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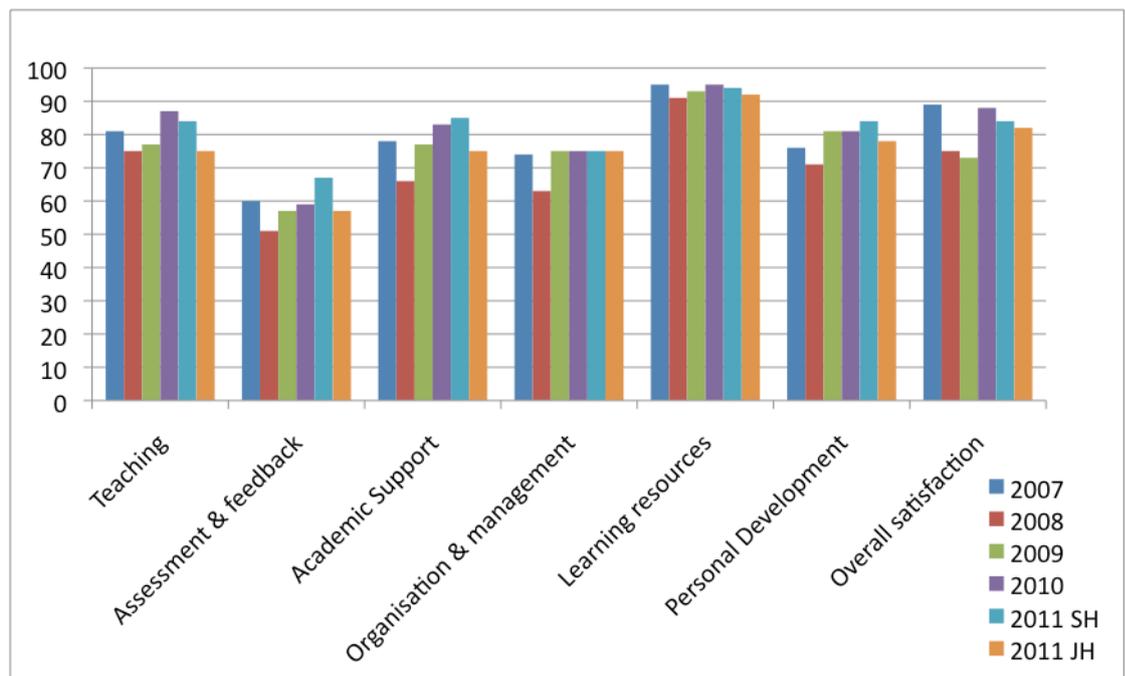
News from Head of School

National Student Survey (NSS)

The results of the NSS for 2011 have been published this week. This is an important survey, as the results are highly visible to applicants, and feed into assorted league tables. It also provides us with some useful insight into how we are doing.

The most visible outcome for Computer Science at Manchester is that overall satisfaction is up 1% from 81% to 82%. It is clearly good that the headline figure is going in the right direction, even if rather slowly. Drilling down is somewhat disappointing, however, in that at a school level overall satisfaction for single honours is 84% and for joint honours is 82%, down from 88% in 2010. Looking at the comments made by students, it seems possible that teething problems in the introduction of the new programmes may have had some impact. The headline figure travelling in the opposite direction from the school figure means that scores for informatics programmes in the business school have increased.

The following figure drills down (thanks to Gill), both to show scores within different areas and to provide changes over time.



The changes in the scores within individual areas are generally quite small, although it is encouraging to see an improvement for Single Honours in the feedback score, given that the new programmes include significantly more feedback in the final year than was the case before. The numbers of students on joint programmes is likely to drift down over time (for example, Computer Systems Engineering is now a single honours programme).

The university has been putting a significant emphasis on NSS in recent years, and will be extremely disappointed that the overall satisfaction score for the university remains at 79%.

Further Theorem Proving Championship Success

Congratulations to Andrei Voronkov and Konstantin Korovin on their successes at the World Championship for Automated Theorem Proving. In 2011, Andrei's Vampire system won in two categories, and Konstantin's iProver retained its winning position in one. This means that Vampire now has had 24 Championship successes since 1999, and that iProver has led its category for 4 successive years.

