Student Support Implementation update - Maths (April 2012)

Staff planning
We are intending to appoint a Student Learning Advisor (SLA) at grade 7, to be in place for 2012-13. The post-holder will have a mathematics degree and be in a position to provide high-level subject specific advice and guidance to students. They will take load away from Personal Tutors, not in the purely administrative areas (which are covered by our TO) but also in aspects of guidance and PPD for undergraduates, particularly at pre-honours level.

Our current principal senior DoS will continue as Senior Tutor. Our second Senior DoS will be replaced by a role of Deputy Senior Tutor.

Implementation details of tutor / tutee meetings
We expect to have a system where Personal Tutors see students individually once per semester, usually at the beginning. Students will also have a group meeting. At least in Prehonours this is likely to be with the Student Learning Advisor rather than the Personal Tutor. We envisage group meetings as being the main mechanism for PPD.

Tutoring Statement
We have not yet formalised the role of Personal Tutor. We will develop documentation around the role in time for 2012-13.

Risks and issues
In common perhaps with other Schools, we foresee problems with finding sufficient academic time to provide a large uplift in the sort of contact envisaged for DoS/PTs, given that we also perceive a need to improve tutorial support and feedback and the issue of the upcoming REF exercise.

We are also concerned about the levels of student expectation that will arise as a consequence of the publicity of the new scheme combined with the paucity of available academic time.

It is intended that the existence of a Student Learning Advisor who will in effect be spending most of their time doing tasks that would otherwise be undertaken by academics because they require skills not normally present in most TO staff will ameliorate these problems.

Communication plan
We have over the last 18 months been improving our available information for both staff and students via our intranet “info.maths”. We will develop this further. Student support will have three tiers: TO (course admin queries); SLA (group meetings with prehonours students; study advice; some regulations queries involving specialist knowledge, preparing of Special Circumstances cases with students); Personal and Senior Tutor (an expansion of the current
DoS role, with some work transferred to the SLA as above).