Evaluation of University of London's (UoL) online tutor support project for the LLB Undergraduate Programme

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Executive Summary

This is an evaluation report of the online tutor support project of the Undergraduate Law programme of University of London. The support project whose aim is to improve students' satisfaction and retention and increase revenue has completed its first year, hence the evaluation. Students of two modules, LSM level 4 and Property, Level 5 based on their entry requirement being higher. Consequently, the managers expect some impact on learning.

A pragmatist approach inclined towards the constructivist paradigm underpinned the evaluation partly due to the emerging nature of the phenomenon and artefacts being studied and partly due to the value placed on the knowledge of the evaluators, which is considered valuable data. A focus group session was held, and system-generated data from the VLE were analysed.

Among other things, it was found that Property modules have higher attendance than LSM modules. This can enable a study of why Property modules appear more successful, following which the findings can be applied to the LSM modules. In conclusion, it was noted that being the inaugural phase of the project, there is insufficient data to determine a number of things, such as whether the OFS threshold of 55% is met, or whether the project was impacting on student retention and revenue. Most importantly, it was concluded that data collected in this year's evaluation will serve as a baseline for next year, if another evaluation holds.

It is recommended that post-tutorial engagement should be improved, and drop-off rate addressed. A major limitation of this evaluation is the insufficiency of data due to the project being in its inaugural year. The team considers this evaluation project relevant and encourages other programmes to adopt similar strategies.

Evaluation of University of London (UoL) online tutor support project for the LLB Programme

1.0   Introduction

This report is an evaluation of University of London's (UoL) online LLB Programme's online tutor support project for independent students. The initiative is currently being piloted and its milestones are set out in Appendix 1. The report presents the outcomes of the evaluation that is two-phased. The formative phase of the evaluation, which is the first section of the report, explores the programme's background, seeks an understanding of elements of the programme and key issues around it, and analyses the feedback from ongoing modules before the commencement of the evaluation (Tobin et al., 2015). In addition, it explores theoretical perspectives related to evaluation of online teaching provisions and sets out the methodological approach of the evaluation.

The second section of the report is the summative phase of the evaluation. It is largely empirical, analysing the data generated at the formative stage of the evaluation, analysing data from the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) whose operational structure is reflected in Appendix 4, and a focus group session involving undergraduate law students (Buller, 2012). Furthermore, it weighs the outcomes of the analysis and evaluations against theoretical perspectives, draws conclusions from the analysis and offers recommendations.

Section 1: Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation enables an assessment of how effective the entire work of the instructor is in an online classroom. In addition, it generates feedback during the delivery of an online programme (Tobin et al., 2015). It takes different forms, and it could be complimentary and overlapping (Achtemeier et al., 2003). It is instructive to note that the formative evaluation being reported is independent of the LLB Programme instructors. In addition, due to time being a major constraint as well as access to the students and instructors, the evaluation is customised. The formative elements are focused on automatically generated data from the VLE as well as elements of working documents from the managers.

2.0   Background: the context and problem

The online tutor support project was initiated to enhance the direct support which independent international students on the programme receive. Other international students are supported through the Recognised Teaching Centres (RTC) (Appendix 3). It is hoped that the support project will improve students' continuation and completion rate consistent with, or above the Office For Students (OFS)'s threshold for part time students of 55%. It is important to note that there are indications that the independent international students on

the programme are outperforming their peers who are based in the UK. However, international students in RTCs outperform those studying independently. Consequently, the project is an enhancement strategy being implemented to improve students' support and the operational delivery of the programme. The aim is to **enhance student satisfaction, retention and revenue generated**. Table 1.0 below reflects a breakdown of five years enrolment before the commencement of the online tutor support project in 2023/24 academic year.

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
1,189	1,202	1,459	1,076	1,056

Table 1.0: Five years students enrolment figures.

This breakdown indicates an initial uptick up to 2020/21 academic year, followed by a decline in enrolment in the subsequent years.

3.0   Aim and objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation aimed to determine how well the online tutor support project for independent students has served them thereby increasing their satisfaction. It was achieved through the following objectives:

i.   Establish a baseline of students' participation based on available data from the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year.

ii.   Systematically identify relevant facts and generate data relating to the tutor support project.

iii. Gather system data from the VLE that will enable a judgement on what has been achieved by the project.

iv.   Collect empirical data that will assist in understanding the progress that has been made in this inaugural year. Consequently, this will determine whether student satisfaction has been enhanced, retention increased, and/or revenue improved.

v.   Make recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation.

4.0   Evaluation questions

In collecting data for this task, the report sought information that helped in answering the following questions, of which the central question is: has the online tutor support project impacted positively on the students and the programme's revenue?

Other subsidiary questions that guided the collection of data and the analysis were:

i. How has the tutor support project impacted on students' satisfaction?

ii. Has student retention increased as a result of the benefits of the tutor support project?

iii. What impact has the tutor support project had on revenue generation?

5.0   Evaluation implementation plan

A review of the unique circumstances relating to the institution, which may impact the evaluation, is the final step towards the evaluation preparation. It is imperative that the outcomes of the actual output of the evaluation processes within the limits of possibilities, practicalities as well as sustainability within the institution be evaluated (Tobin et al., 2015). Such considerations need to be made: at what level, centralised administrative unit, department, or college, is the evaluation mandated? This is in view of the intersection of specialised structures aimed at either online or distance education (Tobin et al., 2015).

Would the evaluation involve parties with competence capable of providing required insight? This is in view of two fundamental considerations involved in such evaluation: knowledge of the instructor of the content of the discipline, and the ability of the instructor to teach the discipline's content online (Royse et al., 2016). This makes it important that insight is gained from individuals with necessary competence. For clarity, the foregoing areas, issues and questions highlighted make for a robust evaluation. However, this evaluation will be very focused on select areas and levels, LSM, level 4 and Property, level 5, and the tutor support project as a service in the light of identifiable constraints. The identified areas to be evaluated are set out in Table 2.0 below.

Task Name	Bucket Name
Prepare induction pages	Induction
LSM induction	Induction
Studiosity (launch)	Miscellaneous activities
LSM Online Tutorial 1	Online tutorials
LSM Tutor Feedback	Practice exam questions
Property law short discussion activity (tutor enabled)	Miscellaneous activities
LSM (STATUTE) lecture plus	Lecture plus
AI Study buddy (launch)	Miscellaneous activities
Property tutor feedback	Practice exam questions
Property Online Tutorial 1	Online tutorials
LSM Online Tutorial 2	Online tutorials
Property peer feedback	Practice exam questions
LSM Peer feedback	Practice exam questions
Property Online Tutorial 2	Online tutorials
LSM Online Tutorial 3	Online tutorials
Revision QAs forums	Miscellaneous activities

Table 2.0 A schedule of areas to be evaluated.

The tasks to be evaluated are either provisions that students can access independently on individual or group basis or participate directly in real time. The meanings of the abbreviations will not be disclosed in order to maintain anonymity. Studiocity is a provision that enables student submit assignments and be given feedback they could implement before submission. The bucket names are what the tasks are labelled in the VLE.

Table 3.0 below is the timeframe for the evaluation. It sets out each of the key activities and the expected period of implementation.

S/No.	Task	Month	Data from team
1	T1 Brief Literature Review - models for evaluation	January	Any relevant references or frameworks
2	T2 Learning materials and engagement	February - March	VLE data analytics
3	T3 Student experience	April	Online survey
4	T4 Staff Perspective	May - June	Short interviews (3-5) or questions
5	T5 Final report	July - August	

Table 3.0 Time schedule for the evaluation of the LLB Programme (2024)

Numbers 1 and 2 of the time schedule above are elements of the formative assessment and numbers 3-5 are elements of the summative assessment.

6.0   Theoretical foundation: a brief literature review

Reviewing teaching practices is a process that is intentional, needing careful design as well as situational context, potentially resulting in the interpretation of the effectiveness of teaching drawing from multiple types of evidence (Ellis, 2012). The context of this evaluation is online tutor support project of an LLB degree programme which a set of data indicates an initial increase followed by a decline in enrolment, as seen in Table 1.0. Students who registered in Level 4 LSM and Level 5 Property modules of the Law Programme were selected based on their entry requirement being higher. Therefore, the project was expected to impact on learning. It is now being assessed to determine whether there is any impact attributable to it leading to the satisfaction of the students.

Teaching with technology has been identified as having seven best practice principles: encouragement of student-faculty contact, reciprocity as well as co-operation among students, employment of active learning techniques, and prompt feedback. Others are transparent timing of tasks, communication of high expectations, and respect for diversity in ways of learning as well as talents (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1987). Other scholars have similarly set out guidelines for best practices for online instructors. They include setting clear learning paths and goals for students, deliberate use of practice and mastery of strategies for

learning, prompt and constructive feedback, the need for challenge and support to be balanced, and elicitation of reflection that is active and critical. Others are genuine issues being linked to inquiry, development of the ability of the learners to learn, and engendering an environment that encourages and supports inquiry (McCullom, 2010; Savery, 2005). The evaluation of the project offers an opportunity to determine how well these practices are not only embedded but implemented in order to enhance the quality of student experience and increase their satisfaction.

6.1   Uniqueness of online teaching formative evaluation

The unique circumstances of online learning and teaching makes formative evaluation important (Thomas, 2015). Online teaching is an activity done in (physical) isolation with the support of Learning Management Systems (LMS), thereby limiting the casual feedback opportunities from peers in the traditional context. The privacy and isolation inherent in online teaching, with its lack of spontaneous feedback that is informal, makes formative evaluation valuable. Unsolicited feedback, such as questions that are asked in the hallway by students or the expressions on the faces of learners, is something online instructors are unable to rely on (Catalano, 2018). This increases the need to device ways of seeking feedback that are structured.

