



## **Executive Summary**

Our Open University students come with a wide range of personal, social, cultural, educational and employment backgrounds. In some cases, the combination of such circumstances means that a student decides to register several months in advance of the start of a module they wish to study. Frequently the University then does little to help that student, build on their enthusiasm and confidence and, in some senses, “reward” their commitment. Whilst initiatives such as our “Freshers’ week” have been introduced we still rather neglect some students for several months and then ask them to begin the module, and increasingly at least one other module, at a fixed date in October.

It seems at least feasible that some students would like to take advantage of a facility to start their study on a much more flexible basis. Students have expressed views that it is “good” to get ahead with study if possible and this pilot has given students on M140 an opportunity to start their study on a rolling basis, at a time of their choosing and up to three months in advance of the usual module start. The approach is different to that of the several “revise and refresh” option running in STEM because it offers a tutor supported, flexible start, and uses the actual module materials.

Around 400 students were offered the opportunity of a flexible early start and just over two hundred students emailed that they would like to do. An over represented group within those that did take part were students who already had some OU credits. It might be argued that such students were already aware of the high October workload and they seemed to wish to minimise it- using their time over the summer. Responses were overwhelmingly positive with students attending online tutorials, using forums, loading and using module software and studying early Units with tutor support.

An important consideration was equality of access to the pilot. The pilot was designed to be open to all students registered before a certain date, regardless of the student’s geographical location. We were aware that, by delivering access only electronically, it was not be possible for some groups of student to participate i.e. some disabled students, SiSI students etc. This limitation would need to be addressed for any further flexible start programme.

## **Aims and scope of project**

The aims of the pilot were to establish if there was demand from students for an early start on M140, and if so, the scale of the demand, the issues involved and how we could cost effectively meet it on M140 J presentations. The key research questions were:

- Are students willing to take part in a flexible early start programme and what are their assessments of the benefits?
- Are there identifiable benefits to students who have the same tutor from Early Start to module completion?
- Does an early start option increase student “engagement” and hence lead to a detectable difference in retention?
- Is this a cost effective way to improve retention on the M140 and concurrent study modules?
- Does participating in an early start option alter the factors used in the predictive probabilities models?

## Activities

### Pre Pilot preliminary analysis

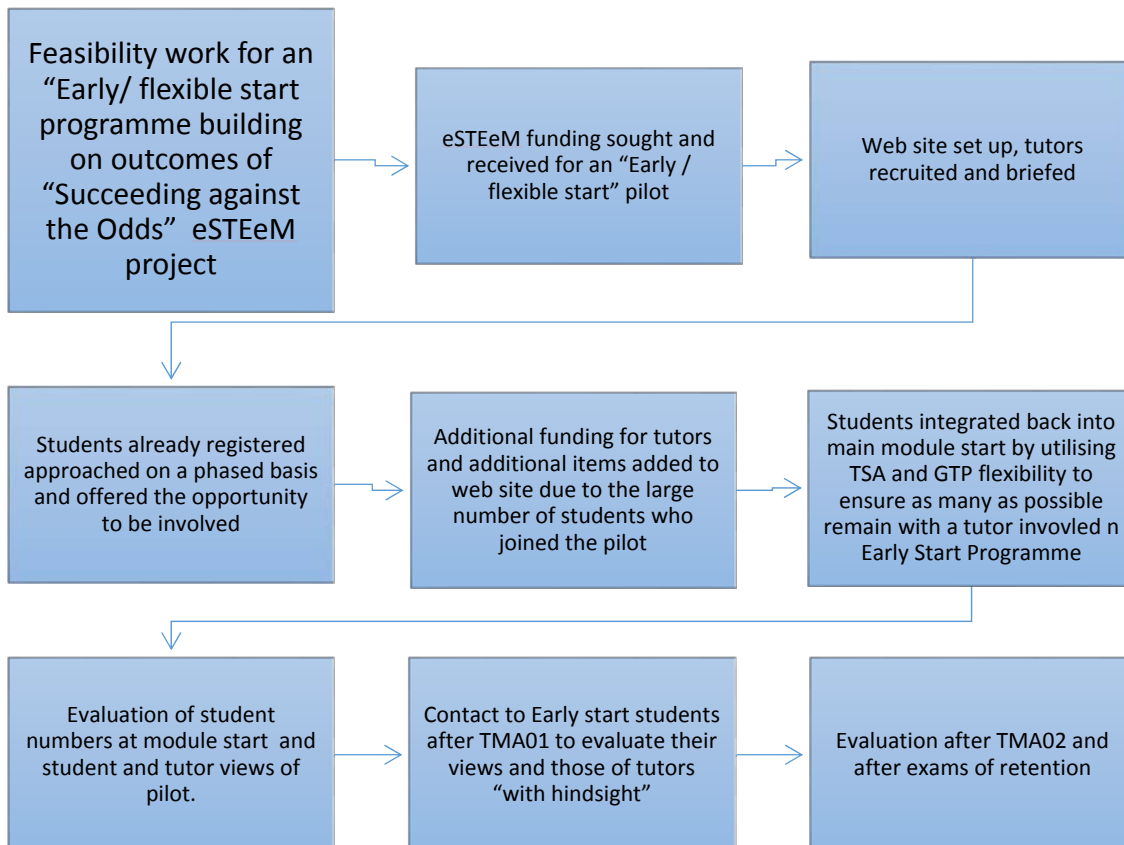
An analysis of 16J M140 J data was undertaken to understand the potential numbers of students for the pilot and to help shape the content of the pilot. Additionally, by looking at the characteristics of the 16J students who registered early, compared to those who did not, it was hoped to gain an insight into any important differences in the profile of early start students. Any such insights could potentially enable some tailoring of contents and processes to help improve retention and achievement.

