Data, Design and Society is a new level 8, 20 point course that is intended to implement a number of themes in the University’s Emerging Vision for Teaching and Learning. The course delivery centres on a substantial project that students will carry out in small interdisciplinary teams, focussing on a design-led, data-rich approach to a ‘real world’ problem. The interdisciplinary orientation will encourage breadth and support graduate attributes, while the small group project will involve a student-centric learning model, engaging students in research/practice activities and moving away from the traditional lecture-style model of teaching.

The interdisciplinary orientation is to be underpinned by a collaboration between multiple schools, with partners currently including Social and Political Science, the Business School and the School of Geosciences, and ECCI acting as an intermediary to the wider community. The intent is that collaborating schools will guide the course content (including the research/practice methodologies) while also helping to resource the course.

Although some components of the course have been tested at Masters level, we wish to treat the first year of this course as a pilot, in order to understand better how to use our approach with pre-Honours students. However, the pilot will only be possible if we are allowed to cap the numbers of students who register for AY 2015/16. We propose 40 as a quota. This will allow us to form students into approximately eight teams of five, which can be mentored by a total of four tutors (e.g., suitably qualified PhD students, each responsible for two teams). We believe this number will be manageable given plausible assumptions about available resources. If there is in fact demand for the course that goes beyond the quota of 40, then we will allocate places so as to best balance representation from the contributing schools and disciplines.

In order to address scalability beyond the pilot, we are in the early stages of considering how to develop a more sustainable cross-school resourcing model, and will be consulting with Professor Sue Rigby and other members of senior management about this issue. Some of these logistical and infrastructural concerns will also be addressed within the framework of a PTAS award that we recently received.