6.2   Targets of evaluation: objectives

Determining what needs to be evaluated is the first step in the process of online evaluation development (Thomas et al., 2015). Considering that a range of factors that are related affect online education quality, it makes this determination more complicated in practice. These factors could be course materials, resources of the institution, impact of the students' prior learning, curriculum design, the behaviour and activities of the instructor as well as student satisfaction (Philips et al., 2012; Catalano, 2018). Instructively, the administrators of the programme being evaluated set out the objectives of the project to include:

i.   Exploring the online tutor support project's *"technical capacity to deliver and register independent students for online tutorials delivered through"* UG Laws.

ii.   The development of "*workflows for the design of student resources"* (University of London Faculty of Law, 2024, p. 1*)* as well as tutor guidance, support and training in relation to online tutorial.

iii.   The tutorial's delivery and provision of recommendations for improvement.

iv.   The delivery of existing tutor and peer feedback activities.

v.   The assessment of the terms of costs, logistics and the support model's benefit to independent student.

vi.   Gained insight into the learning behaviour of students in the supported model. The sections of the VLE relating to these objectives are captured in Table 2.0 below.

7.0   Methodology

There were two distinct characteristics in this task, evaluation involving 'making judgement', and research, which involves 'seeking knowledge'. Both are consistent with the views of Stokes (1997) regarding 'the quest for understanding' and 'consideration of use'. In the view of Reeves (1997), a number of factors influence an investigator's research goals in such area, including the investigator's epistemological views, training and line of inquiry's dominant paradigms. Distinct from the natural sciences, there is an extra element in the studies of artificial sciences, a consideration of how the 'created artefact' functions, and whether they function to purpose (Philips et al., 2012). This consideration creates a potential for improvement. The created artefact with that potential in this task being online tutor support for independent students in UoL undergraduate law distance learning programme.

Conceptual frameworks and models in educational research serve a central purpose of describing, exposing, ordering, and categorising some phenomenon. By their construction conceptual frameworks highlight key elements of a phenomenon to note when considering the phenomenon (Philip et al., 2012). Pragmatism underpinned this inquiry by combining the most appropriate features of other paradigms in order to develop a coherent understanding of the online tutor support project through the use of mixed-method research (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This is due to the emerging nature of the artefact under investigation and the need to adopt an agile framework. Pragmatism is perceived as an appropriate paradigm for e-learning (Philips et al., 2012). In addition, the knowledge and experiences of the evaluators are vital and also serve as valid data in the course of the task, hence the inclination towards constructivism.

7.1   Evaluation design

Following the blend of pragmatist and constructivist approach of this study and the time and access constraints relevant literature is reviewed, providing theoretical roadmap for the evaluation. Data generated from the VLE as well as those provided by the Law Programme managers from their operations at critical points of the project are reviewed. The information was obtained either during periodic meetings or by correspondence. There is an intention to establish a baseline in relation to student satisfaction, retention and increase in revenue. Focus group sessions were organised as a way of gaining insight into the experiences of the students. Theoretical views of the issues being investigated will be weighed against available data.

Section 2: Summative Evaluation

The effectiveness of a programme's online teaching is the focus of the summative evaluation. Carried out towards the end of the programme, it analyses and measures a range of quality indicators for the purpose of decision making (Thomas et al., 2015; Buller,

2012). System generated data from the VLE (Appendix 9) was analysed and the summary is presented in Table 4.0 below. In addition, the transcript of the first focus group session is presented as Appendix 2 and relevant excerpts of it are presented as 8.1 below. Its questions, schedule of activities and transcript of the second group are presented as Appendices 6, 7 and 8, respectively.

8.0   Findings

An analysis of the system generated data from the VLE is presented below, Table 4.0. It reflects the students' frequency in accessing and engaging in various provisions of the online tutor support project.

	Module	Tutorial	No. of registered independent students	Viewed Sign-up	Booked	Attended	Viewed Pre-tutorial	Viewed Post-tutorial	Viewed both pre- and post-tutorials	Viewed pre-tutorial but not post-tutorial	Viewed post-tutorial but not pre-tutorial	Booked and viewed pre-tutorial	Attended and viewed pre-tutorial	Booked and viewed post-tutorial	Attended and viewed post-tutorial	Booked and viewed both pre- and post-tutorial	Attended and viewed both pre- and post-tutorial
0	LSM	LSM1	257	91	69	45	168	80	65	103	15	62	21	32	21	29	21
1	LSM	LSM2	426	Unavailable	72	38	88	36	28	60	8	57	35	16	8	15	8
2	LSM	LSM3	431	92	45	25	51	45	17	34	28	35	23	14	7	12	6
3	Property	Property 1	964	159	145	85	242	113	95	147	18	126	82	55	40	53	39
4	Property	Property 2	1015	105	101	67	130	81	57	73	24	81	64	37	27	35	32

Table 4.0 Data of online students' participation

Two modules, LSM, level 4 and Property, level 5, were supported by the project over five tutorial sessions. Analysis shows that out of 3,093 students registered for LSM, a total of 432 booked to participate in the project but only 260 attended. Instructively, 106 students (3.43% of the entire students) viewed pre-tutorial, attended and viewed post-tutorial, and could be considered as those who took strong interest in the online tutor support project. It will be interesting to ascertain the reason why students who viewed pre-tutorial did not attend.

Figure 1.0 below indicates that the Property sessions were more attended than the LSM sessions which creates an opportunity through which insight may be gained into why the students attend one module session more than the other module's session.
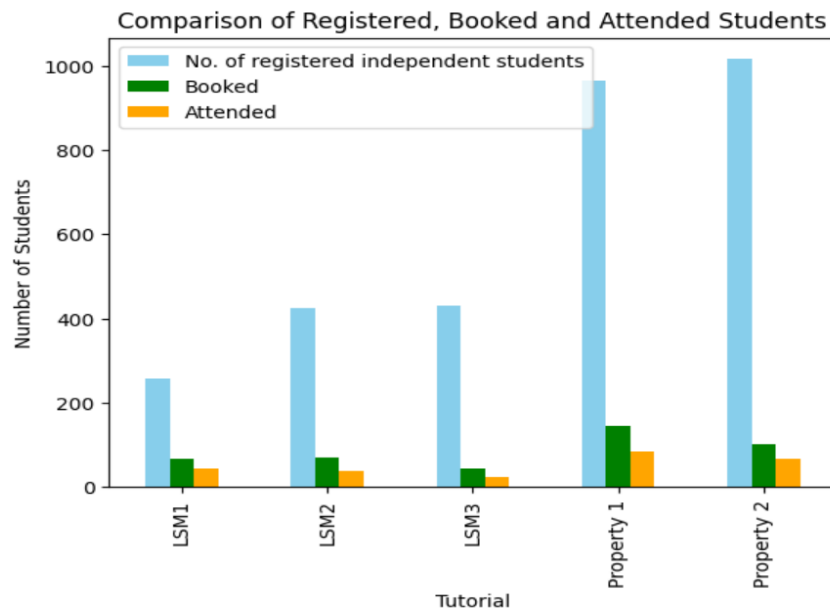
Figure 1.0 Comparison of categories of students during the learning process

Figure 1.0 shows that:

- High registration with low attendance indicates potential issues in relation to things such as scheduling, communication or perceived value
- Across all tutorials, there is a noticeable drop-off from booking to attending.
- Property modules have higher attendance compared to LSM modules. This can lead to deeper analysis of why Property modules appear more successful, what could be applied to the LSM modules.

In other words, Figure 1.0 reinforces the finding of Table 4.0, which shows a high number of registered students on the Law Programme but subdued number participating in the tutor online support. Similarly, it also provides an opportunity for additional insight. A comparison of pre-tutorial and post-tutorial interactions are analysed and presented in Figure 2.0 below.
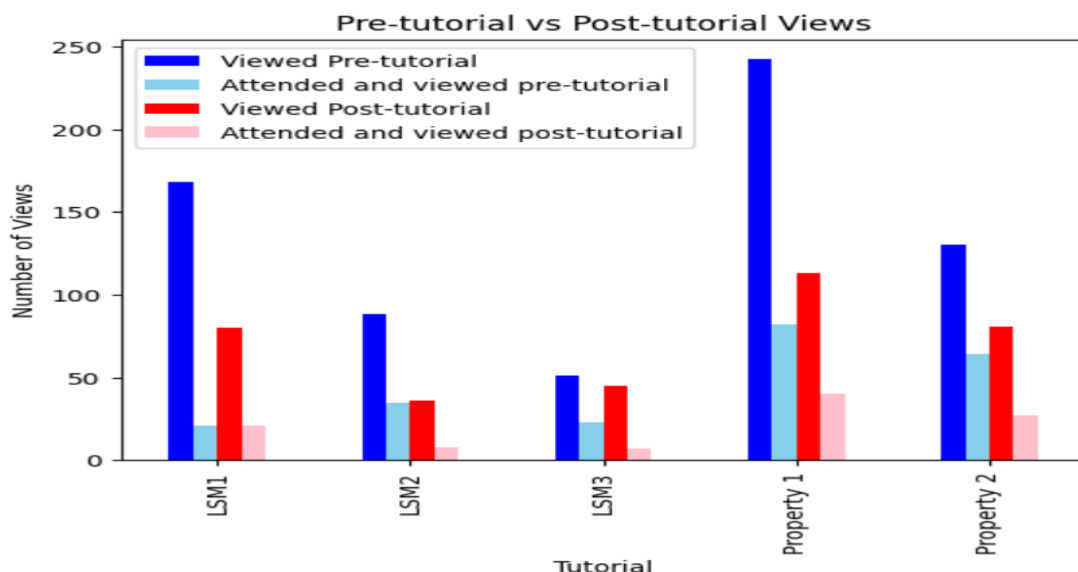
Figure 2.0 Comparison of pre-tutorial and post-tutorial VLE interaction of students

The figure indicates that:

- Higher interaction with pre-tutorial materials suggests that students are preparing but may not be revising effectively. This could highlight areas where post-tutorial materials need to be made more engaging or better integrated into the learning process.
- Property 1 tutorial stands out with the highest engagement across all metrics (registered, booked, attended, pre-tutorial views, post-tutorial views) (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). This tutorial might serve as a model for improving and analysing what works well e.g. topic, relevance, teaching methods, time and duration.