### A Dedicated web site

The logistical difficulties involved in altering mailing dates for paper module materials were perceived to far outweigh the potential benefits in a pilot programme. The decision was therefore taken to rely solely on electronic versions of our module materials for the pilot. The school programme manager built an old style VLE site with an OU live (blackboard) room for tutorials, a moderated forum for student discussion, the software (Minitab) and loading instructions, and the early Units/ practice quizzes/screencast and interactive computer applets. A practice TMA01 (effectively the previous year's TMA01) was also loaded with the associated datasets for students to "try" and have marked by their tutor if they wished.

Initially we loaded the first three Units of the module and subsequently, in response to student requests, loaded two additional units but not the associated materials.

Figure 1: Project Stages for Flexible / Early Start Programme



## **Dedicated named tutors**

Initially two tutors were enrolled to provide the usual tutor support to students on the programme. Further funding was sought and secured when it became apparent that we would have much larger numbers of students taking up the opportunity than anticipated. We therefore had four highly experienced ALs and the project lead available for most of the project.

The increase to four tutors opened up a possibility that active students on the programme could continue their M140 studies, after the Early Start Programme closed, with the same tutor. M140 is tutored in four cluster groups and it was possible to arrange that we had one tutor from each of the four clusters involved in the programme.

## **Enrolling students**

In the interests of fairness it was decided to offer the opportunity to take part in the Early Start Programme to all students who had reached "PA" (registered) status by a certain date. The initial plan was to select a single date that was chosen so that a reasonable number of students might be expected to take up the Early / flexible start opportunity. The students were identified by bespoke SAS programs run against the main University databases. Students were then contacted via email, by the module chair, to outline the Early start programme. Students were asked to respond if they wished to take part and also if they wished to ask any questions. Those who responded were then allocated to a named tutor, the student and tutor informed and the student given access to the site.

In reality we had such large numbers enrolling that a phased approach to enrolment was taken. The only difference between phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 was the date by which the student had reached registered status. For the final phase, phase 4, the process was changed with the Early Site programme URL merely being sent as part of an explanatory email to any students who reached PA status after the 16<sup>th</sup> August. These students were not allocated a tutor but, with the exception of having the opportunity to have a practice TMA marked, everything else on the programme was available to them.

## **Running the programme**

The tutor received some basic information about the student, similar to the information they receive at module start including if the student was also studying MST124. Any such students were actively encouraged on the initial contact letter, on the site and by their tutors to work through MST124 Revise and Refresh materials before engaging with M140 materials.

One of the many advantages of experienced ALs running the program was that they had a deep general knowledge of students on M140. M140 has recent materials and was designed with no pre requisite knowledge required. Tutors generally find that, after the initial wave of contact, most students don't struggle with the materials and actually are relatively rarely in contact with their tutor. On this pilot we recorded a range of information such as the phase of intake the student was in, whether the student responded to the "welcome" email from their allocated tutor, if they subsequently contacted their tutor, if they attended tutorials or posted on forums etc. This enabled us to build up a picture of how much the "flexible start" students participated. The tutors' view was that contact was very typical of a usual presentation which meant students generally tended not to contact their tutors very much. So in phase 4 students were given the site URL address and urged to ask questions in a new forum for those students who did not have a dedicated tutor. This additional forum was moderated from 12<sup>th</sup> August by one of the AL's in the project with the main forum remained being principally moderated by the project lead. The phase 4 students did not have the opportunity to have a practice TMA marked unless they specifically requested it from the project lead.

The change in approach between the early and later phases was made because it was felt all students should have an opportunity for an early start. However students who registered later would actually have less time to engage with the materials and hence access to a practice TMA was less relevant.

### **Interim analysis**

Several interim analyses were undertaken to enable some early re shaping of the pilot to be undertaken if necessary. Student numbers and the views students' expressed on replying to the initial email offer were considered informally and more formally via a questionnaire. The questionnaire was a mix of "tick all that apply" type boxes with a final free text option. It was placed on the site prior to stage 3 students joining the scheme. A second, similar questionnaire, but with more free text options was placed on the site just prior to the site closing. Additionally an analysis was undertaken of the characteristics of those students who took up a place on the programme and those who did not do so.

The project lead and the Early Start tutors held three discussion to enable experiences to be shared and the pilot modified as much as was felt necessary and possible.

