



student newsletter

Issue 1

February 2009

The National Student Survey

The National Student Survey (NSS) takes place every year, at the start of the second semester. All final year undergraduate students are asked about how satisfied they are with their degree programme. The survey covers a range of areas such as teaching, assessment and feedback, learning resources, academic support and personal development.

The university (and your school) take these results very seriously for several reasons:

- It gives us information about what we do well and where we can improve;
- It helps us to develop our learning and teaching;
- NSS data contributes to league table positions;
- Potential students will see the NSS results.

We really value your contribution to the NSS and would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the online survey – you will be emailed details about how to do this. When completing the survey, we'd like to ask you to reflect on the whole of your 3 or 4 year degree programme, and your experiences during your time with us.

For non-finalists, the Programme Experience Survey (PES) will be taking place later in the year. Again, we'd like to encourage you to complete the online questionnaire which provides us with valuable information.

The more students that reply to these surveys, the more meaningful the results.

Make your voice heard!

NSS is just one way of giving your opinion about your programme. The Student:Staff Forum is another effective way of making your voice heard. Please see overleaf for more details about your Student:Staff Forum.

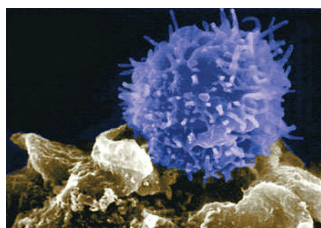
We do act on the feedback that you give us.

After receiving the results of the surveys, we review the scores and comments and, together with other feedback we receive throughout the year, we revise and update our Learning and Teaching Action Plan. This formally takes place during semester one, although the plans are reviewed, implemented and revised on an ongoing basis. We would welcome your comments on our action plan. You can view our Action Plan at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/respondingtoyourfeedback/>

Undergraduate Research

Three Maths undergrads at Leeds were funded through the EPSRC and the BBSRC last year to do a summer research project.

- David Franco worked with Dr Grant Lythe on "Modelling the motion of T-cells inside a lymph node".
 - Nicola Malone worked with Dr Carmen Molina-Paris on "Modelling T-cell competition for survival signals that regulate the diversity and repertoire of the T-lymphocyte population".
 - Alex Collins worked with Dr Martin Speight on Tying knots in 1/94 the time.
- More info on Alex's project overleaf...



Dear Maths students,

Welcome back to Semester 2! I hope the January exams went well for you.

Come and have a look at our refurbished Undergraduate Student Office. We keep improving the level 8 area, and Heather is working hard on updating all the notice boards.

Please visit the Undergraduate Office or my office (8.18i) when you have a question or a concern. My door is open whenever possible.

I wish you a successful semester 2.

Dr Margit Messmer

(Director of Undergraduate Studies)

By now, you should have been introduced to "Leeds for Life" by your personal tutor. Leeds for Life as a concept is about defining what makes a "Leeds Graduate." What will make you stand out from the crowd when you graduate?



What are the core values that you will possess, alongside your subject knowledge and skills? The University defines its core values as community, integrity, inclusiveness and professionalism, and believes that all its students possess these attributes upon graduation.

The University wants you to make the most of your time here – both in terms of your chosen programme and the wealth of other opportunities that are available to you.

The Leeds for Life website (<http://leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk>) is designed to capture all of the resources and opportunities that are available to you, via a database that you can easily navigate. Please make use of the site. It is still being developed, so please email any suggestions that you might have on how to make it better!

Info Event for Finalists!

On Wednesday, 11.Feb. from 1 to 2:30pm all Maths and Joint Honours Maths or Stats finalists (Years 3 and 4) are invited to an Info Event in the School of Maths MALL, including

- Latest career advice
- Info on how your degree is classified
- Postgraduate study opportunities, including the PGCE
- National Student Survey

Free snacks and drinks will be served!

Remember!

Check your University e-mail regularly, or set it up to forward to an account that you are checking regularly, preferably daily.

Look for information on the Maths Student Resources website at <http://www.maths.leeds.ac.uk/school/students/>

In this issue:

Page 1
The National Student Survey
Make your voice heard
Undergraduate research
Leeds for Life
Info Event for Finalists

Page 2

The Staff: Student Forum
Homework Clubs
Great news!
Careers Centre
Personal Tutoring Week
Important dates



The Student:Staff forum is made up of student representatives from each year of study plus various members of staff and usually meets twice per year.

The next Staff-Student Forum will take place on 4 March. You can report your concerns to your Year Representative on the forum. See the Student Resources website or the notice board on level 8 for a list of all year reps.

