%	204	38%	58%	6
	2	285	22%	547	38	585	2.1	24%	25%	136	25%	48%	4
	3	261	20%	285	22	307	1.2	13%	15%	116	22%	44%	2
	4	193	15%	139	3	142	0.7	6%	2%	61	11%	32%	2
	5+	217	17%	38	3	41	0.2	2%	2%	20	4%	9%	2
Mode of Study	Full Time	827	63%	2033	107	2140	2.6	91%	71%	466	87%	56%	4
	Part Time	478	37%	206	44	250	0.5	9%	29%	71	13%	15%	3
Degree	PhD/PhD	1009	77%	2201	141	2342	2.3	98%	93%	512	95%	51%	4
	ProfD	295	23%	38	10	48	0.2	2%	7%	25	5%	8%	1
Nationality¹	Home EU	215	16%	371	33	404	1.9	17%	22%	96	18%	45%	4
	Home UK	645	49%	1013	77	1090	1.7	45%	51%	274	51%	42%	4
	Overseas	441	34%	848	3	851	1.9	38%	2%	116	22%	26%	7
Gender	Female	574	44%	1023	83	1106	1.9	46%	55%	255	47%	44%	4
	Male	731	56%	1216	68	1284	1.8	54%	45%	282	53%	39%	4
Declared disability²	No disability declared	1257	96%	2157	149	2306	1.8	96%	99%	515	96%	41%	4
	Disability declared	46	4%	82	2	84	1.8	4%	1%	22	4%	48%	3
Ethnicity³	White	906	69%	1430	116	1546	1.7	64%	77%	371	69%	41%	4
	Asian	229	18%	593	27	620	2.7	26%	18%	108	20%	47%	5
	Black	52	4%	68	2	70	1.3	3%	1%	14	3%	27%	5
	Not given/other	117	9%	148	6	154	1.3	7%	4%	44	8%	38%	3
Total - UoB		1305	100%	2239	151	2390	1.8	100%	100%	537	100%	41%	4

¹ does not include statistics for Islands and unknown nationality due to small numbers

² aggregated from 15 disability categories

³ aggregated from 21 ethnicity categories



Outputs: post- workshop evaluations

- Standard workshop evaluations
- 97% of PGRs either agree/strongly agree they were satisfied with the course overall
- 98% agreed that they would recommend the course to other PGRs
- Some evidence that compulsion to attend courses is correlated with more negative feedback



Non-attendance

- Students who had not attended any courses in 08/09 were asked why they did not engage
- Very low response rate
- 62% were not campus based and 48% were part time
- 38% were 1st years, 48% 2nd years and 14% 3rd year+
- Reasons for not attending (respondents could select several answers to this question). :
 - 33% not living in Bath or the UK
 - 24% felt there were no relevant courses for them
 - 24% felt they did not have enough time to undertake training
 - 19% had already undertaken training in previous years or as provided by their department



Outcomes: long term evaluations

- During summer after first year of programme (2-10 months after attendance on course)
- Survey (BOS) to participants on ≥ 0.5 day, experiential courses
- Participants asked to reflect on impact of the course on their effectiveness
- 111 responses



Outcomes: long term evaluations

- 64% of respondents had recommended the course they had attended to other students.
- 91% agreed 'attending this course was an effective use of my time'
- 87% agreed 'I have applied what I learnt on the course to my research or personal development'



Outcomes: long term evaluations

When asked **what the course made them most effective at**, respondents were...

...*most likely* to select:

- *Developing myself*
- *Managing my time*
- *Managing my research project*

...and *least likely* to select:

- *Developing or maintaining working relationships*
- *Teaching or supporting others*
- *Developing or maintaining networks*



Outcomes: long term evaluations

When asked **what the course has helped them to do**, respondents were..

...most likely to select:

- *become a better skilled researcher*
- *be more focussed and/or motivated*

...and were least likely to select:

- *be more aware of career opportunities available to me*
- *have better evidence of my skills e.g. for cv's, interviews.*



What helps?

- Good quality student information and records
- Automated systems e.g. SITS, Bristol Online Survey
- Budget for prizes/incentives!
- Know how you will use/analyse the data before you collect it
- Promote your findings



What's next?

- Another round of evaluation/monitoring
- Review of provision for all ECRs
- More assessment of impact/outcomes in the real world
- Supervisor feedback
- Case studies