### **Winding up the programme**

Care was given to how to provide a smooth transition at formal module start for students involved on the programme. The initial plan was to keep the students with the same tutor. This was rapidly modified when it became clear how many students wished to be involved. In reality with over 200 students on phase1-phase3 of the programme, and only four tutors involved, there was no possibility of all Early Start students continuing with their own tutor through the main M140 study period. It was possible to use the flexibility to manually allocate specific students to specific tutors and to utilise the flexibility that GTP offers in terms of students attending tutorials NOT given by their tutors, to ensure all flexible start students from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, East and West Midlands, and the South West and most in R01 were able to at least stay with one of the four tutors Early Start programme tutors.. For the remaining students the aim was to at least inform the students' new tutors that the students have been on the Early Start Programme and ensure participation of all students is recorded in VOICE.

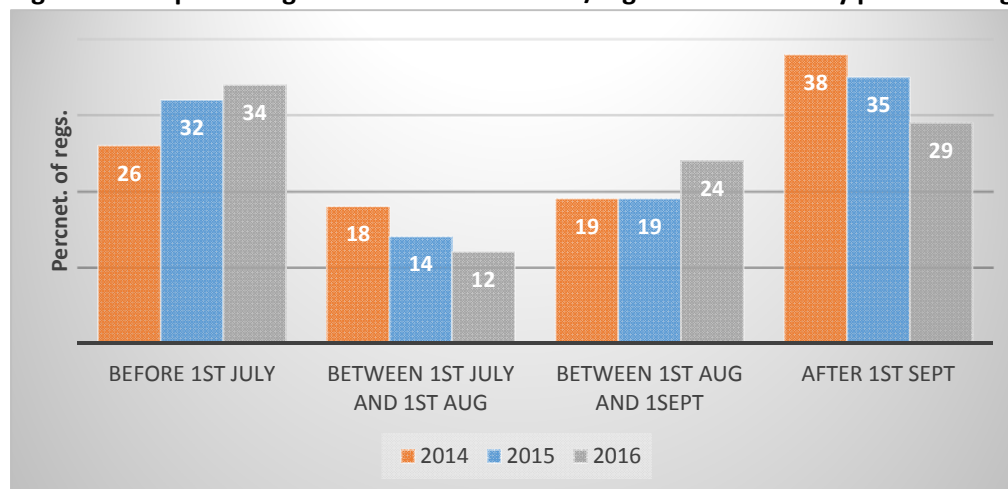
**Hindsight views from students and final analysis:** Students and tutors will be asked six months after the pilot concluded for their views to provide some element of hindsight. The module has four Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and 2016J historical data indicates around 89% of those at the 25% fee point submit TMA01 and 83% submit TMA02. The second TMA is due in 10<sup>th</sup> Jan and hence the collection of views will take place in February 2018.

## **Findings**

### **Pre pilot analysis**

An initial analysis of enrolment data for October in 2014, 2015 and 2016 presentations was undertaken. From Figure 2 it can be seen that consistently around a third of M140J enrolments had taken place by the 1st July and around 45% of enrolments had taken place by the 1st August of the appropriate year. This led to an initial assessment that there might be a pool of around 300 students to draw upon by 1st July and, with an arbitrary predicted take up rate of 20%, that would potential give us around 60 students to take part in the pilot. In the event we had over 200 students enrolled – see table 1.

