

Ant Edwards and Chris Mellor

University of York

Supporting the statistical needs of social science students

Day 1 – Parallel III (16.30-17.00)

This session will reflect on the creation, student take-up, and evaluation of statistics support at the University of York, with a particular focus on supporting social science students. This focus has been chosen not only because a substantial proportion of visits have been from such students, but also because the number of social science students seeking statistics support is expected to increase nationally. This is due to a greater statistical emphasis in these subjects, and specifically the recent £15.5 million grant scheme from HEFCE for quantitative methods training for social science undergraduates (a scheme that denies funding for associated support services).

Following other HE mathematics support centres, the University of York's Maths Skills Centre has widened its scope from a mathematics-only model to one that includes statistics provision. This trend towards an integrated mathematics and statistics centres is evidenced by recent **sigma** funding calls (*Enhancing Mathematics Support Provision*, **sigma** 2011) and papers (*Approaches to extra-curricular statistics support for non-statistics UG and PG*, Patel et al., 2010).

After identifying the areas of statistics supported in this first year, the session will consider the University of York's model of (a) workshop sessions introducing basic statistical themes for postgraduate students, (b) drop-in support for generic enquiries, and (c) appointment-based provision for bespoke advice connected with project and dissertation work. It will combine staff reflections with student feedback to consider how best to support the growing social science student base.