

# **Introduction to the SSRMC**

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# What is the SSRMC?

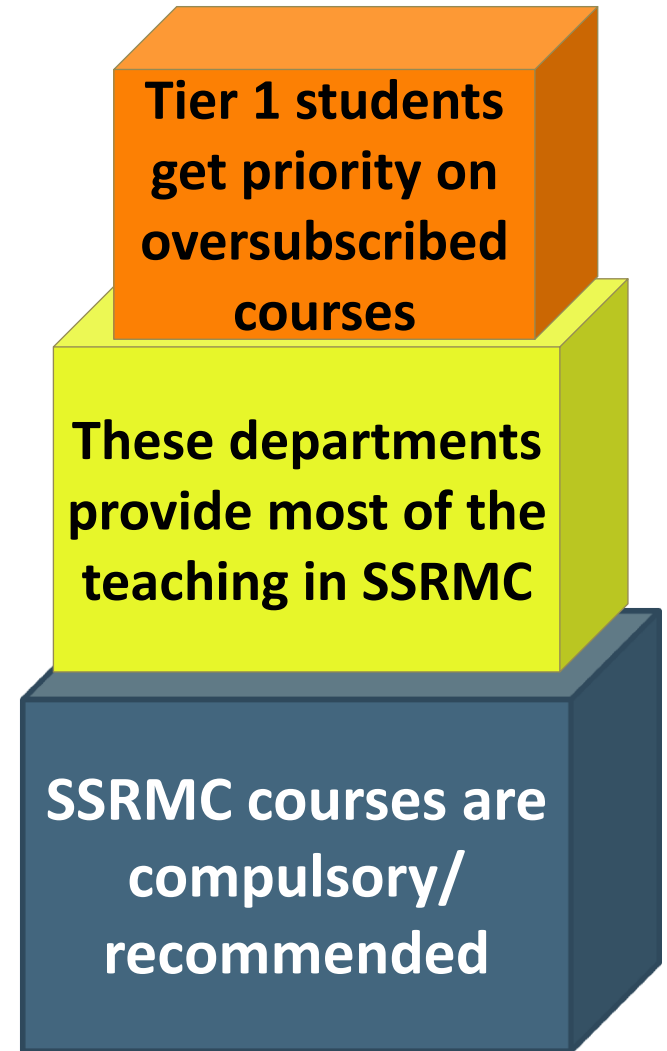
- **Social Sciences Research Methods Centre**
- **Training in research methods to postgraduates across the University**
- **Wide-ranging: all 6 Schools, 100+ departments and centres**
- **Loads of courses!**
  - CORE MODULES
  - OPEN ACCESS MODULES
- **Core modules are grouped into “streams”**
- **All information on our website**
  - <http://www.ssrmc.group.cam.ac.uk/>

# Two types of module

- **Core modules**
  - **Basic statistics stream**
    - Our most popular modules
    - Several repeats of the first 3 modules in the series
  - **Introduction to software packages**
    - Stata, R, Atlas Ti, Matlab, Microsoft Access
  - **Elements of social science research**
  - **Specialist statistics modules**
  - **Qualitative methods**
- **Open access modules**
  - **Taught in individual departments**
  - **Not specially geared to a multidisciplinary audience, but may be of general interest**
  - **Contact the relevant department to book a place**

# Priority: Tier 1 departments

- Criminology
- Education
- Geography
- History
- Land Economy
- Linguistics
- Music
- Politics and International Studies
- Social Anthropology
- Psychology
- Sociology



# Tier 2 departments

- Architecture
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Development Studies
- Any other Faculty/Department, *except....*

# **Tier 3 departments**

- **Any Faculty/Department within School of Clinical Medicine**

# How to choose your modules

- Some are compulsory, so that's easy
- Some are recommended for your degree course
- Others according to your interests/intentions
- Your dissertation/thesis: **THINK AHEAD!**
  - Fieldwork/interviewing?
  - Analytical methods: qual/quant?
  - Software packages?
- Talk to your supervisor
- For PhD students: think one step ahead, to your next paper

28<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Dear Dr Iacovou

I will be starting my fieldwork in 4 weeks and need to learn how to design and implement surveys. Please could you advise.