Additional insight gained from the focus group session into some of the data above are presented in Appendix 2. However, participants' responses to three of the questions related to students' satisfaction are presented below (8.1) under the subheading, Relevant Focus Group Questions and Answers.

8.1 Relevant Focus Group Questions and Answers

Question 1: What made you sign up for the online tutorials?

Student A: *"…I want[ed] to confirm what I read and understand with someone.";*

Student A: *"To increase my confidence."*

Student B: *"…I like to try the alternative tutorial course, I took Hong Kong University Space preparation course, I like to try the online tutorial course provided by UoL, and I find that this is very helpful to deepen my knowledge."*

8.1.1   Question one analysis

Question one appears focused towards the project aim, students' satisfaction. The response from the students helps to situate the value of inquiring into students' satisfaction. The responses indicate their willingness and readiness to participate in the online tutor support project for a variety of reasons. That, in itself, opens up chances of the students being offered what may enhance their learning experience. It also creates the possibility of students being retained. On the other hand, it is difficult to capture the perspectives of those students who do not engage as they are less keen to interact in these surveys.

Question 2. What did you expect from the online tutorials?

Student B: *"…[to] give me more knowledge on the laws which the property online tutorial did give me that, I just wish the course for online tutorial could be more sessions, say 5-6 lessons would be great."*

Student B: *"…further, the property tutorial gave me some direction on the exam too; this is great for me."*

Student A: *"I am not so sure what I expected – I wanted to understand how I am meant to understand the law and how to pass and write exam questions as it is my first time studying Law but not my first degree."*

8.1.2   Question two analysis

The second question appears to be an indirect way of ascertaining from the students the things that may need to be done in order to improve their learning experiences and enhance their satisfaction. The responses are quite clear that the students desire input that will improve their understanding of their modules as well as their exam (assessment) performance. These desires of the students are consistent with what research has found to be best practices in online learning: the development of the ability of the learners to learn and engendering an environment that encourages and supports inquiry (McCullom, 2010; Savery, 2005). Therefore, measures need to be put in place towards these objectives, or to reinforce them if they are already in place.

Question 3: What were the positive features of the online tutorials?

Student B: *"…it is flexible for me, because I am a part time student, I have to take balance on work and study, the timetable for the online tutorial perfectly fits my schedule."*

Student A: *"The possibility to ask questions. The structured answer written and provided at the end."*

Student B: *"I am so honourable that I can interact with the tutor directly, and I enjoy it."*

Student A: *"…and I can raise questions directly to tutor and simultaneously…"*

Student B: *"…further, I found that this is so good that I can prepare the online tutorial with the pre-lecture reading before I attend the lectures, as it gave me a clear picture what I should focus."*

Host: Did you complete all the reading and preparatory activities?

Student B: *"Yes."*

Student A: *"Yes, I did for some tutorials."*

Student B: *"…the material was not so much compare with the study material…"*

Host: Would you say that the pre-activities were too much, too little or just about right?

Student B: *"I would like to be more, may be 2-3 more would be great."*

Student A: *"I must say some were confusing as it needed many to read from the VLE to the online books. I was not ready and got confused."*

8.1.3   Question three response analysis

The answers to the third question provide the clearest indication of specific things that made positive impact in the students' experience. Flexibility due to work commitments, particularly the timetable; ability to interact directly with the tutor and raise questions; ability to work on tutorial questions with pre-lecture materials before the lecture. Instructively, a respondent pointed out that confusion set in at some stage due to the large volume of the pre-lecture materials. In evaluating online learning, encouragement of student-faculty contact is noted as one of the best practices (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1987). This is clearly an element of the feedback obtained from the students, which could be transferred to any of the less successful modules in the online tutor support project.

9.0   Brief discussion

The aim of this report is to provide the results from the evaluation of the online tutor support project. The main evaluation question, therefore, is: *has the online tutor support project impacted positively on the students and the programme's revenue?* Evidence from the students', though very limited number, points to the project bringing some degree of student satisfaction. Therefore, the evaluators see a silver lining in the project and believe more data needs to be obtained in order to steer the project in the best direction.

Key interests in this evaluation are the project's aims of improving students' satisfaction, retention and increasing revenue. However, due to the inaugural nature of the support project sufficient data hasn't been generated to establish necessary benchmarks that would clearly enable the evaluation of student retention and increased revenue. Consequently,

judgement has been on student satisfaction, based only on the faint indication from collected data.

There are set areas detailed in Table 2.0 to be evaluated. There are also set aims and objectives of the evaluation. The missing link is insufficient data that will enable the expected judgment. The artefacts are there in the VLE. However, more data would aid a more comprehensive evaluation focused on the aims and objectives. As a result, the evaluators faced the risk of merely running commentaries that do not address the aims and objectives of the evaluation, put differently, that add no real value to the expected outcomes of the evaluation. However, it can be argued that this evaluation helps establish baselines that would enable proper evaluation in the future.

10.0   Conclusions

- Based on the focus group outcome, there is a faint indication of student satisfaction.
- Since this is the end of the first year of the provision, there is yet to be a comparative basis to determine whether there is improvement in retention and revenue or not. From the end of the next academic year, post-commencement year data for such analysis and comparison will be available.
- Useful data has been generated this academic year that is enabling an evaluation of students' participation and satisfaction.
- Being the first academic year there is insufficient data to determine whether the OFS threshold of 55% is met. Data that will be collected in subsequent academic years would enable this determination.
- This evaluation helps establish baselines that will be useful in future evaluations.

11.0   Actionable Recommendations

Recommendations previously made before this evaluation in support of the provision are presented in Appendix 5. Based on the foregoing study, this evaluation recommends:

- **Improve Post-Tutorial Engagement**: consider making post-tutorial content more interactive or directly linked to assessments to encourage students to engage with it.
- **Address Dropoff Rate**: Implement strategies to convert booked students into attendees, such as sending reminders, offering attendance incentives, or providing engaging previews of the tutorial content.
- **Analyse Successful Tutorials**: Study Property 1 to identify successful elements that can be replicated in other tutorials to improve overall engagement.
- **Follow-up Evaluation**: It is advised that a follow-up evaluation is carried out in 2024/25 academic year when there will be additional data that would enable comparative evaluation.
- **Messages to Students:** to understand the reasons for non-attendance; brief automated messages could be sent to 172 students who booked to determine why

they were unable to attend. The feedback will be invaluable. This may be extended to all students who viewed pre-tutorial to ascertain whether they attended, and if no, why they did not attend.

12.0   Lessons learned

- The data generated in this first year of the student support project provides the basis for establishing baselines in different areas of the project that may be needed to evaluate.
- The interest shown by the students in this inaugural phase of the project indicates significant potential for achieving the project's objectives.
- With benefit of hindsight, a pro-active approach to data collection, based on the experience gained, would increase the chances of gaining a variety of data that may be useful in carrying out evaluation in any direction. This will require early collaboration between managers and evaluators.

13.0   Limitations of the evaluation project/report

- Although relevant data has been generated in this first year of the project, it is insufficient to determine improvement in either retention of students or generated revenue. Nor is it sufficient to deduce student satisfaction, should an evaluator pursue a positivist approach.
- Due to the initial brief, goals of the project and considerations before commencement of the evaluation, there was no access to faculty. A full brief with scope at onset would provide an idea levels and degrees of access that may be necessary. However, data from programme managers following data collection from students offered some insight into relevant subjects of the evaluation.
- Being independent evaluators has its natural limitations unlike if it were a tutor in the programme carrying out the evaluation. There would be natural access to colleagues (academic, administrative and technical), data and anything else the evaluator finds necessary.

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University of London Faculty of Law (2024) Online Tutorials Pilot UG Laws Preliminary Report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Project Milestones

Phase	Activity	Start	End
Planning / Preparation	Design, implement and test technical solutions	July 23	Nov 23
	Schedule activities	Aug 23	Sept 23
	Allocate staff resources (Technical/Academic)	Aug 23	Mar 23
	Develop communication plan	Aug 23	Oct 23
	Create guidance for students and tutors	Sept 23	Oct 23
	Establish a support plan for students and train tutors	Sept 23	Nov 23
	LSM Online Tutorial 1 (independent students) • Create learning materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Release pre-tutorial materials • Open sign-up page • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run tutorials • Release post-tutorials materials • Release post-tutorial survey	Oct 23	Nov 23
	Property law short activity (independent students) • Design the activity • Create learning materials and guidance • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Tutor provides timely feedback	Nov 23	Dec 23
	LSM Tutor feedback activity • Create materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run the marking process • Release results and feedback • Publish sample student answers with feedback on the VLE	Nov 23	Jan 24
	Property law Tutor feedback activity	Jan 24	Feb 24

	• Create materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Announce activity to students and send reminders. • Run the marking process • Release results and feedback • Publish sample student answers with feedback on the VLE		
	LSM Online tutorial 2 (independent students) • Create learning materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Release pre-tutorial materials. • Open sign-up page. • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run tutorials • Release post-tutorials materials • Release post-tutorial survey	Dec 24	Jan 24
	Property law Online tutorial 1 (independent students) • Create learning materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Release pre-tutorial materials. • Open sign-up page. • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run tutorials • Release post-tutorials materials • Release post-tutorial survey	Dec 24	Jan 24
Implementation	LSM Peer feedback • Create materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run the peer feedback process • Arrange for sample tutor marking • Release results and feedback • Publish sample student answers with feedback on the VLE	Jan 24	Mar 24
	Property law Peer feedback • Create materials • Create online pages (VLE) Jan 24 Mar 24 • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run the peer feedback process	Jan 24	Mar 24

