**NUIM Mathematics Support Centre (MSC)**

***Brief description of the services provided by myMaths Learning Support Centre:***

The MSC in NUIM is a drop-in centre that caters for a large number of students. It is open to all undergraduate students in a drop-in capacity for 22 hours a week during the semester. On top of the 22 drop-in hours we run 2 hours of drop-in for secondary school students, weekly workshops for 1st year students and occasionally there are some workshops for 2nd year students as well as a 2 hour study group sessionfor 3rd and 4th year students. I work 13 hours a week during drop-in hours and am also involved in some of the occasional workshops for 2nd year students. This is in addition to 18 tutorials a week for the Mathematics & Statistics Department so I deal with students a lot!

***Brief description of the mathematical ability of the students I commonly encounter in the centre and the type of help I give the:***

During any week in the MSC I see many different students with varying degrees of ability. There are students studying economics or psychology needing help with basic algebra, basic statistics or differentiation. There are maths students working on the various modules they study. In 10 minutes I can see a student who can’t deal with fractions and then see someone who just wants you to listen to them explaining something in their notes to see if they’ve really grasped the idea.

Also, quite a lot of our students like to come in to the MSC and workalone or in a group knowing that if they need help the tutors are there. They don’t often come in with a specific list of questions they want to ask.

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| **DOS** | **DON’TS** |
| Be friendly and talk with students. It helps them realise that we are normal people just like them! They relax and find it easier to ask questions. | Assume the student has written the question down correctly. Always check from the official sheet or book. |
| Use the students’ lecture notes, to show them they’ve done a similar example in class or to find a definition. It shows them how important going to lectures and taking good notes are. | Refuse to help someone. For example, if the topic is not one you’re familiar with then find a tutor who is and if necessary when they are in the MSC and give the student this information. |
| Ask another tutor for help if you don’t know something or are unsure. We all have days when someone surprises us with a question or you go blank. It’s good for students to see this and you’ll be surprised what they learn when they see tutors discussing a topic. | Assume the student is capable of the basic things within a question. Things like fractions, surds, indices and even basic algebra that has all been covered in secondary school may be what is causing all the problems. |
| Explain the steps you go through when you’re trying to solve a problem. This helps teach students the tools they need to solve problems alone because they see the logical way we work through them. | Say things without thinking first! Phrases such as: That’s easy! , Oh that’s simple. , That’s a silly question. Etc. I’m sure you get the idea of the types of things I mean. Just be careful, as it can negatively affect the student. |
| Have fun working in the MSC! It is an enjoyable and rewarding place to work, as well as a place where we can learn too. | Get involved with students personal problems. Make the manager aware of any issues with a particular student as they are in the position of knowing where to suggest a student might avail of help if needed. |