

Mathematics Learning Support in Ireland in 2015



LIMERICK INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA
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8th September 2015

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Outline

- 1 Background
 - The Mathematics Problem
 - The project
- 2 The results
 - Level and type of support
- 3 Staffing and tutors
 - Management
 - Tutoring staff
- 4 User profile
 - User profile
- 5 Summary
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- The Irish Mathematics Learning Support Network (IMLSN) - 2009

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- The survey was completed by 31 HEIs

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- ▶ 45% of centres are subject to annual review
- ▶ In 76% of cases the MLS offering is available to all the HEI's students

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- ▶ Other forms of traditional support include: peer-support systems, numeracy tutors, extra classes/tutorials

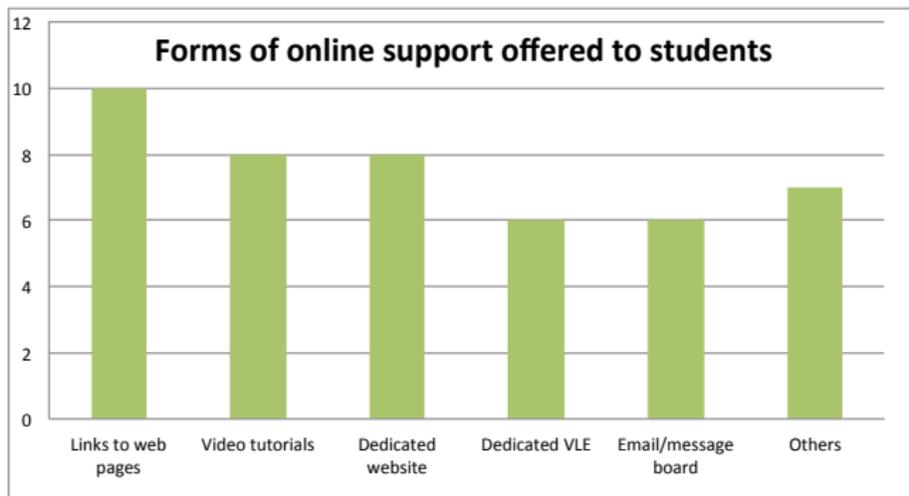
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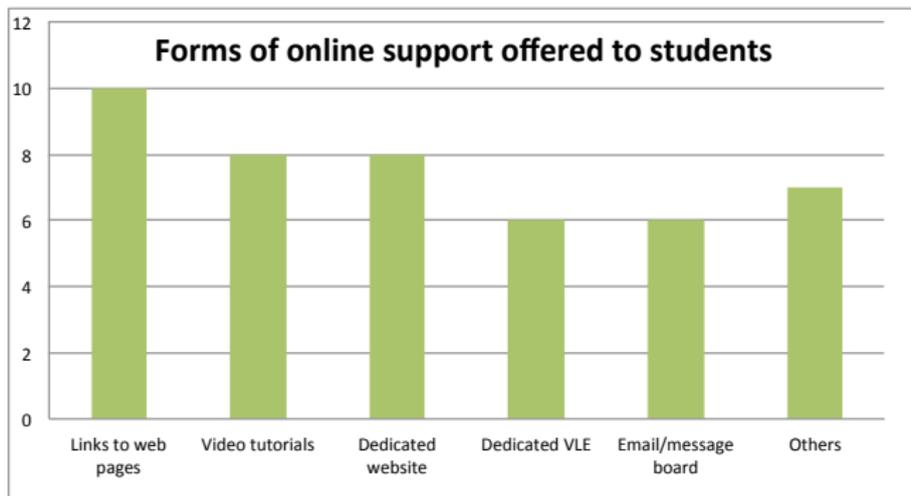
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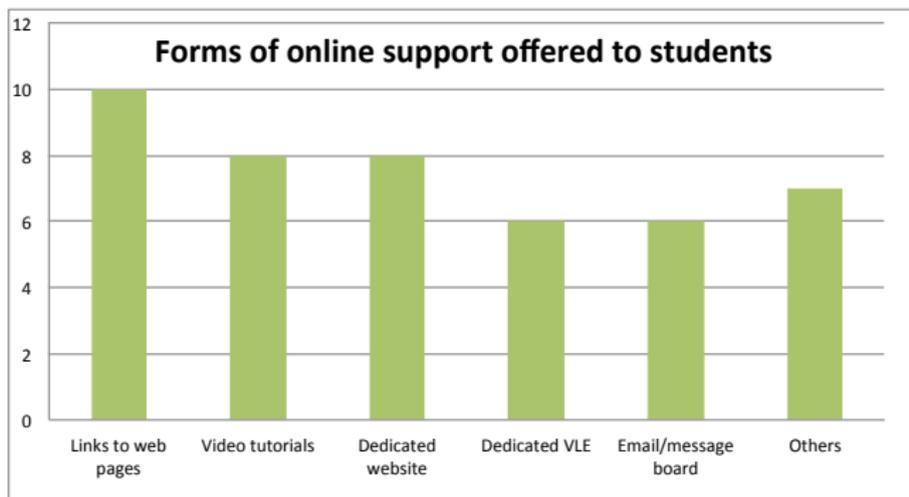
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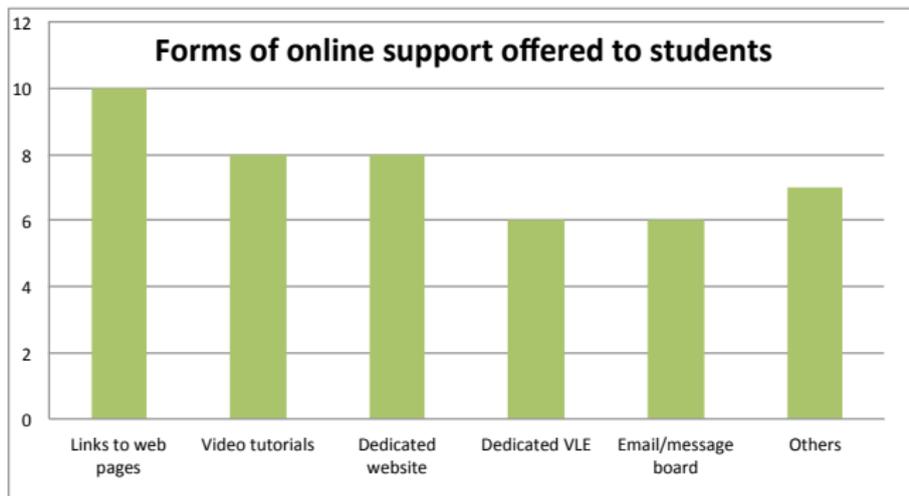
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- ▶ An additional 11 MLS providers said they plan to provide online support in the future