	• Arrange for sample tutor marking • Release results and feedback • Publish sample student answers with feedback on the VLE		
	LSM Online tutorial 3 (independent students) • Create learning materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Release pre-tutorial materials. • Open sign-up page. • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run tutorials • Release post-tutorials materials • Release post-tutorial survey	Feb 24	Mar 24
	Property law Online tutorial 2 (independent students) • Create learning materials • Create online pages (VLE) • Release pre-tutorial materials. • Open sign-up page. • Announce activity to students and send reminders • Run tutorials • Release post-tutorials materials • Release post-tutorial survey	Feb 24	Mar 24
Review and evaluation	Collect feedback through online surveys for the online tutorials, tutor and peer feedback activities	Nov 24	Mar 24
	Prepare technical evaluation report for the online tutorials	Nov 24	Mar 24
	Conduct an interim project evaluation and review further actions	April 24	May 24
	Review data from the Student Experience Survey (SES) to assess student satisfaction levels	June/July 24	July 24
	Collate, review and compare current and past assessment results	Aug 24	Aug 24
	Create a final evaluation report with Recommendations for future delivery	Sept 24	Sept 24

Appendix 2:

Online Tutorial Focus Group (12.04.24) - Summary of responses

Four students attended the Focus Group. Due to misunderstandings over start time (because of the time difference), two of these students joined the session as the first two students were leaving the webinar room. Therefore, the responses have been divided into two groups. In the first group both students used the chat to reply and in the second group both students used their microphones. All responses have been anonymised.

The discussed was directed by a mixture of set questions and impromptu questions triggered by the student responses.

Group 1: Students A and B

What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?

Student A: Because I want to confirm what I read and understand with someone.

Student A: To increase my confidence

Student B: Because I like to try the alternative tutorial course, I took Hong Kong University Space preparation course, I like to try the online tutorial course provided by UoL, and I find that this is very helpful to deepen my knowledge.

What did you expect from the online tutorials?

Student B: [To] give me more knowledge on the laws which the property online tutorial did give me that, I just wish the course for online tutorial could be more session, say 5-6 lessons would be great.

Student B: further, the property tutorial gave me some direction on the exam too, this is great for me.

Student A: I am not so sure what I expected - I wanted to understand how I am meant to understand the law and how to pass and write exams questions as it is my first time studying law but not my first degree

What were the positive features of the online tutorials?

Student B: it is flexible for me, because I am a part time student, I have to take balance on work and study, the time table for the online tutorial is perfectly fit my schedule.

Student A: The possibility to ask questions. The structured answer written and provided at the end.

Student B: I am so honourable that I can interact with the tutor directly, and I enjoy it.

Student A: and I can raise questions directly to tutor and Simultaneously

Student B: further, I found that this is so good that I can prepare the online tutorial with the pre-lecture reading before I attend the lectures, as it gave me a clear picture what I should focus

Host: Did you complete all the reading and preparatory activities?

Student B: Yes, I can.

Student A: Yes, I did for some tutorials.

Student B: the material were not so much compare with the study material 😅

Host: Would you stay that the pre-activities were too much, too little or just about right?

Student B: I would like to be more, may be 2-3 more would be great

Student A: I must say some were confusing as it needed many to read from the VLE to the online books. I was not ready and got confused

How could we improve the online tutorials?

Student B: I would like to suggest: 1) few more lecture; 2) some interaction after the lecture, like the exam activities in VLE.

Host: What sort of interaction might you like? A discussion forum perhaps, or some materials posted up? What sorts of things might you like to see?

Student B: discussions, anything that could stronger our knowledge or test our understanding about the lecture. akin to these. 😄

Student A: More possibility to ask more questions separate from the subject of the tutorials to which the instructors tend to focus on only and rarely have time to answer any more.

Host suggested MCQs

Student B: MCQ is quite boring in my opinion

Student B: 😁

Student A: More interactions questions during the tutorials - I must say some tutors for Contracts are very active and get to discuss more

Student A: But I guess he was reading all our comments live and more people wrote

Host: Do you think it should be compulsory for people to use their microphones? Or should there be a mixture of speaking and use of the chat?

Student B: may be mixture would be great in my opinion

Student A: I tried to speak once but I feel maybe the tutors might get distracted and go in tangent

Student B: how about some lecture is compulsory while some of the lectures are mixture to use the microphone ?

Student A: Good idea I guess ⬆

Student B: Thanks

Host: Is there anything else we could have done to improve the tutorials?

Student A: Can we choose some subject?

Student B: do you think may be some homework after the lecture?

Student A: Or vote

Student A: on the choice

Student B: or group homework after the lecture

Student A: Good idea

Student A: I tried to work in group but as we all did not start at the same time it was very difficult working on a written answer many in group of 2-3 might help

Student B: besides, I feel attending the online lecture makes me feel warm, not feeling study alone, very lonely

Student A: true

Student B: Thanks

Student B: right, the connection with UoL, the online lecture makes me feel that.

Other than online tutorials, what else could we do to support your learning?

Student B: well, I feel difficulties when I study property law, if there is a individual section for us to raise our difficulties on understanding some concept, we may write the questions to UoL, then held a individual lecture for answering our muddled concepts would be great.

Student B: I tried the discussion forum but no answer

Student B: or may be no others interacts

Student A: Contact hours to favourite tutors?

Student B: good idea

Host: Maybe like a live chat?

Student A: Yes something like that. Not all tutors explain the same concept the same way either

Student B: actually for this year, Londy is helpful, the AI

If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?

Student B: I will pay for it

Student B: I would like to pay for all, but for most of the student, I think choose to pay would be more flexible

Student A: As a stressed student I would pay for all either way even if it was not grouped

Host: Student B, what did you like about Londy and how has it been useful for you?

Student A: I have not used it - first time hearing about it

Student B: for example, a term of "reversioner" it is quite confuse for me, even I read the material and the textbook, then I use the Londy, then, it give me a precise definition.

Student B: I like to add some issue about the paying course. is that possible for two sessions, for May/June student and Oct student.

Student B: because I am a part time student, I have to split the modules for two exam in a year. I have experienced something, when I like to pay for the online lecture which cost 100 pound, I cannot attend it when I take oct exam

Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

Student B: well, after studying a few year in UoL, I think the material and supports is very sufficient to me, and the knowledges I gain are very useful to my work too. and I have observed that the support become more and more, for this year, this is the first time for me to use AI support, this is so good, and there is a studiosity something like that. it able for me to check my answering exam question skills.

Student B: that's what I want

Student B: for the first year, I really don't know how to aim and answer the exam question.

Student A: scared to answer questions

Student B: do you think if, if there is an activities, may be an online activity that allowing us to have a trial exam, it can let us know how to gain or loss marks. similar to the learning activities this year in VLE

Host: Student B, did you do the peer feedback or tutor feedback activity?

Student B: I did, but the questions are limited, usually just one question

Student B: like adverse possession or lease and licence

Student B: it is very useful

Host: Student B: Would you like more support with answering exam questions or perhaps study skills?

Student B: yeah, few more is great, seems I am a greedy person. 😅

Group 2: Students C and D

This group gave responses verbally and the responses below are not an exact transcript.

What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?

Student C: Online tutorials are a good opportunity to receive feedback from tutors to get insight into what the real examiner is expecting and it is very useful for distance students. Would like such activities to increase.

Student D: The need for further assistance. Studying independently and just seeing the references from the module and the mini-lectures and so on. So I felt any additional support would be most welcome.

What did you expect from the online tutorials?

Student C: I received what I expected. The significant thing from the tutorials was the structure of the answer. The whole information that we need for the exam, the material, can be received from the VLE. It's a great resource actually. But how to structure your answer is very useful. I expected and received how we should structure our answers.

Student D: I expected to get a clear understanding of the topic and be able to address any concerns with the concept.

What were the positive features of the online tutorials?

Student D: I think that they gave, in terms of the areas that being addressed, that the time was taken not just to answer the questions that were posed pre-tutorial, but also at what possible misconceptions there could be and cleared those, and addressing questions that flowed out of the questions that were posed or even just general concerns. I think that was positive. And hearing the professors actually speak to the issues in a very clear way, those were positive. They were receptive to questions and cleared misunderstandings. Quite a number of positives.

Student C: In general I agree with Student D. I think that we received a great opportunity to examine some narrow issues of different questions and we received strict guidelines (a repetition of my previous idea) of how to answer real exam questions. It's very useful.

How could we improve the online tutorials?

Student C: Just increase the number of tutorials. We had only three on LSM and it would be great if the number could be increased.

Student D: Not just more but maybe if a survey can be down about which topics might particularly be most needed. So that we can provide that feedback and you can prepare tutorials on the additionals.

Student C: Probably another thing is to make the sessions a little bit longer. An hour or an hour and a half is not enough for us individual students. We wish they are made a little bit longer.

Student C: Online tutorials are very useful. Probably to image some podcasts could be useful as week. A discussed which may be recorded and then we could listen to them. This type of activity might be useful.

Host: That's interesting. Previously I have done something called 'In conversation with', where two or more people who are experts or have an interest in that area have a discussion which can then be downloaded as a podcast. Is that the sort of thing you would be interested in?

Student C: Yeah, absolutely, that's exactly the idea that I tried to describe.

If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?

Student C: I can answer this question as I was thinking about it. First of all I want to say that some payable activities are rather good for me and it ok when we should pay for something we can receive additionally. As for me, I think that it is more comfortable to pay for some options. You can choose something and pay for it. Because some activities might be less useful, but you should pay for it if you chose the option. For me it is more comfortable to chose and pay for *options you have chosen.*

Student D: I support pay as you go as well.

Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

Student C: In general I can say that I really are grateful for such activities you provide us for us to give you feedback and receive some feedback from you and this type of collaboration, conversation, whatever, is very useful and fantastic. Another point I would like to mention is that it is very difficult to be a distance student because during the route of your education you feel yourself alone and such activities allow you to feel yourself as part of a community. That's really fantastic.

Student D: I was thinking that maybe additional activities where you just review past papers as exams and have that level of interaction as a tutorial. I know it's written as an additional resource but it also helps if you can speak in a forum of that nature, controlled by the university and not just left up to students, because sometimes I find that when students collaborate on their own and the information is not always correct. The authority of the university must be most present.

Host: Would that work for you as a recording? Does it have to be a live session? Could you have a tutor bringing a question up and talking you through it in a recording?

Student D: It could be a recording and feedback questions to the tutor. Maybe the control of a recording might be better in the tutorials a person might be asking question heading in a particular direction and you are a different levels of understanding of the issue. You sometimes feel like you are being kept back because that person doesn't have a clear view of what the concept is and so you have to go through all these things.

END

Appendix 3:

Online Tutorials Pilot UG Laws Preliminary Report

Background and Purpose

There has been a drive for a review of support for independent students on the UG Laws programme, as the student continuation and completion figures are below the OFS thresholds and they have lower satisfaction rates than students studying with Recognised Teaching Centres (RTCs).

The Online Tutor Supported model is a one of a series of initiatives which together form the UG Laws Enhancement project aimed at addressing support of independent students in the 2023/24 academic year. This preliminary report reviews the data collected to date for the online tutorials and provides an interim evaluation of progress against the specific project objectives. Further analysis will be required once the exam results for the June 2023/24 assessment sessions are available. UG Laws is also working with CODE Fellows on the evaluation of the Enhancement project and they will provide an overall report on the quality of the learning behaviour and the feasibility of extending this provision for all independent students.

The Project Plan provided the project objectives and outputs.

Objectives:

- To explore the technical capacity to deliver and register independent students for online tutorials delivered through the UG Laws VLE.
- To develop workflows for the design of student resources for the online tutorials and tutor guidance/training/support for delivery of online tutorials.
- To evaluate the delivery of the tutorials and make recommendations for further enhancement.
- To successfully deliver the already existing Tutor & Peer Feedback activities as part of the online supported module.
- To assess the feasibility in terms of costs, logistics and student benefit of offering an online supported model to independent students in UG Laws.
- To discover insights into student learning behaviour in a tutor supported model.

Outputs:

- Improve continuation and completion of independent students as part of our B3 metrics return.
- Increase engagement among the independent students as measured where possible by VLE data.
- Improve independent student experience as measured in the SES
- Deliver Evaluation report which will form part of the evidence contributing to the strategic discussion considering the viability of delivering the UG Laws programmes as an online tutor supported programme to independent students.

Online Tutorials Overview

Two modules were selected: LSM at Level 4 and Property at Level 5. It was decided to chose two modules from different levels as students entering at Level 4 were subject to higher entrance requirements and the project sought to ascertain if there was any effect on the learning which could be attributed to this. Three tutorials were planned for LSM and two for Property. Because Level 5 students were Continuing Registration, which was not complete until January 2024, the first Property Tutorial would not take place until January/February 2024.

The tutorials took place in the following months.

Table 1: Planned tutorial sessions

Module	Tutorial Number	Delivery month/year
LSM	1	November 2023
LSM	2	January/February 2024
Property	1	January/February 2024
LSM	3	March 2024
Property	2	March 2024

Technical Implementation

One of the challenges to consider was the technical implementation of the pilot, particularly as the tutorials were restricted to independent students. It was determined that we would need to provide a specific online tutorials page on the VLE, along with access to the Blackboard Collaborate webinar system.

The main questions to be addressed were:

- How to provide access to the relevant pages only to independent students.
- How to get students to sign up on individual sessions.
- How do students access the sessions.
- How to support the students and the tutors.

The Online Tutorials Technical Report (the "Technical Report") created by the Learning Technology team addresses these aspects in detail and an extract is given in Appendix 1. In summary, the functionality of the VLE could be used to control access to pages and allocate students to groups. Group allocation then controlled access to the webinars at the appropriate time. Staff from the Learning Technology and admin teams supported students and tutors during the webinar itself, and students were provided with a means of contacting the team if they had technical difficulties.

According to the Technical Report "The implementation of the online tutorials using the Laws VLE and Blackboard Collaborate appears to have been successful. Students did not encounter major issues with accessing materials or live sessions." This is supported by analysis of the survey responses at Figure 1. The initial findings suggest that the challenge of

the technical implementation was successfully addressed and can be replicated for any further implementation. Scaling up this process will inevitably involve increased resource.

One issue surrounding scalability is the provision of technical support, which involves staff time and availability. UG Laws has experience of providing a greater level of this form of support during the annual Online Revision which are provided for up to nine modules There are also other models of technical support, including concurrent technical support, whereby technical staff support a number of sessions concurrently and tutors can alert the technicians when they have specific needs.
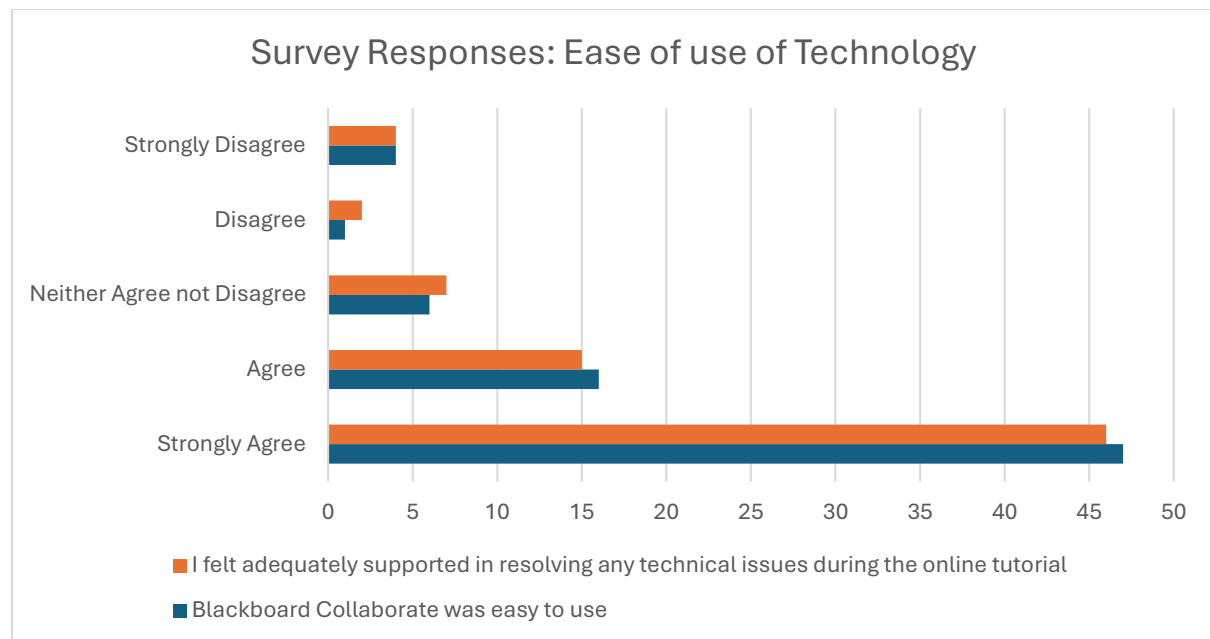

Figure 1: Survey Responses: Ease of Use of Technology

Academic Delivery

A second challenge was ensuring we had sufficient academic capacity and capability to deliver the sessions. Five tutors were commissioned to deliver the sessions: three for LSM and two for Property. UG Laws has a bank of tutors from existing study events that it can commission to deliver online tutorials. For each module a Co-ordinating Tutor was appointed, whose role was to:

- choose tutorial topics;
- create the learning resources, including any PowerPoint slides;
- write tutorial guidance for tutors;
- liaise with tutors to ensure they were comfortable with the materials and the sessions;
- support tutors during the tutorials, if necessary; and
- provide feedback to the UG Laws team on how things went.

Tutors were provided with a guidance document, covering:

- The tutor and student materials provided to tutors;
- Features designed to encourage interaction, including breakout rooms;

- Making students aware of the resources and survey; and
- The contact details of their Co-ordinating Tutor.

All of the tutors had previously used Blackboard Collaborate, but all were given the opportunity to attend a technical training session with the Learning Technologist. Most of the tutors felt comfortable using the technology and did not require a training session, but two tutors chose to attend a session to get extra guidance on the features that might be beneficial for tutorials.

Tutor feedback

The views of the tutors were sought after the first tutorial and at the end of the pilot. An extract from the LSM Online Tutorial 1 Report can be seen in Appendix 2, outlining suggestions that were followed in later sessions.

All five tutors responded to the end-of-pilot tutor survey and a copy of the questions can be seen in Appendix 3. Tutors found the materials useful and most reported that the students seemed engaged. When asked what went less well in the tutorials, there were only three responses, with the rest stating there were no negatives. The difficulties identified by the three tutors were:

- Poor attendance
- Engagement limited to typing on screen, with no students using microphones*
- Not engaging the students as well as they had hoped to.*

*As this is the first time we have offered tutorials, it may be that students are less used to participating. They may require guidance on how to get the best from the sessions.

Tutors were asked if they made changes to their approach following tutorial 1, and if so, the impact of this. The property tutors reported no changes. For LSM, tutors reported that for the later tutorials they:

- Tried to get students to speak instead of use the chat box;
- Spent less time on the icebreaker MCQs and more time on how to approach and structure the exam essay question;
- Tried to get to know students at the start to try and increase participation.