**Figure 2: The percentage M140 students at “PA/registered status” by period of registration.**

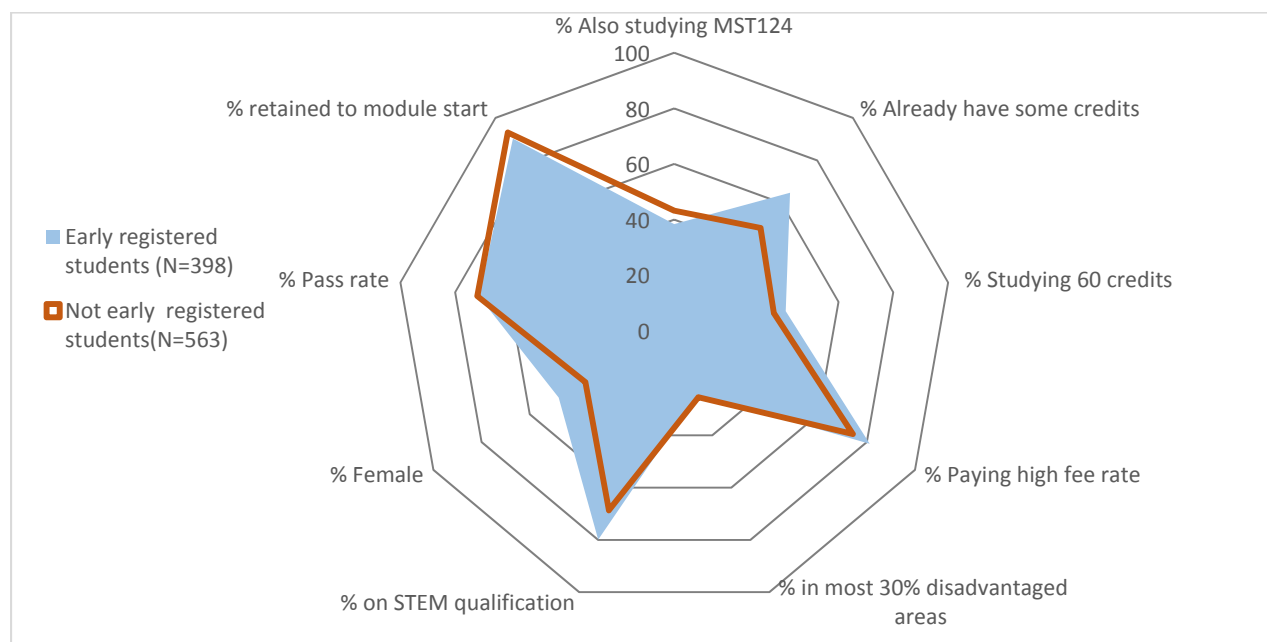


It seemed reasonable that students who registered early might differ in many ways, from those who do not register early, perhaps in terms of education experience or vulnerability as an OU students. Over a number of years Open University researchers have developed sophisticated statistical models, based on very large student cohorts, to predict the likelihood of success for students studying OU modules. The models use retrospective data to identify patterns of success for students with a variety of characteristics. These studies have enabled University educational statisticians to accurately predict, even as early as enrolment, which students are most likely to be successful and which more likely to struggle or fail.

For M140 the critical factors from these models included how many credits a student has already achieved and how many credits they are studying in year. These factors, along with others not critical in the models, were built into a “profile” of the students. The “profile” included gender, fee type, and home area in an area of high disadvantage. The profile also included whether students were concurrently studying MST124, on a STEM qualification, pass rates and retention rates from registration to module start. This enabled an easy, albeit simplistic, comparison of how M140 16J students who registered early differed for those who did not.

Figure 3 displays the “profiles” of the group of students who registered before 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 compared to those who registered later. The chart has “contour lines” running at 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80% and 100%. The shaded area (blue) is the profile of the early registered students and the outline (orange) shows the same characteristics for those 2016J students who registered later. The “profiles” of the two groups are very similar. The early registering students tend to have a higher percentage of students who already have some credits, to be on STEM qualifications and to be female. Pass rates are very similar for the two groups with marginally fewer early registered students being retained until module start - 90% compared to 93%. Studying MST124 and M140 concurrently is relatively common and is on one of our advised pathways through to a named degree. Within the school it is therefore also of interest if students who are register early are also concurrently studying MST124- 38% of those early registered were compared to 43% of those who register later. The difference is slight but sadly not in the direction we might have hoped for as students studying both potentially had a lot to gain for a flexible start.

**Figure 3: Data for 2016J M140 students registering early compared to those who registered later.**



### Analysis during programme

#### Enrolment of students

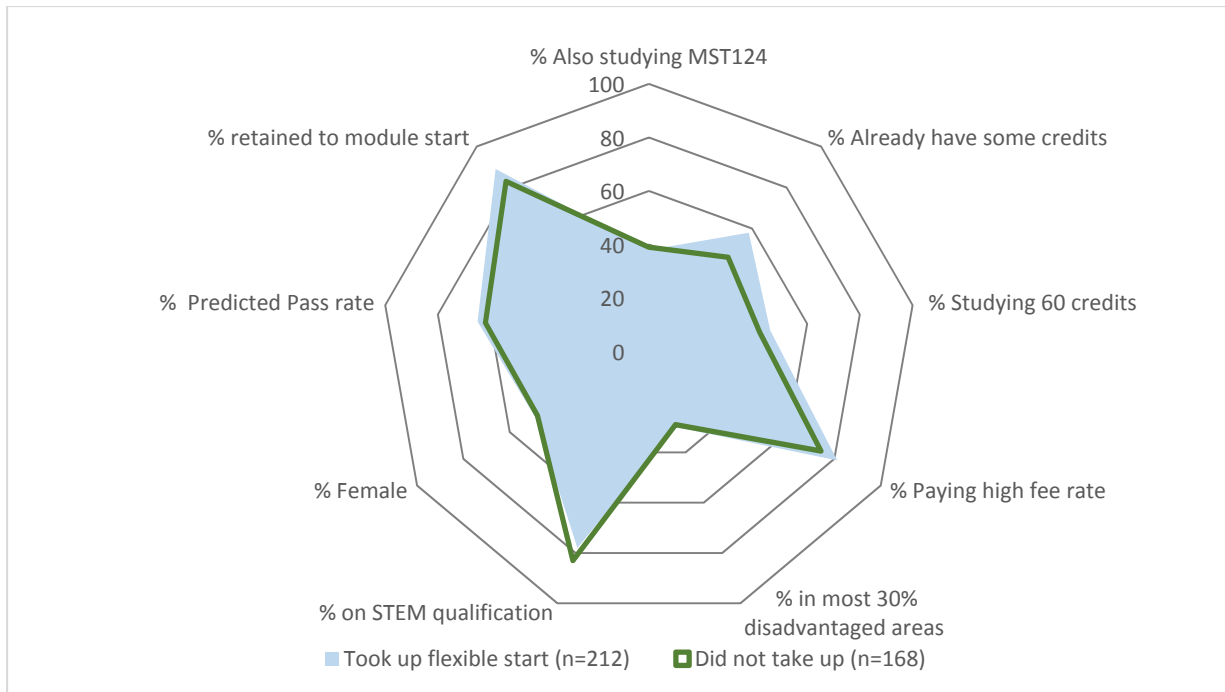
**Table 1: Numbers taking up the opportunity for an early start**