With best regards,

Miss D. Course



# Statistics courses: WHY ???

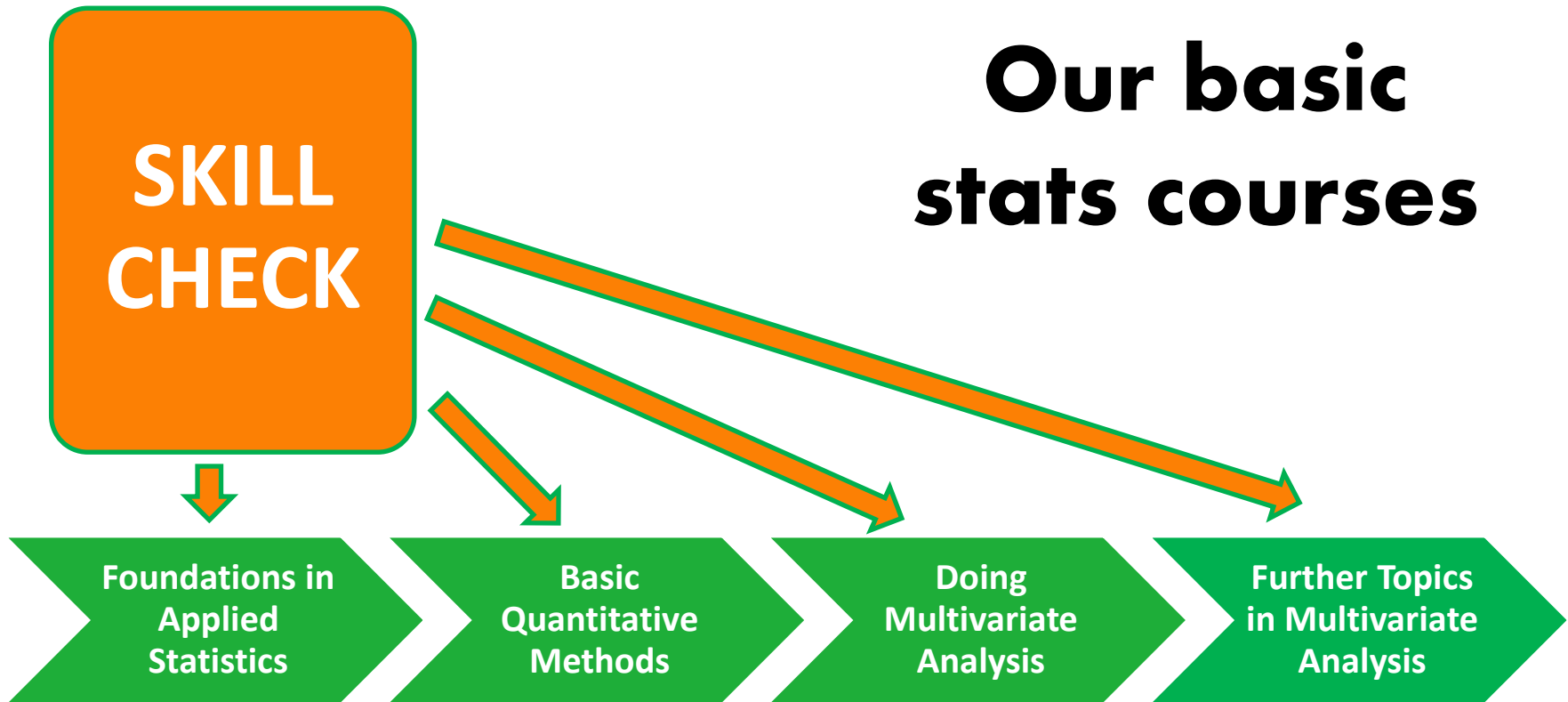
- If you know you will be using a statistical approach
- But stats are also important for other students
- Most importantly: need to be able to read & understand quantitative papers in your area
- May change your mind about doing quantitative research
- Massive boost to employability