When asked how to improve the sessions, most tutors were positive. One tutor thought that consistency of tutor across the sessions would be beneficial for students. This suggestion has been considered as it might benefit the students, but as it is likely to reduce students' choice of sessions and introduce complexity in terms of administration, it cannot be introduced at this time. A second tutor wanted greater participation. Only one tutor requested further training, asking for support in improving their skills with the interactive functions of Collaborate. T

Teaching observations

During the tutorials in March, each tutor had a teaching observation for at least one session. Areas of best practice included:

- Resources designed for interaction

- Structured materials for LSM
- Icebreakers to encourage participation
- Gave guidance on what examiners are looking for in essay and problem questions
- Encouraged learners to think and be critical
- Use of stories to bring the law to life

The observer also reflected on ways to improve the experience for learners, including:

- Recognising when a student is taking the session off-track and steering the discussion.
- The property slides might benefit from some MCQs and greater structure/more content, although it is noted that Level 4 modules might benefit from structured materials more than Level 5, where more discussion is expected.
- Training for tutors on how to use the features of Collaborate and how to ensure learners are familiar with these feature before they start any activities using them.
- Improving the use of the icebreaker. All students were asked their location as the icebreaker. While this helped students become comfortable and encouraged early interaction, for the larger groups it took up a disproportionate amount of the time available. And although it was a question all students could answer, it should be explored whether a more engaging icebreaker can be used.

Student Feedback Relating to Tutors

While the student surveys did not directly ask for feedback on the tutors, of the students that made comments, 26.7% commented positively on the tutor. In addition, 27.9% used the word 'interaction', 'interactive' or 'interact' when commenting positively on the sessions.

Conclusions on Academic Delivery

The challenge of the academic delivery of the tutorials was also successfully met. The use of co-ordinating tutors allowed for a consistent and targeted experience, and ensured tutors were supported throughout the process. Tutors responded positively to the experience and, given the response of the students, clearly contributed to students' perception of value of the sessions.

Recommendations include:

- Continuing with the use of co-ordinating tutors for similar events;
- Providing further guidance to tutors on best practice when delivering online tutorials, to strengthen existing skills;
- Ensuring consistency across resources whilst allowing for the needs of individual subjects;
- Continue to encourage student interaction and consider the guidance given to students ahead of the tutorials.
- Consider alternative icebreakers.

Student Registration for Online Tutorials

Publicity/Announcements

A coordinated set of announcements was put in place to encourage student registration. All independent students received an email informing them of pilot at the point of registration. According to the Technical Report, this was followed by:

- "Initial announcement sent two weeks before the deadline date including pre-tutorial materials and signup instructions.
- Two reminder announcements. The first reminder was sent one week after the first announcement and the second reminder sent 2 days before the signup deadline date.
- An announcement with instructions on how to join the tutorial was sent a day before the session to individual session groups.
- Final announcement was sent about the post tutorial materials and the survey."

It is noted that the communications to students focussed heavily on the logistics of the tutorial.

Timing

One challenge is the range of time zones in which UG Law students reside. To offset this, tutorials were offered as both morning and afternoon slots (UK time). Analysis of the attendance data shows no student preference for morning or afternoon sessions.

Attendance statistics

The tables below are extracted from the Technical Report and show that for both modules, the number of students signing up and attending decreased between Tutorials 1, 2 and 3. For LSM, only 6% of registered Independent students attended the final tutorial, with 7% for Property.

56.6% of students who attend Tutorial 1 for Property also attended Tutorial 2. 20% of students who attended Tutorial 1 of LSM went on to attend Tutorials 2 and 3.

Although students who signed-up but didn't attend the sessions were asked why in the surveys following Tutorials 2 and 3, only five students completed this and most gave no particular reason.

Table 11: LSM Tutorials Comparison

Metric	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3
Total independent students registered	257	426	431
Students signed up	85 (33%)	72 (17%)	45 (10%)
Students attended	45 (18%)	38 (9%)	25 (6%)
Average attendance percentage	53.33%	52.78%	55.56%
Students attended more than one session	-	19	21(2 sessions) 9 (3 sessions)

Table 12: Property law Tutorials Comparison

Metric	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2

Total independent students registered	964	1015
Students signed up	145 (15%)	101 (10%)
Students attended	85 (9%)	67 (7%)
Average attendance percentage	58.33%	68.33%
Students attended more than one session	-	48 (2 sessions)

Conclusions on Student Participation

While the number of students participating is disappointing, the percentages are a greater proportion of the eligible students when considering the submissions for the Tutor or Peer Feedback activities over the last few years. These activities are also provided for no fee. It is clear that there is a desire for online tutorials: students have requested these in the End of Module Surveys and in the student surveys from this project. The fact that the tutorials are free might have some impact on this. While there is an expectation that free resources will have a greater take-up, students sometimes attach more value to resources they have to pay for. Free tutorials can also result in a greater percentage of non-attendance, as there is no financial impact. Even when there is a fee attached to the events we currently run, there are students who fail to attend even having made the payment.

It should be noted that, while there is less participation than hoped for, feedback from those who did attend indicates that students valued the online tutorials and found them beneficial to their learning. Thought should be given to methods of encouraging participation, which might include:

- Communications to students should include the benefits of attending the tutorials – what they will gain from them.
- Student testimonials.
- Inclusion in the student newsletter (if extended to all students).
- Fees for tutorials (to show their value and increase attendance for those that sign-up).

Student Feedback

Student feedback was gathered through a survey after each tutorial and a focus group that took place in April.

Student Survey Feedback

After each tutorial students were sent a link to a survey. A list of the questions can be found in Appendix 4. After the first LSM survey in November 2023, additional questions were added to the survey, covering the administration and technical process.

As a result of the feedback from the first LSM tutorial, the duration of later tutorial sessions was increased 1 hour to 1.5 hours.

In the collated feedback for all the tutorials, students were extremely positive about the experience as can be seen at figure 2, with 86.1% selecting either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' when asked if they would recommend the tutorials to other students. (NB: In the survey

some of the students who selected 'strongly disagree' had accompanied this with very positive comments, so it is possible they had misunderstood the scoring.)
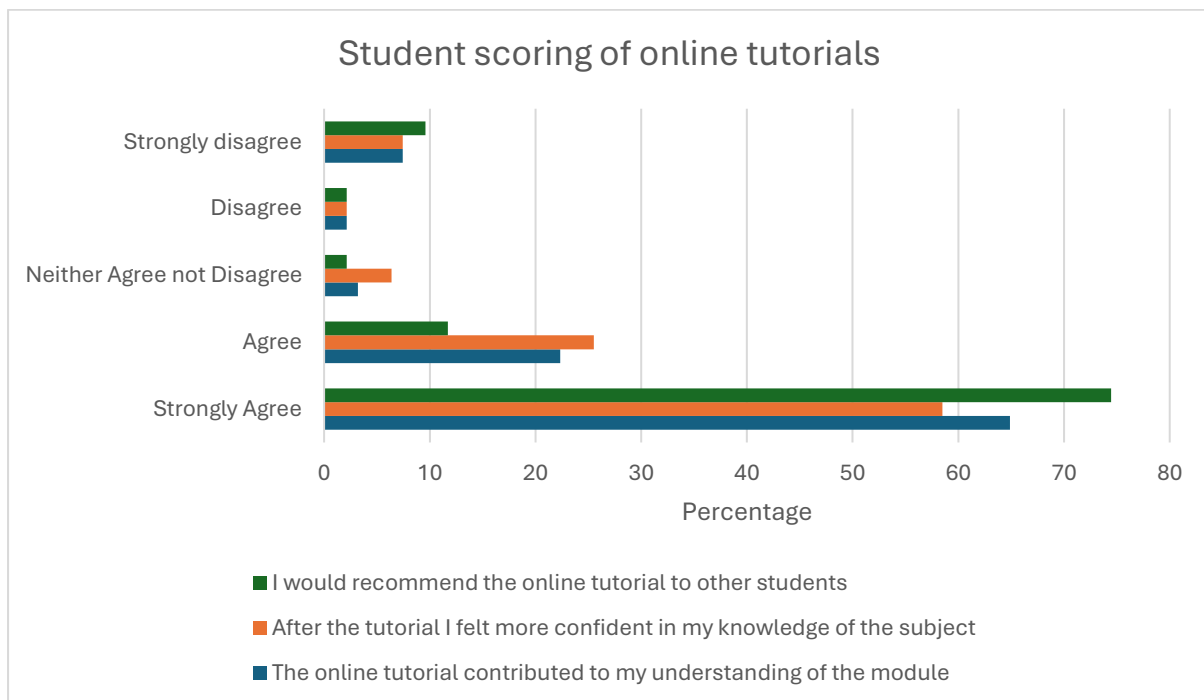

Figure 2: Student scoring of online tutorials

Selected comments include:

"The interactive nature of the session was awesome"

"Everything was on point. Excellent"

"This format was extremely helpful and beneficial to my online learning. I would definitely avail of more of these should they be offered."

Focus Group Feedback

After all tutorials had ended, an invitation was sent to those that signed up to the tutorials, inviting them to attend a Focus Group run by the Associate Dean for teaching and learning. 12 students agreed to take part in the Focus Group, although only four attended. A copy of the Focus Group questions can be seen in Appendix 5.

The students were again very positive about the tutorials. They were appreciative of the opportunity to obtain guidelines on how to approach questions and to interact with the tutors. When asked what they would like in terms of improvements, they wanted more tutorials and they wanted them to be longer. The tutorials also gave them the opportunity to feel like a community.

