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Scenario based training of statistics support tutors

Day 1 – Parallel III (16.00-16.30)

The provision of mathematics support in the context of mathematics learning centres in HE institutions has developed significantly since sigma first began. The provision of statistics support in particular has grown rapidly. However, it is acknowledged that providing statistics support in this context differs from maths support. This is due to the fact that requests for statistics help are often in the context of an individual problem to be solved with a data set that can sometimes be messy and complex rather than support with course material. Statistics support is often given by PGR's and maths tutors who may struggle to move from theoretical methods to the practical application of statistics to real data. In larger centres, some on the job training is possible but limited. Anecdotal evidence, in the form of discussions at sigma workshops and hub meetings, suggests that there is demand not just for initial training but also for further and ongoing training and skills development for staff that offer statistics support. This talk will discuss a project that has been funded by the sigma resource development initiative that aims to develop a pack of "scenario-based" training resources to be used for developing statistics advisory skills.

These resources will consist primarily of edited videos of actual statistics advisory sessions combining video recordings, PC screen captures and strategically placed pauses with questions and issues for consideration and discussion. One of the key challenges for statistics tutors is making sense of the students' research in order to ascertain the correct analysis so listening to actual students explaining their data is an important learning tool. The videos typically contain elements such as the student discussing their problem with a statistics advisor, screen captures of any data being discussed and/or statistical software being used in the session. These resources were designed with a workshop environment in mind; to allow the workshop audience to consider and discuss the issues raised during the viewing of the videos but may also be used by individuals where workshop attendance is not possible. Eventually these videos will be available on request from the talks' authors. The resources will also include additional paper based (pdf) materials for new and experienced tutors which will be available on www.statstutor.ac.uk.

All of the resources that have been developed to date will be showcased in this talk and details of planned one-day workshops that will make use of these resources will also be discussed. These workshops will be of particular interest to staff who would like to run similar workshops themselves in their own institution (or sigma hub) in order to train their own staff.