Intake by M140 registration period	Number of students offered	Number who accepted	Percentage enrolled
Phase 1- registered by 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	187	99	53%
Phase 2- registered 22 <sup>nd</sup> May to 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	89	47	53%
Phase 3 – registered 22 <sup>nd</sup> June to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	123	66	54%
Totals	399	212	53%

Note: In addition 140 students who reached PA status between 22<sup>nd</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August were identified as a Phase 4 group and all were simply supplied with the site URL.

Table 1 shows that, fairly consistently, just over 50% of the phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3 students who were offered the opportunity of a tutor supported, flexible early start, on M140 emailed back to the project lead that they would like to take up the opportunity. The “profile” of the 200 plus students who did take up the opportunity is shown in Figure 4 as the shaded area (blue) and the outline shape (green) shows the profile of those students who did not take-up the offer of a flexible, early start. The profiles of the two groups are very similar. Even the predicted pass rates, using the statistical models in use in the University to predict success, are very close for the two groups. The only difference is that again students who already have some credits are more likely to take up the opportunity of the flexible start.

**Figure 4: Percentage Data for 2017J M140 students taking part in the flexible/ early start program and those who did not**



Note: Percentage retained to module start is currently an estimate as University level data cleaning has yet to occur

### Initial Student responses

The majority of students who were going to take part responded to the initial invitation in the first 24 hours. Thereafter, for the next week or so each day one or two would be in contact to request a place. For phase 1 most questions asked by the students related to

- a) confirming that they could have a place albeit their student loan was not yet in place.

AND

- b) timescales for the actual assessments including end point (EMA).

The questions that were commonly asked were compiled into a FAQ document and this was sent to all the phase 1 students and subsequently the phase 2 and phase 3 students. Other than at the first part of phase 1 very few students asked questions which indicated the FAQs were addressing the most likely questions. The front page of this report is a wordcloud based on the replies of student to the initial invitation to take part in the pilot programme.

One student set up a **WHATSApp** group and the site details record that 106 of the 212 phase1-phase3 students viewed that post and 96 viewed the post on how to get a **free version of Office**. So perhaps 50% of those signed up were in some ways “active”. Students were sent a welcome email from their tutor and asked to respond and 109 did so- again suggesting that at least half of those signed up were “active”.

A standard VLE **questionnaire item** was added to the dedicated web site and was open from the 23<sup>rd</sup> July (9pm) to 30<sup>th</sup> July (9pm). The questionnaire was anonymous, consisted of four questions and an open text box and was designed to get early views from students who were actively using the site. We



had 146 students who had access to the site at that time and 34 responded i.e. 23%. The students were emailed once to say that there was a questionnaire there and could they complete it and with a reminder just a couple of days before closure. Three students additionally emailed because 50 characters was insufficient for them in the free text box. A **second, similar questionnaire**, was added to the site just before it closed and there were 51 responses over the ten days the questionnaire was open i.e. around a 24% response rate.

Students were asked to **introduce themselves on the forums** and just say a little about themselves. This is a standard approach and is intended to make students aware that they are part of a community studying M140; to build their awareness of forums on the module site; to increase their confidence in using a forum by being asked to post a small, “neutral message”. Of the 212 students in phases 1-3 49 did post on the “hello” thread i.e. 23%

Students were offered two types of **online tutorials**- one set on study skills and one set on content. The tutorials were recorded- as is increasingly our standard practice on M140- and we had 12 attendances across three study skills session and 45 attendances. Across 6 content sessions.

The phase 1-phase 3 students all had a named tutor who was available to give students feedback on a practice TMA if the student wished. Just over 20 students took up this opportunity i.e. around 10%.

### Questionnaire analysis

The site provides a breakdown of responses automatically which is included in Annex A. The first question was about why the students had taken up the flexible start option and this question were also repeated in the second questionnaire. Table 2 shows that students frequently indicated that multiple factors were important and these most frequently included having time to study over the summer, wanting to ease the load in October as they were going to study more than one module and wanting to get ahead. This might be interpreted as some students are planning their future loads and, if given an opportunity, will try to use the summer to ease the October load.

