London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
(University of London)

MSc / PGDip Epidemiology

Module Evaluation 2008-09

Feedback Summary and Action Plan from Module Organiser(s)
   – draft for DL Epi Course Committee Oct09

Module Code: EP101

Module Title: Fundamentals of Epidemiology

Module Organiser(s): Laura Oakley, Laura Woods, Jenny Evans

1. Review of previous year’s Action Plan

   Continuing work from 2006-2007 evaluation: FAs
   1. Discuss issues raised by student evaluation on possible changes to FAs.
      We will continue discussions on this subject, but no major overhaul of FAs are
      planned for this coming year.

   New issues arising from 2007-2008 evaluation: Quality of course material, point 4
   2. Organise regular update of CAL material so that most recent version can be
      downloaded throughout the year.
      After discussion, we felt it would be confusing for students to have more than one
      version of the CAL available each year. We will continue to log corrections and
      improvements but will release just one version of the CAL at the beginning of the
      year.

   Quality of Email /Webboard tutor feedback, point 2
   3. Continue active follow-up by MO of tutors monitoring the webboard to ensure
      prompt replies to queries.
      We have monitored the webboard carefully to ensure that tutors reply to posts within
      a reasonable time. This issue was not raised in the student evaluation for 2008-2009
      which suggests that responses have been within student expectation. The MO will
      continue active follow-up of tutors monitoring the webboards..

   Content of course, point 1
   4. Consider developing extra exercises for the CAL material (long-term)
      We are keeping this in mind but currently focussing on the development of more
      interactive CAL materials (animated podcasts).

   Clarity of presentation, point 3
   5. Course management could consider the use of audio for all modules
      Animated podcasts are in development.

   Readings and textbooks point 1
   6. Revise the introduction to the Reader in 2008/09 in order to make it clearer how the
      Reader and text books should be used in conjunction with the CAL material
This has been revised to make it clearer how the reader and textbooks should be used with the CAL material.

Overall opinion of the course, points 1, 2, 5
7. Course management could consider two exam sittings per year
8. Students to be emailed the day or so after the exam to inform them of when the results will be available
9. Discuss possibility of a ‘chat online’ facility or attachment scheme with course management.

We have discussed these points with the course management. Two exam sittings per year are unlikely to be possible. Students are routinely told that exam results will be available mid-August. Online chats are currently being pursued in other modules within the DL MSc epidemiology. Currently we do not have plans to implement them in EP101 but will consider this after the animated podcasts are up and running.

2. Comments from Module Organiser about year just ended or current year

A higher proportion (44%) of students responded to the survey this year (last year it was (34%)). Most (92%) students were satisfied with the EP101 module. Overall student comments were positive – see below for some suggested areas for improvement and action points arising from student feedback.

Students who started EP101 in 2008 were provided with an entirely updated Reader, and all CAL sessions in Authorware. Most of the minor errors introduced into the course material as a result of the change of software from toolbox to Authorware have now been corrected. We are implementing a few extra interactions this year and improving the quality of some of the images. We will also be producing animated podcasts which will provide more variety in the way the course is delivered.

The rate of submission of the formative assignments was 1.8 per student. This was a little lower than last year. There are four formative assignments on this module.

The format of the exam changed this year to two compulsory questions. A very small number of students did not register this change. However, as previous exam papers in this format will now be available for practice, this will not be a problem in future years.
3 Student Satisfaction Survey