# Basic Stats stream – Skill Check

- Feedback in previous years indicated that some students found their courses too hard or too easy
- Skill check will assess your existing competence and tell you which of our basic stats modules is a good starting point
- If your result is ambiguous, you will need to talk to your supervisor
- Will not affect your degree grade
- Take the test:  
<http://www.ssrmc.group.cam.ac.uk/take-skills-audit>
- Open book test, but nothing to be gained from “cheating”
- To book for basic stats courses, you must
  - EITHER have taken the skill check
  - OR have passed the exam for the previous module in the stream

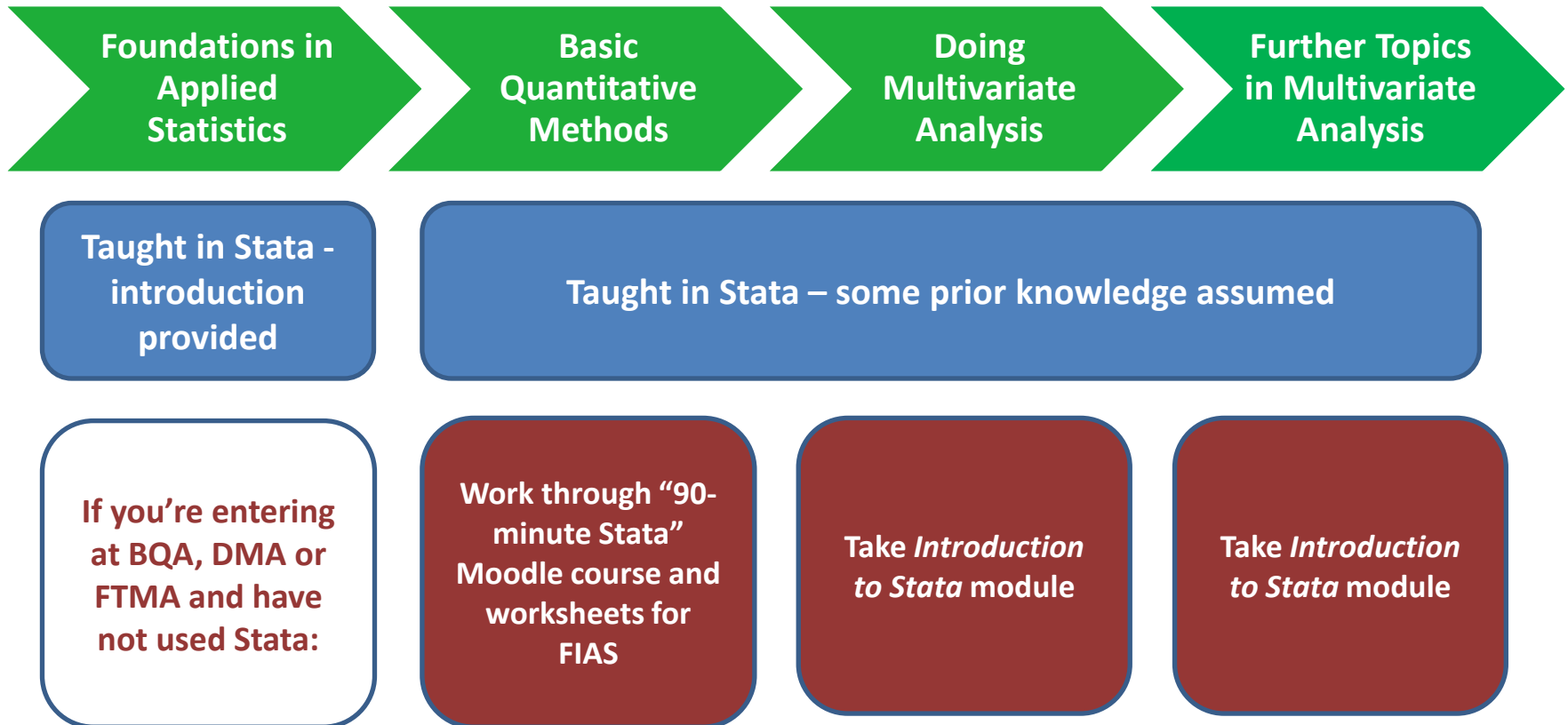
# Our basic stats courses



All our stats modules are “hands-on”, using real data

They are taught in computer labs, using statistical packages for data analysis

# Our basic stats courses



# Software packages

- **Stata**
  - Most SSRMC modules taught in Stata
  - Powerful, simple to use, easy to save syntax to reproduce your results
  - Expensive to buy, but some good student deals
    - <http://www.stata.com/order/>
    - and see next slides for cheaper ways to use Stata
- **R**
  - Some SSRMC modules are taught in R
  - As powerful as Stata, more difficult to use
  - Free – but you will also need to download a “front end”
    - <http://cran.ma.imperial.ac.uk/> for R
    - <http://rstudio.org/> for R-studio “front end”
- **SPSS**
  - Easy to use, but “point and click” format makes it difficult to reproduce findings
  - No longer supported by the SSRMC
  - Cheap student version available
    - <https://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/products/statistics/buy-now.html>

# Managed cluster machines

- **Stata, SPSS and other software packages are available in UIS Managed Cluster machines in:**
  - Titan Rooms, Phoenix Rooms, University Centre Mill Lane (when these rooms aren't booked for classes)
  - Managed clusters in POLIS, Sociology, Education, Geography, History, Land Economy, some other Departments
  - Managed clusters in most Colleges
  - Some Libraries
- **To log in to the workstations you will need:**
  - **Login: your uni ID (e.g. mj258)**
  - **New students: your “combined UIS password”**
  - **Old students: your Desktop Services password (NOT your Raven password)**
- **If you do not have a password or if you are not sure, ask the University Computing Service helpdesk**  
**\*\* BEFORE START OF MODULE \*\***

# DS-REMOTE

- **DS-Remote provides remote access (from anywhere in the world) to the University's managed cluster machines**
  - A new service
  - £5 per month for all the software packages you use
  - DS-remote is only for students
  - The SSRMC won't pay, but if you don't want to pay there are many other ways to use the MCS machines
  - Register here: <http://www.ucs.cam.ac.uk/desktop-services/ds-remote>

