

Martin Reed and K A Jane White

University of Bath

## **Experiences from a bespoke programme for year 1 foundation mathematics for students with vocational entry qualifications**

### **Day 2 – Parallel IV (10.55-11.25)**

The Department of Mathematical Sciences in Bath provides a first-semester Foundation Mathematics unit to a class of about 75 students, predominantly studying Sport & Exercise Science (SES) but also Chemistry and Natural Science. Students are enrolled on this unit if they do not have A-Level mathematics. The cohort is quite diverse and includes students with AS mathematics, students who studied A levels not including mathematics and students with a vocational background, entering the university either with BTEC or Access qualifications.

In 2011/12, a group of vocational entry students identified themselves and highlighted particular issues that they were experiencing with the unit. Most significant amongst these issues was the difficulty they had learning mathematics via the traditional lecture/tutorial structure extensively used at the University of Bath. These students received additional small group support throughout the semester and then were invited to help develop an alternative structure for the effective delivery of foundation mathematics for BTEC and Access students. What emerged from that was the development of pre-sessional materials, alternative teaching arrangements and a peer mentor plan.

In this session we will motivate the bespoke programme drawing on data about recruitment and retention of vocational entry qualification students at selective universities. We will describe and qualitatively analyse the delivery of the programme and will explain how this complements experiences documented from other HEI and informs the next stage of development for this unit.