**Table 2: Q1 “To help us understand what you were hoping for from the Early Start Programme please click on as many of the reasons below that apply “**

	Initial questionnaire	Second questionnaire
<b>Number potential respondents-phase1 and 2- 146 students</b>	146	212 on phases 1-3
<b>Actual number of respondents</b>	34	51
	<b>Numbers (and percentage of actual respondents who included this option)</b>	
It seemed a way to start gently	12 (35%)	25 (49%)
I am studying more than one module in October and it seemed a good way to ease the load in October	20 (59%)	29 (57%)
I had time over the summer and wanted to use it for study	24 (71%)	29 (57%)
I wanted to get ahead	18 (53%)	33 (65%)
It seemed a good way to get used to returning to study	6 (18%)	12 (23%)

**Table 3: Q2 “It will help to plan future programmes if you can tell us what you’ve already to do form the activities on offer. Please click on all that apply. “**

	Initial questionnaire	Second questionnaire
<b>Number potential respondents-phase1 and 2- 146 students</b>	146	212 on phases 1-3
<b>Actual number of respondents</b>	34	52
	<b>Numbers (and percentage of actual respondents who included this option)</b>	
I have contacted my tutor just to say hello	18 (53%)	32 (63%)
I have contacted my tutor with specific questions	7 (21%)	18 (35%)
<b>I have got MINITAB working</b>	28 (82%)	44 (86%)
I have looked at the forum threads	24 (71%)	38 (75%)
<b>I have worked through parts of the Units</b>	27 (79%)	48 (94%)
I have looked at the screencasts	15 (44%)	40 (78%)
I have not got started yet	3 (9%)	1 (2%)

The second question in each of the questionnaire was also the same. From table 3 it can be seen that that similarly students accessed multiple parts of the site. Loaded MINITAB and working through parts of the Units were consistently mentioned and clearly the later groups including students using the screencasts to perhaps get a quick “flavour” of what was involved in M140. Annex 1 also includes the automated analysis from the second questionnaire.

Students used the free text boxes in both questionnaire and several also chose to email the project lead directly. Just one of the free text boxes answers and one email are included here to give a flavour

*Having studied before, but not for some time, my personal hurdle could have been getting used to web access, software loading, and forums. For me this early start option has given me the confidence that the formalities surrounding the studies (including TMA) really are manageable for me. It prompted me to write a full study calendar for all three modules that I'll be doing live from October (M140, MST124 and MST125). As their content is revision for me, the question mark was going to be how to handle the study time and assessments. I know feel well-prepared, not just for M140 but for going back to studying in general. Thank you so much. I count myself lucky to have been given the opportunity to participate in this pilot.*

*Dear Carol*

*I have been an OU student for a great many years. During that time I have seen some good ideas come and go. But being able to start the course this early is quite simply the best idea I have seen in a very long time.*

*Last year I completed MU123, and MST124 the year before. In each of those years I have real problems keeping up with the pace of the course. The course material was fine. My*

*difficulties stem from having a wife with terminal cancer. We were told three years ago that my wife only had one or two years left to live, and here we are three years on!*

*My tactic for getting through the courses, has been to get as far ahead as I can, because it is almost inevitable that there will be periods when I simply cannot get any work done. Having access to the course material this early is going to be an enormous help to me.*

*Thank You.*

**Tutor responses (to be analyse using text analysis software)**

### **To be included in a final report**

Student feedback after TMA02

Tutor feedback after TMA02

Retention Analysis after TMA02

### **List of deliverables**

The AL days were a total of 40 days and the building of the site took a further 5 days. However were we to repeat the process I anticipate that we could run on 15- 20 days of AI time and 5 days of admin time?

### **Figures and tables**







### **References < to be added to for final report>**

Carol Calvert (2014) "**Developing a model and applications for probabilities of student success: a case study of predictive analytics**" Open learning Vol 29, No2, 160-173.









Carol Calvert et al (2017) "Succeeding against the odds" Succeeding Against the Odds. eSTEE M Final Report <https://intranet9.open.ac.uk/collaboration/Scholarship-Exchange/Wiki/Document.aspx?DocumentID=2075>

## Early questionnaire – 23<sup>rd</sup> July- results from a group of 146 able to access questionnaire

1 To help us understand what you were hoping for from the *Early start* programme please click on as many of the reasons below that apply.




Response	Average	Total
It seemed a way to start gently	 15%	12
I am studying more than one module in October and it seemed a good way to ease the load in October	 25%	20
I have time over the summer and I wanted to use it for study	 30%	24
I wanted to get ahead	 22%	18
It seemed a good way to get used to returning to study	 8%	6
<b>Total</b>	 100%	80/34

It will help us to plan future programmes if you can tell us what you've already chosen to do from the activities on offer. Please click on all that apply.

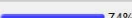





Response	Average	Total
I have contacted my tutor - just to say hello	 15%	18
I have contacted by tutor with specific questions	 6%	7
I have got Minitab working	 23%	28
I have looked at the forum threads	 20%	24
I have worked through parts of the Units	 22%	27
I have looked at the screencasts	 12%	15
I have not got started yet	 2%	3
<b>Total</b>	 100%	122/34

2.

3 Do you think you will have any more time to study the M140 materials before official module start on 7th October?

Response	Average	Total
Yes	 97%	32
No	 3%	1
<b>Total</b>	 97%	33/34

4 Would you recommend to a student on the next presentation of M140 that they take an *Early start* option if one is offered?

Response	Average	Total
Definitely yes	 74%	25
Probably yes	 12%	4
Can't say as depends too much on their circumstances	 6%	2
Probably not	 6%	2
Definitely not	 3%	1
<b>Total</b>	 100%	34/34







5 Anything to add - in less than 50 characters?

Thank you for completing and remember the fun stuff at <https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/subpage/view.php?id=4360>









Response
None
Early start? No brainer!
thank you for early start
Excellent - similar prog for other Q31 mods pls?
Nope - I couldn't have asked for anything better!
It has been really good, my tutor has been amazing
Mark's tutorial was brilliant, very engaging.
This is a good idea to start early
Good to see materials early. Thank you.