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- ▶ 65% placed one-to-one as the most *effective* support for student learning

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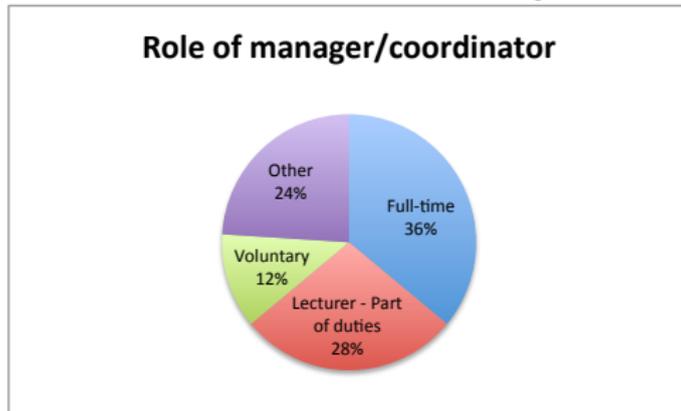
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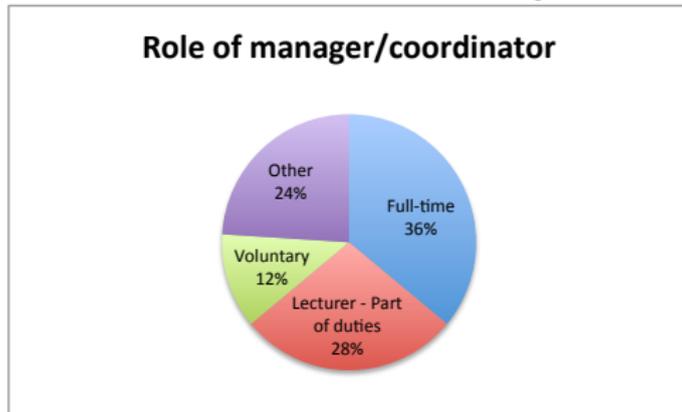
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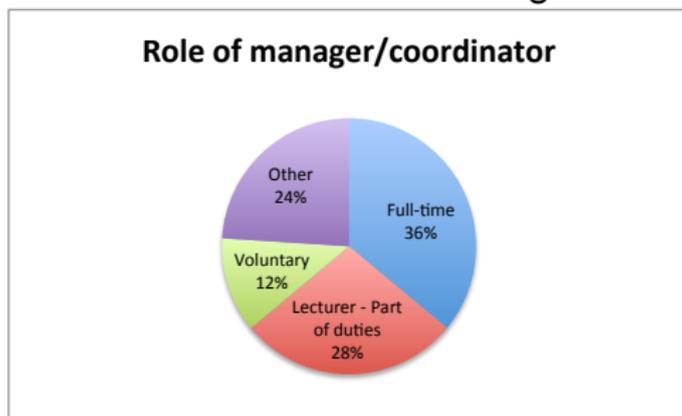
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- ▶ In the same period the percentage of voluntary managers has fallen from 16% to 12%