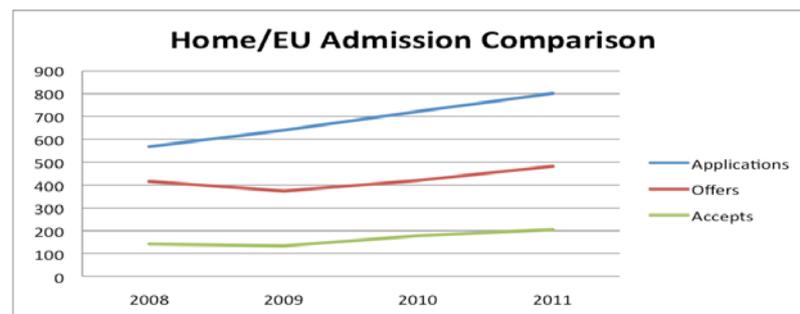
Undergraduate Admissions

Following the publication of A-level results, it is becoming clear where we stand with respect to undergraduate admissions. There has been an "interesting" conclusion to this process, in that the university has decided not to enter clearing and only to allow students to be accepted at one grade below the advertised grade (whereas we had planned to accept students two grades below on the basis of evidence from progression that these students were doing as well as those with higher grades). As a result of this decision, we expect to miss our target of 190 Home/EU students by around 15.

Overall, the school's ability to recruit good students has been strengthening over time, reflecting considerable credit on the recruitment/admissions and visit day teams. In the context of consistent offers (A*AA for MEng, AAB for BSc), the following numbers of students have made the advertised grades in recent years:

- 2011: 120
- 2010: 101
- 2009: 81

The following graph (thanks to Bernard) shows several related trends:



The financial consequences of missing the target for this cohort will be in the region of £50K in 2011/12 and £100K in each of the two subsequent years. Of course, if the bar is set as high in subsequent years, there is a potential compound effect, which by 2013/14 could be more than £300K in the context of many unknowns (e.g. the impact of higher fees). Overall, the undergraduate numbers position is quite complicated, in that, even missing our target this year by 15, the following are the actual (or predicted) total undergraduate headcount numbers over recent years:

- 2011/12: 605 (predicted)
- 2010/11: 607
- 2009/10: 584
- 2008/09: 596

Thus we see little immediate effect on the total size of the undergraduate school from the fact that we expect to admit around 35 fewer undergraduate students in 2011 than in 2010. However, in terms of our overall financial position, the plan had been to grow overall undergraduate numbers on a (slightly) reducing number of entrants, building on improved retention rates. If we lose this plank in our strategy due to university policies that ignore school-level details, there will

be long term financial implications that could lead to a reduction in the size of the school.

Events

Complexity in the Life Sciences - Workshop

6 September 2011

1.00 pm - 1.10 pm Introduction

Dr Rasmus Petersen (Faculty of Life Sciences)

1.10 pm – 1.30 pm Inhibiting inflammation by computational optimisation

Dr David Brough (Faculty of Life Sciences)

1.30 pm – 1.50 pm Systems biology of multi-scale inflammatory signalling

Dr Pawel Paszek (Faculty of Life Sciences)

1.50 pm – 2.10 pm Analysing the complexity of cell adhesion: A proteomic approach

Dr Adam Byron (Faculty of Life Sciences)

2.10 pm – 2.30 pm Evolving networks of environmental cues and responses

Dr Christopher Knight (Faculty of Life Sciences)

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm Coffee/Tea

3.00 pm – 3.20 pm Dimensionality Reduction for Dynamical Systems

Mr Chris Welshman (Mathematics)

3.20 pm – 3.40 pm Functional Phylogenies

Dr John Moriarty (Mathematics)

3.40 pm – 4.00 pm TBA

Dr Mark Muldoon (Mathematics)

4.00 pm – 4.20 pm Fitness landscapes in biology and computation

Dr Joshua Knowles (Computer Science)

4.20 pm – 5.20 pm Discussion

Registration & Organisers

Please contact

[Helen Harper](#)

In the first instance if you are interested in attending this event.

New Funding and Award Opportunities

[top](#)

None this week

Research Awards

[top](#)

Title: MUSCLE: Multi-platform Unbiased-optimisation of Spectrometry via Closed-Loop Experimentation

Funding Body: BBSRC

PI: Josh Knowles

Award Amount: £34054

