

## ACC1012/3: Professional Skills for Accounting and Finance

# Instructions for workshop leaders/assistants

## Background

In April 2013 I was awarded a grant from the University's *Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee* (ULTSEC) to investigate the use of case-based assessments in a Statistics "service" course – that is, a Statistics course taken by non-mathematicians/statisticians. My service course is ACC1012/ACC1013: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE, a stage 1 basic maths/stats course for students taking degrees in Accounting & Finance/Business Accounting & Finance. The aim is to use a new method of teaching and assessment that (hopefully!) encourages student engagement, participation, enthusiasm and motivation, whilst at the same time promoting *deep learning* rather than just *surface learning*. One way of trying to do this is through case-based teaching and assessment, which involves teaching through real-life, relevant case study material with open-ended, non-prescriptive questions. Students will work on case study material in the workshops that you will be assisting with, in small groups. We will closely supervise these groups, giving them a helping hand; however, through group work and discussion, the idea is that the students learn more from each other than they do from us – we just have to point them in the right direction!

The University wants students to be involved in the whole process. Over the summer I employed several students as "interns" to help set things up; now I want you to help in the running of things! You will get paid for your help, but I hope you will also see this as something really interesting to do, and as something that can enhance your CV.

## Allocation

The current allocation of workshop leaders/assistants is:

Group	Day	Time	Place	Lead	Assist
<b>A</b>	Mon	9–10	BSTC.1.48	Keith Newman	—
<b>B</b>	Mon	1–2	BSTC.1.48	Lee Fawcett	—
<b>C</b>	Tues	12–1	HERB.4.TR1	Lucy Sherwin-Robson	—
<b>D</b>	Tues	4–5	HERB.4.TR1	Lucy Sherwin-Robson	—
<b>E</b>	Wed	12–1	BSTC.G.36	Lee Fawcett	—
<b>F</b>	Thurs	9–10	KGVI.1.43A	Keith Newman	—
<b>G</b>	Thurs	11–12	BSTC.1.48	Lee Fawcett	—
<b>H</b>	Thurs	4–5	HERB.4.TR1	Lee Fawcett	—

These workshops will take place in teaching weeks 2–11 of semester 1. Each workshop group has about 25/30 students – bigger than expected, but hopefully manageable... we'll see!

# How will the workshops ‘work’?

Although the primary focus will be on case-based activities, it is also important to make sure students can “turn the handle” and do the easy stuff! Therefore, most workshops will be split into two parts:

- First 20 minutes or so: Students attempt ‘standard’ questions
- Next 30 minutes or so: Case study work

## 1. Standard questions

The students already have their lecture notes. At the back of each chapter of notes there is a section of “practice questions”. At the end of the previous lecture, students are told which questions to look at in advance of the workshops. In the first 20 minutes or so, we will go around the room, helping students with these questions or just looking at what they’ve done and making sure they’ve done it right! We will also give them a few other questions, from the bank of questions in the lecture notes, to try out, helping them when they put their hands up. You will be given a full set of lecture notes, with solutions to these questions, in advance – you will need to look at them before the workshop, but they’ll be easy and shouldn’t take too long for you to master!

## 2. Case studies

This is where the fun begins! In the first session (w/b 6th October) each class will be subdivided into some smaller groups. I have told the students that I don’t care if they work with their friends or not – I want them to be able to discuss the work comfortably, in a relaxed environment. As long as the groups are no more than 5/6 students in size, and no smaller than around 3 students. The idea of the case studies is that the maths is “hidden”; students aren’t given a list of questions to answer, but a list of “possible ideas for investigation” – they need to figure out for themselves exactly what they need to do. There might be no right/wrong answer; there might be more than one way to tackle a problem; some students might think outside the box and come up with something unique! The case study work that is started in the first session will then continue to be used in the last 30 minutes or so of every workshop for about 4/5 weeks; then each student submits their own written report. After this, the whole process starts again on a new case study (about half-way through the term), the reports for which will be submitted towards the end of term. You will have a copy of some ‘solutions’ to the case study work, but these will not include the full “write-up” that the students will need to prepare.

I’ll now give a detailed breakdown of what will happen week-by week.