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Staff types

Note: The following figures refer to staffing numbers exclusive of manager/coordinator

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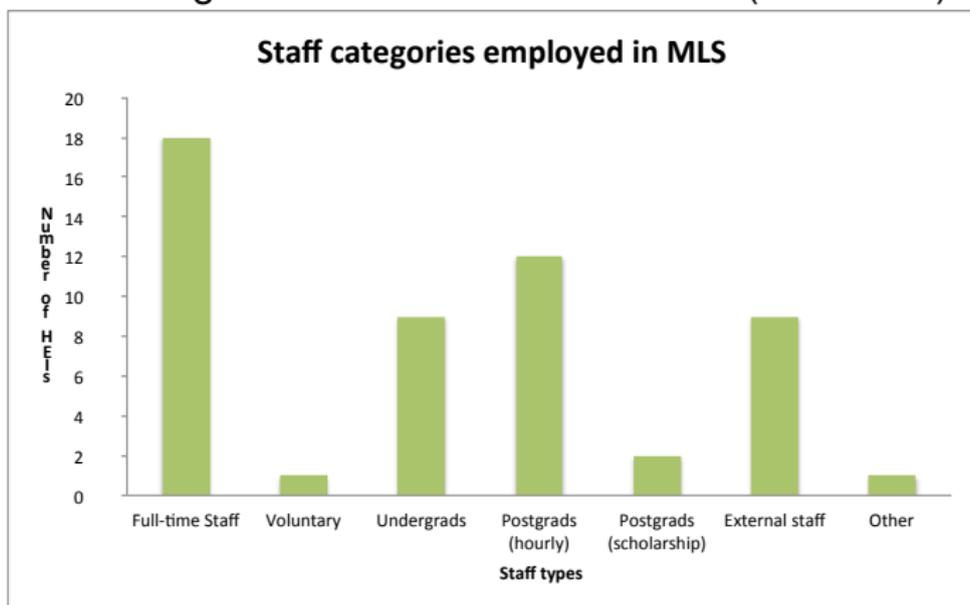
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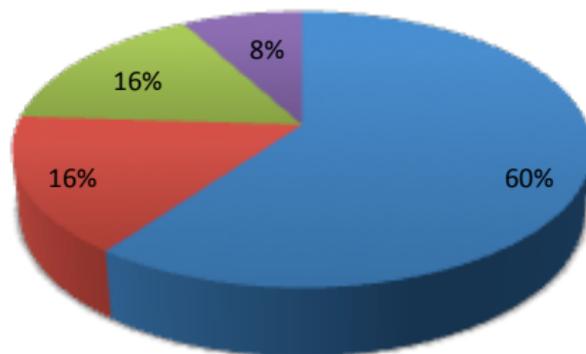
- ▶ 13 HEIs employ MLS staff of one type only:
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 - 1 uses hourly-paid postgraduates only