## Second questionnaire 1-10<sup>th</sup> Sept





**1** To help us understand what you were hoping for from the Early Start Programme please click on as many of the reasons below that apply

Response	Average	Total
It seemed a way to start gently.	 20%	25
I am studying more than one module in October and it seemed a good way to ease the load in October.	 23%	29
I had time over the summer and I wanted to use it to study.	 23%	29
I wanted to get ahead.	 26%	33
It seemed a good way to get used to returning to study.	 9%	12
<b>Total</b>	 100%	128/52

**2** To help us plan any future programmes could you tell us what you have chosen to do from the activities on offer. Please click on as many that apply.

Response	Average	Total
I have contacted my tutor- just to say hello.	 14%	32
I have contacted my tutor with specific questions.	 8%	18
I have got Minitab working.	 20%	44
I have looked at the forum threads.	 17%	38
I have worked through parts of the Units.	 22%	48
I have looked at the screencasts.	 18%	40
I have not got started yet.	 0%	1
<b>Total</b>	 100%	221/52

**3** Would you recommend to a student on the next October presentation of M140 that they take an Early Start option if one is offered?

Response	Average	Total
Definitely Yes.	 75%	40
Probably Yes.	 8%	4
Can't say as it depends too much on their circumstances	 17%	9
<b>Total</b>	 100%	53/52

4

If there is just one thing we should change if we run an Early Start Programme again what would it be?

Response

Possibly a TMA that is compulsory to all to see what it would be like to have deadlines etc

Open the main website to early starters

A module site more consistent with the proper site. This one looks incredibly informal and slap dash

Nothing

make the work count officially

Advertise the times and dates of online tutorials.

face to tutorials

to receive the paper copies of the material

Slightly slower pace

Better web page formats

Make all module texts available as PDFs

Access to the full website

Provide the computer book in person it's been difficult to use the computer and read from the book at the same time.

a practice iCMA to get used to the type of assessment

Have a set number of units to do and match the lectures with them.

Directions on filling up the practice TMA.

offer more modules just in case someone has more time

More practice TMAs

Get the printed materials out to us. I simply cannot read on screen for sustained periods of time, so I just ended up listening to screen casts and fiddling with Minitab.

The only disappointing thing was for the OU skills tutorials I suggested exam techniques for the last tutorial, but this was dismissed. (I notice the last skills tutorial didn't even happen??) I understand M140 doesn't have an exam, but for a lot of people who are doing more than one module, they will have an exam, as both MST124 and MST125 has exams. I was previously enrolled to do M140 and MST124 together in October, but I've cancelled MST124 for a few reasons, one being I'm not ready to do an exam as I haven't had exam experience in decades. However, I understand this was an early start for M140 only. Perhaps if there are plans for an early start project for MST124/MST125, it would be good to include exam skills.

actual ICMA and TMA available

Have printed books sent earlier

perhaps more mini tab basics examples

Can't think of anything. Happy as is.

More time between OULive tutorials, just an extra few days would have definitely helped

With regards to the TMA, it would have been useful towards the end of the module (or even a few weeks after the TMA was released) for a 'perfect' or 'marked' TMA to be published so even those of us who simply didn't have the chance to complete a TMA could get a look at what the answers were so they could compare and contrast.

Have a link from the main M140 module page to make the early start easier to find

It was superb

That we can have access to the real TMA's

Have all units available

It has met my expectations

Open more!

Might not be viable but maybe shipping out the first book

if you could get the printed books out early I think i could have made more use of it

make more of the printed books available



5

What is the one thing you think we should definitely NOT change if we run an Early Start Programme again?

Response

The interaction and forum

Practice TMA

Keep text books available

Access to units

I don't know.

forums

practice tma

The online tutorials

Structure

Access to the first Units

The mock TMA

Having a tutor

tutorials, they were real

The way it was organised.

access to units/screencas

Practice TMA.

contact with tutor, forum

Having textbooks

Availability to communica

Access to forums

n/a

early access to software

early access to software

Tutorials and a tutor

Recording many tutorials

practise TMA

Having tutors to help

date perfectly pitched

See 4

Keep everything! 😊

multiple unit tutorials

Practice TMA

The start date

Practice TMA

Tutorial recordings





Site accessibility

Running live tutorials

practice TMA





6

Do you feel that you are more confident about your M140 and other study as a result of your experience on the M140 Early Start Programme?

Response	Average	Total
Yes	 90%	45
No	 4%	2
Does not apply	 6%	3
Total	 96%	50/52

7

Do you feel you know what to expect from M140 as a result of the Early Start programme ?

Response	Average	Total
Yes	 96%	49
No	 2%	1
Does nto apply	 2%	1
Total	 98%	51/52

8

Anything else you would like to add? ( upto 2500 words)

Response

Maybe send out team first text book? I struggle to read from screens and actually paid to have the pdf printed and bound, an expense I could have lived without. Even if it was just the first book, it would have saved money. You're going to send it to me anyway so why not?

