

NATCOR (A National Taught Course Centre in Operational Research)

1. Project and Partners

EPSRC Reference EP/E502067/1

Starts: 1st October 2006 Ends: 30th September 2011 Value: £241,052

Scheme: Mathematical Sciences Integrated PhD

EPSRC Research Topic Classification: Mathematical Aspects of Operational Research

Website: www.natcor.ac.uk

Collaborating Universities

Lancaster University (Coordinator)

Brunel University

Cardiff University

University of Nottingham

University of Southampton

University of Warwick

Institutions involved in NATCOR

EPSRC

The Operational Research Society

Other EPSRC funded taught course centres

APTS – The Academy for PhD Training in Statistics

Scottish Mathematical Training Centre – Taught course centre for UK PhD students.

Taught Course Centre for the Mathematical Sciences based at Oxford, Warwick, Imperial, Bath and Bristol

MAGIC – Mathematics Access Grid: Instruction and Collaboration

London Taught Course Centre for PhD Students in the Mathematical Sciences

2. Courses

NATCOR will offer the following courses during 2007– 9:

Heuristics and Approximation Algorithms

University of Nottingham 31st March – 4th April 2008

Convex Optimization

Brunel University 16th – 20th June 2008

Combinatorial Optimization

University of Southampton 15th – 19th September 2008

Stochastic Modelling

Lancaster University 23rd – 27th March 2009

Simulation

University of Warwick 29th June – 3rd July 2009

Each is a one week (5 days) residential Course. The courses operate over a 2 year cycle (3 courses in year 1 (2008), 2 courses in year 2 (2009), to be repeated in 2010, 2011)

2.1 First course (Heuristics and Approximation Algorithms)

Attended by 93 students.

Student Feedback (based on 72 questionnaires)
(5 point scale: 1:Disagree to 5:Agree)

The course was successful with no major concerns reported. The extent of prior knowledge possessed by students differed considerably and, as a result, some students felt the course was rather easy whilst others felt it was difficult. Nevertheless, the overall student opinion was positive.

Top three rated features:

1. The standard of the accommodation (bed and breakfast) (Mean 4.2)
2. The event was well organised (Mean 4.1)
3. I will recommend NATCOR to others (Mean 4.0)

Bottom three rated features:

1. The amount of prior knowledge assumed was appropriate (Mean 3.3)
2. The course met my expectations (Mean 3.2)
3. The level of the course was right (Mean 3.0)

2.2 Second Course: (Convex Optimization)

to be held at Brunel University, 16th – 20th June 2008.

80 students currently registered (closed to new applicants)