3.1 Summary figures

Number students registered in 2008/9: 167

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of respondents</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>44% (of those registered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘very satisfied’</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘somewhat satisfied’</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘neutral’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘somewhat dissatisfied’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘very dissatisfied’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
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## 4. Summary of comments from Student Satisfaction Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Positive comments</th>
<th>Suggestions for improvement</th>
<th>Action needed (please number Action Points)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course material</td>
<td>“It is an inviting way learn.” “I think that the material was excellent.” “layout was very simple and comprehensive” “Study materials were … very easy to understand.” “The readings are very interesting and the selection of the texts are great.”</td>
<td>(i)CAL needs to be checked for small errors (2 students) (ii)”too technical presentation on CD, would help if there were powerpoints to give a general over view” (iii)”More Clarity for the modules on study designs, as this is the most confusing part.” (iv) “There were places with poor explanations in The Fundamentals of Epi: e.g., in the Linear Trend presentation. I thought the Attributable Risk presentation weak […] the infectious diseases modelling lesson could have had a little more explanation - or some problems to illustrate the concepts…” (v) “.. some of the recommended readings were a little difficult to understand without a background in that area of practice.”</td>
<td>(1) Continue with continuous CAL improvement: logging errors and correcting authorware (i) (2) Continue with development of animated podcasts which include podcast on study design (ii) and (iii). (3) Look again at sessions on linear trend/Measures of impact/infectious diseases(iv) (4) Some students will find that there is too much course material, some too little. (iii) (iv) (5) We need to give a variety of real epidemiological examples which will be based in different areas of medicine – difficult to avoid the fact that some students will not have background in those areas. (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webboard</td>
<td>“the exam seminar for re-sitter was good and satisfactory.” “I found that I didn't really use the webboard until exam time where it was useful for feedback on any queries I had to exam questions.” “Student interactions as well as tutors’ interventions on webboard were very helpful and timely”</td>
<td>(i)“The only problem would be, perhaps about 20 people were invited, only a handful of students actively give their comments. So, I think you need to survey further what was the obstacle for these non-active-participants.” (ii) “… there should be more interaction with the other students. For example, little exercises or anything that encourage students to engage in further dialogue on the web boards.”</td>
<td>(6)Discuss with CO and DCO possibility of surveying students: what are the barriers to webboard participation (i) and ideas for increasing interaction (ii). Might need to be done at course rather than module level.</td>
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<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Assignments were helpful/useful (3 students) and the personal feedback was helpful/useful/informative (3 students)</td>
<td>(i) “… as they were very long I found them very daunting. More short Qs at the end of a group of modules would help check understanding as you go along.” (ii) “ In a couple of instances I had hoped for more detailed and useful feedback”.</td>
<td>(7) Point (i) on current action plan. We are keeping this in mind but currently focussing on the development of more interactive CAL materials (animated podcasts). (8) Feedback comment (ii) to quality assurance tutor. Continue with review of tutor feedback to ensure quality</td>
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</table>
| Overall | “Great module!” (2 students)  
“Well-designed” (3 students)  
“Well-taught” (1 students)  
“Good grounding in principles of epidemiology” (2 students) |
| --- | --- |
| | (i) 4 students felt that there was too much material in EP101 but conversely one student suggested “to expand the CAL materials.”  
(ii) “Conflicting statements are sometimes made by different tutors and should be clarified.”  
(iii) The following comments relate to communication: “Sometimes feel difficult to contact to tutor.”  
“Although I feel confident I was surprised to the mark I get from this core. I really want to get feedback comments from this module”  
“I would suggest that individual feedback to students on areas that they did not do well should be provided. This will help such students to take corrective measures rather than the general responses given”  
“the follow-up is not enough, it should be nice to have more complete follow up, not only during exam preparation” |
| Exams | (i) 3 students said that they were not aware of the different format of exams (2 compulsory questions) this year.  
(ii) 3 students said that the time for the exam was inadequate.  
(iii) 3 students said they would like detailed model answers to assist with exam revision  
(iv) 1 student wanted more opportunity to practice exam type questions”.  
(v) “the material for the unseen exam should also double-checked by staff, as if from the eye of candidates.”  
(vi) “I thought the exam did not cover a wider range of what I had learnt in this module”  
(vii) “The past exams reports vary widely in quality of information in the feedback section and sometimes one tutor states a particular detail is not required in response to a question, whereas another tutor expects it. The approach should be standardised.” |
| | (9) As one student wanted earlier FA deadline and one student wanted later FA deadline comment (iii) was not put on action list. (iii) |
| | (10) Students were told before the exams that it was now two compulsory questions. This is less likely to be an issue this year as students will have an example of the new exam structure on which to practice.  
(11) Discuss time required to complete the exam (ii)  
(12) It is not possible to provide more than “guidance” notes to past papers under the existing regulations (iii).  
(13) Exam practice conferences already provided to students. We will encourage students to use these more, and will also discuss this issue with CO and DCO (iv)  
(14) The guidance provided to those writing exam reports is continually being revised. Points (v) (vi) and (vii) are included in revision. |
| | (15) Difficult to address (i) without compromising course objectives.  
(16) There do exist genuine differences of opinion by epidemiologists. Although consistency is desirable it is difficult to achieve completely. Any errors in CAL or tutor interpretation of will be corrected as part of the continuous CAL improvement. See point (1) above. (ii)  
(17) Discuss communication with CO and DCO (iv) |
5. **Action Plan for 2009.10 (please number items)**

| 1. | Continue with continuous CAL improvement: logging errors and correcting authorware (points 1 and 16) |
| 2. | Continue with development of animated podcasts (point 2). |
| 3. | Look again at sessions on linear trend/measures of impact/infectious diseases (point 3) |
| 4. | Discuss with CO and DCO possibility of surveying students: what are the barriers to webboard participation and ideas for increasing interaction (point 6) |
| 5. | Feedback student comment regarding detailed feedback to tutors and/or quality assurance tutor (point 8). |
| 6. | Feedback student comments that there was not enough time to complete the exam (point 11) |
| 7. | Continue to encourage use of exam practice conferences and discuss exam practice with CO and DCO (point 13) |
| 8. | Feedback student comments to staff setting exams and writing exam reports (point 14). |
| 9. | Discuss students’ general comments on communication with CO and DCO (point 17). |

6. **Changes for 2009.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does next year’s action plan imply any of the following changes?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major change to content</td>
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<td>Major change to assessment</td>
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<td>Major change to teaching methods</td>
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<td>Change of Module Organiser</td>
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<td>Changes in tutors (e.g. increased numbers, specific expertise)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other major change, eg dropping the module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of title</td>
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