"…I feel attending the online lecture makes me feel warm, not feeling study alone, very lonely… the connection with UoL, the online lecture makes me feel that"

Student suggestions for resources/support included:

- Post-tutorial activities
- The ability to ask UoL questions on the subject (a student noted they tried the discussion forum, but there was no response)
- Individual contact with tutors (the Associate Dean suggested a live chat at this point, to which there was a positive response)
- Podcasts
- Activities where you review past papers (the student reacted positively to the Associate Dean's suggestion that this could be a recording, as long as there was a way to feedback questions to the tutor)

Each student indicated that they would be willing to pay for the online tutorials, but were spilt 50:50 on the question of whether they would like to pay for an entire set in one go, or whether they would want to pay as they go.

Conclusions on Student Feedback

The tutorials were a positive experience for students and they clearly valued having support and interaction with the tutors.

Conclusions: Progress in Respect of Objectives

1. *To explore the technical capacity to deliver and register independent students for online tutorials delivered through the UG Laws VLE.*
   No technical limitations were experienced during the pilot and the process ran smoothly. It is considered that the challenge of the technical implementation was successfully addressed and can be replicated for any further implementation. However, if the online tutorials are a paid for service, there may be additional technical requirements regarding payments.

2. *To develop workflows for the design of student resources for the online tutorials and tutor guidance/training/support for delivery of online tutorials.*
   Initial workflows and guidance have been created and reviewed. This will be expanded following feedback from the students and tutors.

3. *To evaluate the delivery of the tutorials and make recommendations for further enhancement.*
   This preliminary report reviews the available data and has identified the following suggestions:

   - Explore introducing a fee for the tutorials;
   - Improve marketing of the tutorials;
   - Continue with the use of co-ordinating tutors for online events;
   - Create additional tutor guidance and training to further enhance the tutors' skills;
   - Expand the interactive features, including icebreakers.

4. *To successfully deliver the already existing Tutor & Peer Feedback activities as part of the online supported module.*

This is considered in a separate report: Tutor and Peer Feedback Assessment Report 2023-24.

5. *To assess the feasibility in terms of costs, logistics and student benefit of offering an online supported model to independent students in UG Laws.*
This will be addressed in the final report produced by the CODE Fellows.

6. *To discover insights into student learning behaviour in a tutor supported model.*
The preliminary results suggest:

- Although not all students participate in the interactive features of tutorials, they value the opportunity for interaction.
- Students value the knowledge of the tutors and the insights into how to address exam questions.
- Students like to use the chat room to engage with tutors instead of using microphones.
- Student responses to breakout rooms are mixed, with some enjoying them and other preferring more time with the tutors.
- Tutors report a positive experience, with only a few suggestions for improvements, aimed at increasing participation.
- Students were open to the suggestion of making a payment to attend the online tutorials.

Scaling the project

The pilot for 2023/24 was delivered to independent students only and restricted to two modules, which meant that the pool of students was limited to 431 students for LSM and 1015 students for Property. This is only 12.3% (for LSM) and 24.9% (for Property) of students registered on programme. If online tutorials are extended, the following scalability issues will need to be considered.

Table 2: Addressing scalability

Issue	Addressed by
Sufficient tutors	Use of existing bank of tutors, with time for additional recruitment factored in if needed
Sufficient technical skills for tutors	Use of existing bank of tutors, with use of co-ordinating tutor and written/recorded technical guidance
Pre-tutorial resources	Use of existing recordings from online modules and use of co-ordinating tutor
Scalability of booking	Expand knowledge of existing UoL booking system to ensure efficiency
Administrative support	Dedicated academic support until new processes are fully tested and embedded
Technical support	Explore the use of concurrent technical support, alongside additional tutor guidance
VLE processes	Streamlining process, incorporating automation wherever possible.

Next Steps

1) Analyse the assessment data once available and provide a final UG Laws report on the online tutorials.
2) Work with CODE on the production of an overall report for the enhancement project.
3) Creation of a project plan for Phase 2 of the pilot, including:
   a. Developing a series of online tutorials, delivered for a fee, to a limited number of independent and RTC students.
   b. Timetabling of the sessions and how this aligns with other online events (such as the study support event).
   c. Recruitment and support of tutors.
   d. Administration considerations, including the online booking system and technical support.
   e. Best practice for online tutorials, including technical skills, icebreakers and increasing interaction.
   f. Marketing to students.

Appendix 4: Extract from Online Tutorials Technical Report

"Technical implementation

The Online Tutorials are delivered via the Laws VLE. All the relevant materials are published within the existing LSM 2023/24 and Property 2023/24 module pages. The platform that is used to run the online sessions is Blackboard collaborate which is available to access through the VLE.

Below are some of the main technical requirements and how they were implemented.

1. How to provide access to the relevant pages only to independent students.

- Creating an Online Tutorial section on both LSM 2023/24 and Property 2023/24 module pages.

- Setting up a restriction on the Online Tutorial sections so that only students with XNULL or XOTHER in the Institution field in their profile would be able to access the section.

- Guest access was removed from all activities so that students who were independent but not registered for LSM and Property 2023/24 could not access the resources.

- All relevant information was placed within this section, including Guidance, Pre-tutorial materials and Post tutorial materials, sign-up pages.

2. How to get students to sign up on individual sessions.

- Added a Group Choice activity in the Online Tutorial section. A group was set up for each session capped to **40 students**. This formed the signup page where students

could select the session, they wish to register for which would then automatically add them to the respective group.

- The signup page, guidance page and pre-tutorial materials page was made available just over 2 weeks before the deadline date.

3. How do students access the sessions.

- A Blackboard Collaborate activity was then added to the Online Tutorial section. Restrictions were then applied to this activity so that only students in a specific group (determined by when they signed up) could access the link between a certain date/time. This ensured only students registered on a specific session got access. This activity was hidden but made available so that we could link to it without it being visible to students.

- A join the online tutorial page was created where guidance and information were published on joining the session and a button published which linked to the Blackboard Collaborate activity. Restrictions were added to this page so that only students who were in one of the groups could see and access this page.

4. How to support the students and the tutors.

- The Blackboard session was opened 45 minutes before the start of the session for the tutor to login so we could do a test of their video and audio and to go through any queries they had. They also had the use of the moderator's chat if they wanted to communicate directly with us during the session.

- The Blackboard session was opened to students 30 minutes before the start and where we went through some basic housekeeping for the session and gave students the opportunity to ask questions before the start of the session. We also encouraged student to not only use the chat but also speak using their mic when interacting with the tutor.

- A chat activity was added to the Online Tutorial section for students to communicate with 30 minutes before and during the session. Restrictions were applied to this activity so that only students in a specific group could access the chat between a certain date/time."

Appendix 5: Extract from the LSM Online Tutorial 1 Report

Recommendations for Later Tutorials in the Module

- "Introduce more online polls for MCQs
- Give students more time to look at the questions before putting up poll
- Provide more feedback on wrong answers to MCQs
- Tutor to encourage students to use their mic instead of the chat to ask questions
- Add in other means for students to interact in tutorial, eg using Blackboard writing tool to write on slides

- Small changes to the slides to facilitate the workflow of the tutorial. (Comment for the Coordinating Tutor)
- Tutors to receive brief tutor notes before tutorial
- Record tutor briefing with the Coordinating Tutor for those who cannot attend
- Change the sign-up deadline date to a Thursday so we can send out email to students booked on the Monday session on Friday OR start the first session on Tuesday so we can communicate to students on Monday rather than Friday.
- Make the sessions a little bit longer (possibly 1.5 hours) so that sufficient time is given for questions and answers at the end.
- Ensure students know the survey is anonymous.
- The survey should ask students also about the process. It is focussed mainly on the materials and teaching, but we need to know if it was easy for them to attend, time zones, engagement, etc"

Appendix 6: Focus Group Questions

1) What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?
2) What did you expect from the online tutorials?
3) What were the positive features of the online tutorials?
4) How could we improve the online tutorials?
5) Other than online tutorials, what else could we do to support your learning?
6) If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?
7) Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

Appendix 7: Online Tutorial Focus Group Agenda and Questions

12 April, 2pm-3.30pm

1. Welcome
   a. Introducing myself, Jude and Luis
   b. Purpose of focus group
   c. Focus group will be recorded for note-taking, but deleted afterwards and all contributions will be anonymous
   d. Ground rules – no right or wrong answers, listening to others, treating differing views with respect, not sharing information outside of the focus group

2. Icebreaker
   a. Question – what is your favourite law subject so far and why?

3. Questions

Brief recap of Online Tutorials – pilot for Property and LSM, invited to sign up, provided with pre-reading and activities, tutorial took place through Blackboard

   a. What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?
   b. What did you expect from the online tutorials?
   c. What were the positive features of the online tutorials?
   d. How could we improve the online tutorials?
   e. Other than online tutorials, what else could we do to support your learning?
   f. If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?
   g. Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

4. Thank participants and end the session

Appendix 8: Online Tutorial Focus Group 12.04.24: Summary of responses

Four students attended the Focus Group. Due to misunderstandings over start time (because of the time difference), two of these students joined the session as the first two students were leaving the webinar room. Therefore the responses have been divided into two groups. In the first group both students used the chat to reply and in the second group both students used their microphones. All responses have been anonymised.

The discussed was directed by a mixture of set questions and impromptu questions triggered by the student responses.

Group 1: Students A and B

What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?

Student A: Because I want to confirm what I read and understand with someone.

Student A: To increase my confidence

Student B: Because I like to try the alternative tutorial course, I took Hong Kong University Space preparation course, I like to try the online tutorial course provided by UoL, and I find that this is very helpful to deepen my knowledge.

What did you expect from the online tutorials?

Student B: [To] give me more knowledge on the laws which the property online tutorial did give me that, I just wish the course for online tutorial could be more session, say 5-6 lessons would be great.

Student B: further, the property tutorial gave me some direction on the exam too, this is great for me.

