**IMLSN Survey extract: Student rating of and comments about MLS services**

To try to build a picture of the student experience of mathematics learning support (MLS), 1633 first year students who were studying at least one service-mathematics module (i.e. students who were studying at least one mathematics module as part of their degree programme, but were not specialising in mathematics) took part in a large scale survey conducted by the IMLSN in the 2011. The survey was carried out in nine HEIs, with five universities and four institutes of technology taking part, from a possible total of seven universities and fourteen institutes of technology in Ireland. The universities involved were Dublin City University (DCU), National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), University College Dublin (UCD) and University of Limerick (UL). The institutes of technology involved were Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC), Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITTD) and Institute of Technology Tralee (IT Tra).

587 students of the 1633 students who responded to the survey availed of MLS. As part of the survey students who had availed of MLS students were asked to rate on a list of MLS services which were provided in their institution on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all Worthwhile and 5 = Extremely Worthwhilebut they also had an option to mark Not Applicable. The students were also asked given the opportunity for each MLS service listed for that institution to provide an open–ended comment/suggestion.

The list of services overall included *Drop-In Centre, ICT enabled supports (e.g. Online Support/Website, Email Questions service, CALMAT software), Topical or Exam Revision Workshops(Workshops, Exam Revision Programmes)* and *Support Tutorials.* This list was modified locally in each institution to reflect the range of services offered in that particular institution as shown in Table 0.

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| Number of students availing |  | Number from the 9 institutions offering this service | UL | NUIM | NUIG | UCD | ITT | DCU | Tralee | Carlow | Blanch. |
| 519 | Drop-In Centre | 9 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 268 | ICT enabled Support | 8 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| *232* | *Topical or Exam Revision Workshops* | *6* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *No* | *No* | *No* |
| 101 | Support Tutorials | 3 | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No |

**Table 0: Table of MLS services and institutions in which they were available.**

**Student rating of the Drop-In Centre service.**

519 of the 587 attendees from all institutions indicated a response on the scale given of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all Worthwhile and 5 = Extremely Worthwhile as follows:

Figure 1: Students response to question “How do you rate the Drop-in Centre?” (N=519)

Over 82.5% of these 519 students felt MLS was quite or extremely worthwhile and only 6.75% of the 519 suggested it was not worthwhile.

**Student comments/suggestions regarding the Drop-In Centre service**

General comments relating to the drop-in centre were invited as part of the survey244 of the 519 attendees made additional comments/suggestions. Responses fell into four categories: *Resourcing (staff, contact hours, space), Satisfaction levels with services provided, Quality of tutors/teaching, Other.*

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| **Categories of comments** | **% comments**  **(N = 244)** | **Sample comments** |
| Satisfaction level with services provided | 42.21% | “Very helpful/Excellent service.”  “Helpful, very friendly, very approachable tutors”,  “Website/extra notes very helpful.”  “Excellent service; very helpful; very well run.”  “I left knowing all I needed to know for answering questions like the one I was stuck on.“  “It is a good place to go and do maths assignments. It supplements lectures and tutorials and provides the right environment for solving problems.”  “Only for the centre I probably would have dropped out.”  “Without MSC I would fail maths! I learn the most from talking to tutors and other students there.” |
| Resourcing(staff, contact hours, space) | 36.07% | “Better/longer opening hours.”  “More tutors needed.”  “Very busy.”  “Not worthwhile when busy but extremely worthwhile when quiet.”,  “Bigger room needed.”  “It’s excellent. Wish there were more hours open because some peoples timetables (e.g. me) are so jam packed you can rarely get there.”  “Not enough room or people around to help. Extend opening hours”  “Occasionally, a bit crowded; may need extra tutor for this (nearer exams).” |
| Quality of tutors/teaching | 18.03% | “I find the tutors are very helpful and they have helped my confidence in my own mathematic ability to grow. Especially Ciaran, he is always willing to help and spend ages with me until I understand it 100%.”  “Sometimes the support (lecturers) can be judgmental and rude but more often others are extremely helpful!”  “Tutors were excellent, was just waiting for help for a while.”  “The tutors spent more time trying to figure out the questions and then didn’t know how to explain it.” |
| Other | 3.69% | “Didn’t use it even though I should have and I feel really guilty for not doing that.” |

**Table 1: Student comments/suggestions regarding the Drop-In Centre service**

**Student rating of the ICT enabled supports**

In 8 of the 9 institutions students were asked to rate ICT enabled supports (for example maths learning centre websites, online supports, ‘email question service‘, CALMAT software package).268 users of MLS from 8 of the 9 institutions (all except IT Tallaght) responded as follows:

Figure 2: How do you rate the ICT enabled supports?( N=268)

Over56% of these 268 students felt MLS was quite or extremely worthwhile and 7.5% of the suggested it was not at all worthwhile.