The SSF's main purpose is to discuss issues that students wish to raise. If you don't already know who your year rep is, then you should find out! If you have any issues with your programme, or wish to comment on anything that has been particularly good, you should contact your year rep, who will take your issues to the next forum meeting. The forum then reports to the School Learning and Teaching committee, where the points raised are considered.

We always consider all points raised and endeavour to either act upon them, or provide students with feedback on the issue as appropriate. Sometimes there is a good reason why things are done in a certain way, and hopefully we can lay worries to rest. On other occasions we have made significant changes to the way we do things based on what students tell us.

Back by popular demand!

During teaching weeks 2 to 11 in semester 2, Year 1 Maths students will be able to get help with homework during the **Drop-in Homework Help Sessions**, on:

Wednesdays from 11am to 12:30pm in **MALL 1**, and

Thursdays from 10:30am to 12 noon in **MALL 2** (12 March and 19 March in the Reading Room).

These sessions will mostly be staffed by postgraduate students who will do their best to help you with homework problems (without doing the homework for you!!).

Alex's summer research placement project: Tying knots in 1/94 the time

Knot solitons are topologically stable configurations of matter in which force-field lines are tied up in knots. They are conjectured to occur in certain exotic superconductors. Until now, to study them mathematically has required lengthy computer simulations on large parallel processor grids - typically taking about a week to find each stable soliton.

Using simple ideas from differential geometry and thermodynamics, Alex developed a radically simpler model of knot soliton formation, which can be implemented on a laptop computer in around 2 hours, but still captures the essential features of these theoretically fascinating objects.

The results will be developed further by Dr. Speight and a recently appointed postdoctoral research fellow. Alex Collins is currently spending a year at the University of Heidelberg as part of the Erasmus exchange scheme.



Week 3 is Personal Tutoring Week!

During the week of 9th of February all Maths students should meet with their personal tutor to get feedback on their exam results, discuss future plans, and any other aspect of their academic and personal development. More information about how to prepare for and what to expect from such a meeting will be sent by e-mail and posted on the Student Resources website.

Great news for all students!

In response to students' requests for solutions to previous exam problems, starting in Semester 2 of 2008/09 lecturers will provide students with final answers to problems on previous exams for questions with short (mostly numerical) solutions.

Lecturers will also try to include a lecture or session on tackling past exam questions for each module.

Inaugural Day!

On the 18th of March at 2pm, recently appointed Maths professors will give talks about their research. All Maths students (including JH) are invited.

The right career starts with the Careers Centre!

It's never too early to think about Careers especially in the current economic climate. Get ahead of the game by using your Careers Centre and make use of the wide range of services we offer tailored to your needs. Because employers really value Leeds students we have one of the biggest and best graduate recruitment programmes in the country, and we're confident we'll continue to lead despite the recession.

Take advantage of individual specialist appointments from your dedicated Faculty Careers Consultant, *Caroline Ramage*. Many of the students we meet have no idea about what they want to do after Leeds! We can help you.

You can drop in to the Careers Centre informally during the week for a quick chat with our friendly staff who will help you decide what help you need to move your ideas along. We come to you too, making it easier for you to fit career planning into your academic schedule. Look out for talks and drop-in sessions delivered by your Faculty Careers Consultant in your School.

Struggling to get it down on paper? We can help you write your CV or fill in application forms so that they read with maximum impact. Dreading the selection process? We give you the chance to practice typical graduate recruitment aptitude tests, with personalised feedback on your performance afterwards. We offer mock interviews and much more too. You can also use our e-guidance service. Our dedicated e-guidance team can guarantee a response within 3 working days e-guidance.leeds.ac.uk

Some forthcoming Careers events that may be of interest to you :-

Monday 9th Feb - Presentation by Ernst and Young

Tuesday 10th Feb - Presentation by BNP Paribas - Corporate and Investment Banking Organisation

Thurs 5th March: 'I don't know what I want to do but I don't want to be an accountant' *Pricewaterhouse Coopers*.

For a full programme pick up an events programme from the Careers Centre or look on our website careerweb.leeds.ac.uk

We look forward to welcoming you to our Careers Centre!

Important dates for your diary

w/c 9 Feb - Provisional results available for semester 1

Wed 11 Mar - Provisional Semester 2 exam timetable (campusweb)

Wed 25 Mar - Final Semester 2 exam timetable (campusweb)

Mon 11 May - Revision Week.

Mon 18 May - Sat 6 Jun - Semester 2 examinations

Fri 19 Jun - End of term

Tue 7 Jul - Official results available online

Fri 20 Feb - Deadline for changing Sem. 2 modules

Fri 20 Mar - End of Term/teaching.

Mon 20 Apr - Teaching recommences

Mon 11 May - Online module enrolment for 2009/10 commences

Mon 8 Jun - Deadline for submitting Semester 2 special circumstances forms