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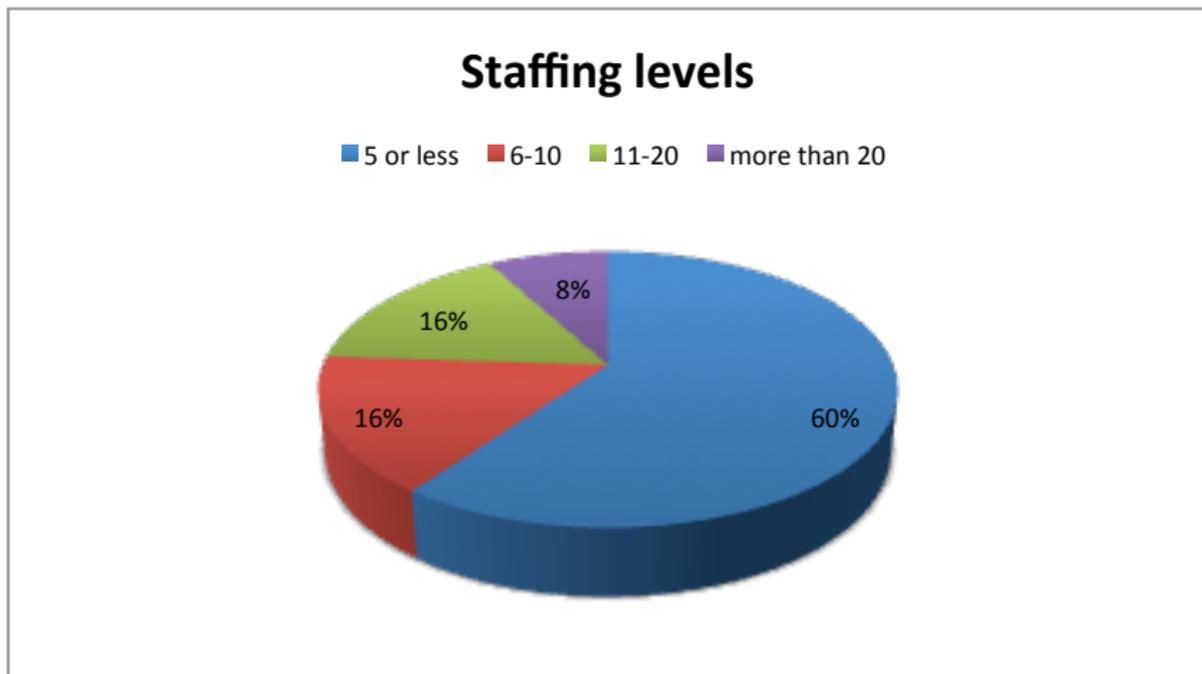
Staff numbers

Staffing levels

■ 5 or less ■ 6-10 ■ 11-20 ■ more than 20



Staff numbers



16% of MLS offerings are run by at most two institutional staff

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- ▶ Several suggested that tutors be given permanent contracts and a better salary so as to "encourage the good tutors to stay longer and see it [MLS] as a viable career"
- ▶ A recent UK report by Tolley and MacKenzie [2] noted that senior management from several UK HEIs suggested the need for appropriate MLS training, leading to some kind of professionally accredited status.

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- ▶ All disciplines are represented, with the majority coming from science, engineering and business in that order
- ▶ Non-traditional students are key users with one HEI stating that between 61% and 100% of their users are non-traditional

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When asked what MLS practitioners most needed from the IMLSN, the following quote epitomises several responses:

Keep raising the profile of MLS and the centres. Keep pressure on institutions and government to recognise the need to properly support us

THANK YOU

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We would like to extend a sincere thank you to The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning whose funding support assisted the completion of this work.



References

- [1] Gill, O., Johnson, P. and O'Donoghue, J. (2008) An audit of mathematics support provision in Irish third level institutions. CEMTL (Regional Centre for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching and Learning), University of Limerick.
- [2] Tolley, H. and Mackenzie, H. (2015) Senior management perspectives on mathematics and statistics support in higher education. Sigma, Loughborough University. Accessed via <http://www.sigma-network.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/sector-needs-analysis-report.pdf>