Student A: I am not so sure what I expected - I wanted to understand how I am meant to understand the law and how to pass and write exams questions as it is my first time studying law but not my first degree

What were the positive features of the online tutorials?

Student B: it is flexible for me, because I am a part time student, I have to take balance on work and study, the time table for the online tutorial is perfectly fit my schedule.

Student A: The possibility to ask questions. The structured answer written and provided at the end.

Student B: I am so honourable that I can interact with the tutor directly, and I enjoy it.

Student A: and I can raise questions directly to tutor and Simultaneously

Student B: further, I found that this is so good that I can prepare the online tutorial with the pre-lecture reading before I attend the lectures, as it gave me a clear picture what I should focus

Host: Did you complete all the reading and preparatory activities?

Student B: Yes, I can.

Student A: Yes, I did for some tutorials.

Student B: the material were not so much compare with the study material 😄

Host: Would you stay that the pre-activities were too much, too little or just about right?

Student B: I would like to be more, may be 2-3 more would be great

Student A: I must say some were confusing as it needed many to read from the VLE to the online books. I was not ready and got confused

How could we improve the online tutorials?

Student B: I would like to suggest: 1) few more lecture; 2) some interaction after the lecture, like the exam activities in VLE.

Host: What sort of interaction might you like? A discussion forum perhaps, or some materials posted up? What sorts of things might you like to see?

Student B: discussions, anything that could stronger our knowledge or test our understanding about the lecture. akin to these. 😄

Student A: More possibility to ask more questions separate from the subject of the tutorials to which the instructors tend to focus on only and rarely have time to answer any more.

Host suggested MCQs

Student B: MCQ is quite boring in my opinion

Student B: 😁

Student A: More interactions questions during the tutorials - I must say some tutors for Contracts are very active and get to discuss more

Student A: But I guess he was reading all our comments live and more people wrote

Host: Do you think it should be compulsory for people to use their microphones? Or should there be a mixture of speaking and use of the chat?

Student B: may be mixture would be great in my opinion

Student A: I tried to speak once but I feel maybe the tutors might get distracted and go in tangent

Student B: how about some lecture is compulsory while some of the lectures are mixture to use the microphone?

Student A: Good idea I guess ⬆

Student B: Thanks

Host: Is there anything else we could have done to improve the tutorials?

Student A: Can we choose some subject?

Student B: do you think may be some homework after the lecture?

Student A: Or vote

Student A: on the choice

Student B: or group homework after the lecture

Student A: Good idea

Student A: I tried to work in group but as we all did not start at the same time it was very difficult working on a written answer many in group of 2-3 might help

Student B: besides, I feel attending the online lecture makes me feel warm, not feeling study alone, very lonely

Student A: true

Student B: Thanks

Student B: right, the connection with UoL, the online lecture makes me feel that.

Other than online tutorials, what else could we do to support your learning?

Student B: well, I feel difficulties when I study property law, if there is a individual section for us to raise our difficulties on understanding some concept, we may write the questions to UoL, then held a individual lecture for answering our muddled concepts would be great.

Student B: I tried the discussion forum but no answer

Student B: or may be no others interacts

Student A: Contact hours to favourite tutors?

Student B: good idea

Host: Maybe like a live chat?

Student A: Yes something like that. Not all tutors explain the same concept the same way either

Student B: actually for this year, Londy is helpful, the AI

If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?

Student B: I will pay for it

Student B: I would like to pay for all, but for most of the student, I think choose to pay would be more flexible

Student A: As a stressed student I would pay for all either way even if it was not grouped

Host: Student B, what did you like about Londy and how has it been useful for you?

Student A: I have not used it - first time hearing about it

Student B: for example, a term of "reversioner" it is quite confuse for me, even I read the material and the textbook, then I use the Londy, then, it give me a precise definition.

Student B: I like to add some issue about the paying course. is that possible for two sessions, for May/June student and Oct student.

Student B: because I am a part time student, I have to split the modules for two exam in a year. I have experienced something, when I like to pay for the online lecture which cost 100 pound, I cannot attend it when I take oct exam

Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

Student B: well, after studying a few year in UoL, I think the material and supports is very sufficient to me, and the knowledges I gain are very useful to my work too. and I have

observed that the support become more and more, for this year, this is the first time for me to use AI support, this is so good, and there is a studiosity something like that. it able for me to check my answering exam question skills.

Student B: that's what I want

Student B: for the first year, I really don't know how to aim and answer the exam question.

Student A: scared to answer questions

Student B: do you think if, if there is an activities, may be an online activity that allowing us to have a trial exam, it can let us know how to gain or loss marks. similar to the learning activities this year in VLE

Host: Student B, did you do the peer feedback or tutor feedback activity?

Student B: I did, but the questions are limited, usually just one question

Student B: like adverse possession or lease and licence

Student B: it is very useful

Host: Student B: Would you like more support with answering exam questions or perhaps study skills?

Student B: yeah, few more is great, seems I am a greedy person. 😅

Group 2: Students C and D

This group gave responses verbally and the responses below are not an exact transcript.

What made you to sign-up for the online tutorials?

Student C: Online tutorials are a good opportunity to receive feedback from tutors to get insight into what the real examiner is expecting and it is very useful for distance students. Would like such activities to increase.

Student D: The need for further assistance. Studying independently and just seeing the references from the module and the mini-lectures and so on. So I felt any additional support would be most welcome.

What did you expect from the online tutorials?

Student C: I received what I expected. The significant thing from the tutorials was the structure of the answer. The whole information that we need for the exam, the material, can be received from the VLE. It's a great resource actually. But how to structure your answer is very useful. I expected and received how we should structure our answers.

Student D: I expected to get a clear understanding of the topic and be able to address any concerns with the concept.

What were the positive features of the online tutorials?

Student D: I think that they gave, in terms of the areas that being addressed, that the time was taken not just to answer the questions that were posed pre-tutorial, but also at what possible misconceptions there could be and cleared those, and addressing questions that flowed out of the questions that were posed or even just general concerns. I think that was positive. And hearing the professors actually speak to the issues in a very clear way, those were positive. They were receptive to questions and cleared misunderstandings. Quite a number of positives.

Student C: In general I agree with Student D. I think that we received a great opportunity to examine some narrow issues of different questions and we received strict guidelines (a repetition of my previous idea) of how to answer real exam questions. It's very useful.

How could we improve the online tutorials?

Student C: Just increase the number of tutorials. We had only three on LSM and it would be great if the number could be increased.

Student D: Not just more but maybe if a survey can be down about which topics might particularly be most needed. So that we can provide that feedback and you can prepare tutorials on the additionals.

Student C: Probably another thing is to make the sessions a little bit longer. An hour or an hour and a half is not enough for us individual students. We wish they are made a little bit longer.

Student C: Online tutorials are very useful. Probably to image some podcasts could be useful as week. A discussed which may be recorded and then we could listen to them. This type of activity might be useful.

Host: That's interesting. Previously I have done something called 'In conversation with', where two or more people who are experts or have an interest in that area have a discussion which can then be downloaded as a podcast. Is that the sort of thing you would be interested in?

Student C: Yeah, absolutely, that's exactly the idea that I tried to describe.

If we offered online tutorials or tutor feedback and support as a paid for option, would you prefer to pay a single fee covering everything, or would you prefer to pay as you go, choosing which options to pay for?

Student C: I can answer this question as I was thinking about it. First of all I want to say that some payable activities are rather good for me and it ok when we should pay for something we can receive additionally. As for me, I think that it is more comfortable to pay for some options. You can choose something and pay for it. Because some activities might be less useful, but you should pay for it if you chose the option. For me it is more comfortable to chose and pay for *options you have chosen.*

Student D: I support pay as you go as well.

Is there any further feedback you would like to give?

Student C: In general I can say that I really are grateful for such activities you provide us for us to give you feedback and receive some feedback from you and this type of collaboration, conversation, whatever, is very useful and fantastic. Another point I would like to mention is that it is very difficult to be a distance student because during the route of your education you feel yourself alone and such activities allow you to feel yourself as part of a community. That's really fantastic.

Student D: I was thinking that maybe additional activities where you just review past papers as exams and have that level of interaction as a tutorial. I know it's written as an additional resource but it also helps if you can speak in a forum of that nature, controlled by the university and not just left up to students, because sometimes I find that when students collaborate on their own and the information is not always correct. The authority of the university must be most present.

Host: Would that work for you as a recording? Does it have to be a live session? Could you have a tutor bringing a question up and talking you through it in a recording?

Student D: It could be a recording and feedback questions to the tutor. Maybe the control of a recording might be better in the tutorials a person might be asking question heading in a particular direction and you are a different levels of understanding of the issue. You sometimes feel like you are being kept back because that person doesn't have a clear view of what the concept is and so you have to go through all these things.

END

Appendix 9: Online Student Participation Data

Module	Tutorial	No. of registered independent students	Viewed Sign-up	Booked	Attended	Viewed Pre-tutorial	Viewed post-tutorial	Viewed both pre- and post- tutorials	Viewed pre-tutorial but not post-tutorial	Viewed post-tutorial but not pre-tutorial	Booked and viewed pre-tutorial	Attended and viewed pre-tutoral	Booked and viewed post-tutorial	Attended and viewed post-tutorial	Booked and viewed both pre- and post-tutorial	Attended and viewed both pre- and post-tutorial
LSM	LSM1	257	91	69	45	168	80	65	103	15	62	21	32	21	29	21
LSM	LSM2	426	Unav.	72	38	88	36	28	60	8	57	35	16	8	15	8
LSM	LSM3	431	92	45	25	51	45	17	34	28	35	23	14	7	12	6
Prop.	Prop1	964	159	145	85	242	113	95	147	18	126	82	55	40	53	39
Prop	Prop.2	1015	105	101	67	130	81	57	73	24	81	64	37	27	35	32