I think Early Start is valuable for any othe Maths modules as it helps prepare and set expectations before starting to do the assessments. I found the chance to try an assessment before the start very valuable.

no

this has been a good way to stay in the right mindset and routine of studying (although i have not been as dedicated as i would during actual module dates). It meant my brain stayed active and i remained in the mindset of studying. the only thing i am concerned about is that after MST125 moving onto M140 i am worried my knowledge of integration etc will fade whilst i am studying this statistics unit, which may hinder me when i get to level 2 modules. hence i have also used the summer to redo some MST125 questions! it might be good if OU could keep access to the previous module mini tests fro this reason. i am enjoying M140 and am happy with Mike Hobbs as my tutor and hope i can remain with him, or at least attend his online tuorials (as i did with MST125). the early start has been a good idea, to keep the brain active, prepare for the actual start date and to get ahead. thank you

I am still a bit overwhelmed by mini tab as i am not really up to scratch with technology. So the early start helped greatly and stops some of the panic I may have had. I am also doing mst124 and the early start along side the revision for the maths course helps greatly. As i have not studied for many years apart for an acces course the early start gave a better indication of what to expect than the access course although it had its positives as well. I Would suggest for older students like myself not up with technology and not studied for many years it is ideal. The early start would also benefit students who would be looking to stagger start dates for future courses. Lastly i must apologize for late reply

This was a great opportunity to get ahead and enjoy some study during the summer, and I'll be glad of that when MST125 begins (well, it's already begun because I've been sent the materials!!). I didn't get around to completing the practice TMA which was a shame, but that was due to illness and other bits and bobs rather than any laziness on my part, but I made sure that I grasped Units 1 and 2 okay anyway. The support from Mark was excellent, always helpful and always on hand, and I really enjoyed taking part in the OULive tutorials. So, many thanks again for offering me the opportunity to do the Early Start, I've siezed it as best as my difficult August would allow, and I'll look forward now to the main start in not-too-many weeks time. Well done and thank you to all those who gave up time during the summer to get it all up and running! 😊

This was extremely helpful for me and I really appreciated the ability to listen to multiples of the same tutorials to get the same information but just explained slightly differently. I have a few medical conditions and a learning disability that make understanding and retaining new information very difficult and I feel the early start module has really helped mitigate those issues. This is the first course I feel even remotely confident that I will be able to keep up with, thank you to everyone that has helped this happen.

Tutor feedback was so useful, especially as I'm doing maths and not used to questions that involve the words "interpret", "describe", etc

Very happy with the support and communication offered by the M140 team

Thank you!

people clearly have time in the summer. OU should think outside the box

its a very clever idea, thanks for opening up the program. it is my first year studying at open uni and this was a good way to get comfortable with how it works!

I was finishing my module DD103 so I was unable to keep up with the pace of the online tutorials. It might be worth slowing the pace down with the early start as once I could not keep up I did not continue. I realise that most people would not be finishing a module (I started Feb 2017), although I imagine people may welcome a slower pace during the summer months. I have really enjoyed starting early and now I have completed DD103 (submit EMA today), once I return from my weeks holiday I will pick up where I left off. Thanks for the opportunity to start early.

This has been a massive help for me as I also work full time (45+ hrs a week)

This should be made available to MST124 and MST125 and L2 modules in the future

It's been a fantastic opportunity and if it was offered for another module for me again I would definitely take up the offer. My tutor (Luay) has been great and I feel I'm ahead enough to get going properly when the books arrive and the website opens.

The page of the early start to be in the same format as the actual page for M140 so students get used to layout during the early start.

My tutor, Luay, was great and really helpful throughout the entire time. The course really gives people a confidence and it gave me an idea of what level of work i need to produce to gain the grades i want and require.

I would like to see early start options for more modules

I'd be nice to provide a sample of a correctly hand-written and typed TMA. It's not clear how it is expected to be formatted in terms of spacing, inclusion of pictures, font sizes etc.

Having studied before, but not for some time, my personal hurdle could have been getting used to web access, software loading, forums. For me this early start option has given me the confidence that the formalities surrounding the studies (including TMA) really are manageable for me. It prompted me to write a full study calendar for all three modules that I'll be doing live from October (M140, MST124 and MST125). As their content is revision for me, the question mark was going to be how to handle the study time and assessments. I know feel well-prepared, not just for M140 but for going back to studying in general. Thank you so much. I count myself lucky to have been given the opportunity to participate in this pilot.

I was very grateful for the early start for several reasons. One major thing is, that summer break is long so you tend to loose a bit of 'momentum', it's great to keep in shape, study wise. Also, you - at least I did -tend to have some extra time you can put to good use studying. It gives confidence to have a proper taste of the module before it actually kicks off. I'd love to have the chance for early start again in the future.

Excellent idea, would love for my future modules

I think the early start project is excellent! I would definitely recommend this to anyone starting a module. It has given me reassurance for starting M140 in September/October, and I would've been panicking around now without it! Thank you Carol and to everyone who has made the early start possible 😊