**Comments relating to ICT enabled supports**

General comments relating to ICT enabled supports were invited as part of the survey 128 of the 268 students made additional comments/suggestions. Responses fell into the following categories: Satisfaction level with services provided,*Quality of materials/layout/ease of access*

*, Didn't know it was there, Prefer human help with maths, Not used myself, Other*

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| **Categories of comments** | **% comments**  **( N =268)** | **Sample comments** |
| Satisfaction level with services provided | 32.62% | “Really helpful for revision”  “Helps learn the basics”,  “It is a good point for reference or a quick way of looking back on material.”  “Very helpful, especially towards exams.” |
| Quality of materials/layout/ease of access | 21.99% | “Not everything works like the videos”,  “Difficult to download”,  “Can't run on my computer”,  “Hard to access some material.”  “Maybe have questions there in folder for practice.” |
| Prefer human help with maths | 9.93% | “Still need help being explained in person”.  “I don’t like that you have no-one to help with these if you get stuck.” |
| Didn't know it was there | 4.96% | “Didn't know about it”,  “Never knew it was available.” |
| Other | 2.84% | “I find it hard to make time to engage in the online course.” |
| Not use myself | 17.73% | "Never used it” |

**Table 2: Comments relating to ICT enabled supports**

**Student rating of the Topical or Exam RevisionWorkshops**

232 attendees from 6 of the 9 institutions NUIM, NUIG, UCD DCU UL and IT Tallaght responded as follows:

Figure 3: How do you rate the Topical or Revision Workshops?( N=232)

79% found the workshops quite or extremely worthwhile whereas only 6% of these students found the workshops not very or at all worthwhile.

**Student comments/suggestions regarding Workshops**

General comments relating to Workshops were invited as part of the survey 95 of the 232 students made additional comments/suggestions. Responses fell into the following categories: *Satisfaction level with workshops, Issues with timing of workshops, Not used myself, Didn't know about them, Other*

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| **Categories of comments** | **% comments**  **( N = 232)** | **Sample comments** |
| Satisfaction level with workshop | 66.32% | “Mature student workshops great”,  “Extra help is always great”,  “Wouldn't have passed without them”,  “Made maths simple”.  “Very helpful”,  “Excellent for revision”,  “Also fantastic, a great help – brings material back to basics.”  “Great to reinforce concepts that may have been overlooked.” |
| Issues with timing of workshops | 16.84% | “Times didn't suit”,  “I have only gone to one because it’s on at a bad time. Bit it was great the time I went.”  “Could never attend as it clashed with my physics labs.” |
| Not used myself | 9.47% | “Didn't go”, |
| Didn't know about them | 5.26% | “Wasn't aware of it”. |
| Other | 2.11% |  |

**Table 3: Student comments/suggestions regarding Workshops**

**Student rating of the Support Tutorials**

101 attendees from University of Limerick, Carlow IT and IT Tallaght responded as follows:

Figure 4: How do you rate the support tutorials?N=101)

81.2% felt the support tutorials were worthwhile and only 5.9% said they were not worthwhile.

**Student comments/suggestions regarding Support Tutorials**

General comments relating to Workshops were invited as part of the survey 31of the 101 students made additional comments/suggestions. Responses fell into the following categories: *Satisfaction level with support tutorials, Issues with timing of support tutorial, Other.*

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| **Categories of comments** | **% of comments**  **( n=31)** | **Sample comments** |
| Satisfaction level with support tutorial | 70.97% | “Very helpful”,  “Good tutors”,  “Excellent. Really good at narrowing down a topic and making it easier to understand.”  “The support tutorial is of extreme benefit and I would not have passed maths without it.”  “Very good – teacher goes through content well.” |
| Issues with timing of support tutorial | 16.13% | “On too late in the evening so a lot of people can’t attend. “  “Increase number of days because the times clash with lecture times” |
| Other | 12.90% | “Would prefer one-to-one grind.“ |

**Table 4: Student comments/suggestions regarding Support Tutorials**