## w/b 6th October

- **Workshop leader:** Introduce yourself, and your assistant, and let the class know that you will see them every week up until Christmas.
- **Workshop leader:** Remind them that it is their responsibility to bring their lecture notes, calculator etc. along to class – as they were told last week by Lee. However – some spare copies of lecture notes are available to ‘loan’ during the workshop.
- **Workshop leader:** Tell the students that, for the next 20 minutes or so, you’d like them to think about the questions that have been set from the lecture notes. Get them started on these questions – if any of the students have already completed all these questions, there will be some further questions from the lecture notes for them to try, as advised by Lee. Tell them to put their hand up/shout out if they need help with anything... but also, tell them to talk to each other about the work. Remind them that these questions are *not* assessed, so we can give them as much as help as they want with these questions – not so with the case studies! **Lee will advise you, via email and by the end of the previous week, which questions the students have been told to look at – including any ‘extra’ questions we might ask them to look at.**
- **Workshop leader:** Pass round the attendance list.
- **Workshop leader** and **assistant:** Wander round, chatting to the students, asking them about the work. Don’t force the issue – if students want to work quietly, alone, this is OK. Be prepared to answer any questions about the work if students ask/put their hands up.
- **Workshop leader:** After about 20 minutes, tell the students that full solutions to the questions they have been working through will be available on the course webpage later on in the week (after the last workshop). Now it’s time for case study work!
- **Workshop leader:** Split the students into groups – let those who want to work with friends, stay with their friends; any students who aren’t with friends/don’t know anyone/don’t want to work with friends should be grouped together. Group sizes: between 3–6 students in each. Remind them that they will work in the same groups every week now for the next few weeks, on the case study you are about to give out.
- **Workshop leader** and **assistants:** give out case studies. There are two unique case studies – give out one per student, but make sure all students within each group have the same case study!
- **Workshop leader:** Remind them of the whole point of the case studies (they’ve heard me go on about this already):
  - To encourage problem–solving – will help with their work in other modules/3rd year dissertations/life in general!
  - To work on real–life problems (not just rolling dice/flipping coins/pulling socks out of the drawer!)
  - To promote deep–learning (as opposed to surface learning/following recipes)
  - To learn from each other!
- **Workshop leader:** Remind them that no work is due in now – they will each submit their own report by 4pm, Friday 31st October. An example case study write–up will be given out in lectures/workshops soon, just so they know exactly what we’re after. Also remind them that, although they’re working in groups, the write–up they submit must be their own individual work! For now, let’s just read the material...

- Give them about 5 minutes to read through their case study and chat to each other about it
- **Workshop leader** and **Assistant**: Go round each group and complete the “Group Membership” form – make a note of their case study, and the names of each student in the group. Also, ask them if they’ve got any questions about the work so far. You might need to “break the ice” a bit – you could ask them how well they know each other (they might have been friends for years or just met in Fresher’s week!) and what they did in their A Levels. We want to encourage them to talk to each other, and you might need to spur them on a bit in the first workshop! Spend a few minutes with each group.
- **Workshop leader**: Draw the workshop to a close at about five-to the hour. Remind them that we will continue with the case study work in next week’s session – there’s no work to do on this between now and then. Also remind them that they have a lecture on Friday at 1pm, and don’t forget to collect the attendance sheet!

### w/b 13th October

As per the previous week. Students should now feel more relaxed, probably more chatty, and should know a bit more about their case study. **Lee will let you know, via email, which of the ‘standard questions’ they have been asked to look at from the lecture notes for the first half of the workshop.** In the case study part of the class, sit with each group and see what progress they’ve made. See if any of them need any ‘pointers’, but try not to give too much away!

### w/b 20th October

As previous week. By this point, some groups might be nearly finished their case study work, so you might need to help them with the write-up. Refer to the example write-up for any help you might need with this. **Workshop leader**: Remind them that there will be marks for presentation too, and – although they’ve been working in groups on their case studies – we don’t want any students to submit identical reports! The write-ups must be their own work! Their reports are due in at the end of next week (4pm, Friday 31st October). If any groups have completely finished their case studies, then refer them to the exercises at the back of the lecture notes for more work.

### w/b 27th October

This is case study submission week! Therefore, the workshop will be slightly different.

- **Workshop leader**: Remind them that their case study reports are due in by 4pm, Friday 31st October. Tell them that this week, the workshop will be a little different – they will each be asked an individual question based on their case study, and they will be marked on this – this mark will go towards their final case study mark.
- **Workshop leader** and **assistants**: Sit with each group for around five minutes. Ask them if they’ve got any questions about the case studies, and advise accordingly.

- **Workshop leader** and **assistants**: From the **list of questions Lee has provided you with**, go round the group asking each person a question. Give them plenty time to answer, and allow other group members to ‘chip in’ – this won’t affect their mark. We’re really trying to assess their own ability, but also the group dynamic. If the question you ask prompts a discussion, all the better! Award each student a mark out of 3 – the default being 2 for a decent attempt, but giving 3 for a student who excels. A mark of zero would be given for a student who doesn’t say anything or who hasn’t turned up, and a mark of 1 indicates *some* sort of attempt. Record this mark on the “Group Membership” form.
- **Workshop leader**: After marking is complete, remind them that their work is due in at the end of this week – they need to attach a homework submission form (from the webpage) and then post it in the homework submission box on the 3rd floor of the Herschel, just outside the Maths General Office. **This is really important – they won’t be used to handing work in here, being from the Business School.**
- If time permits, once the case study work has finished, let the students work through this weeks’ ‘standard’ questions.

### w/b 3rd November—w/b 10th November

No case study work – just standard questions.

### w/b 17th November – w/b 8th December

Same cycle as 6th–27th October, but for new case study material.

## Materials

I will provide you with all the materials you will need, well in advance of the workshops. These will include:

- Lecture notes – each set will last about 3/4 weeks, and there are practice questions in the back
- A solutions file – with full solutions to all the practice questions at the end of the lecture notes
- Case studies
- Case study ‘solutions’
- Group Membership forms (for Leaders only)
- Attendance register (for Leaders only)
- Marking pro-forma for assessed questions on case studies

I will let you know after the Friday lecture which ‘standard’ questions from the lecture notes the students are to attempt in the first half of each workshop. We might also meet at some point in the next two weeks to discuss progress and how we will mark the assessed case study questions.