# End-of-module tests

- **Most quantitative modules are assessed via online multiple choice tests**
- **Most qualitative modules are not assessed**
- **Tests are compulsory for some students, not for others**
- **Should YOU take the test?**
  - **Ask your Department, not the SSRMC**
  - **If your course is compulsory, so is the assessment**
  - **To progress to the next module in Basic Stats, you must take the test**
  - **We recommend that all students take the end-of-module test**
  - **For quantitative modules, no proof of attendance without taking the exam**



# Feedback

- **Very important to us, and it forms part of your agreement with the SSRMC**
- **Our feedback form is very simple**
- **You will be asked to provide your email address, but the survey is actually anonymous**
- **An email with a link will be circulated shortly after your last session**
- **After that you will get regular email reminders.....**
- **Please don't ignore the reminders**
  - **If you didn't finish the module, you can respond to that effect**
  - **You will not be able to get proof of attendance unless you provide feedback**

# **Proof of Attendance**

- **The SSRMC doesn't formally record attendance, and we don't issue any kind of attendance certificate.**
- **We will tell your Department your marks in any end-of-module test, and your Graduate Administrator will also be able to check whether you registered for a module and whether you provided feedback.**
- **If these conditions are met, your Department will normally be willing to issue an attendance certificate.**
- **If for any reason you will need proof of attendance, ask your Graduate Administrator for an attendance log, which you should give your lecturer to sign at each session.**

# Moodle

- All SSRMC course materials are hosted on Moodle (SSRMC is under “staff and student training”)
- <https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/login/index.php>
- After booking your module via the UTBS system [more to follow] please enrol yourself on the Moodle page for that module, in order to access the course materials

# **Do's and Don'ts**

- **DO read the course descriptions**
- **DO talk to your supervisor about what courses to take**
- **DO anticipate your future needs**
- **DO the skills audit if you want to take basic stats**
- **DO ensure you know your desktop services password**
- **DO read the info on the SSRMC website**
  
- **DON'T ask Siobhan to explain anything unless you have read the website**
  
- **DO enjoy the opportunities on offer!**

# Bookings

- You must make a booking for every module that you take
  - Even if the module is taught by someone who works in your own Department
  - Even if you don't have a lot of time
  - Etc
- Bookings are made via UTBS – access via the SSRMC website “make a booking”
- Bookings open after this induction finishes
- Before you book... check your Department timetable and ensure you have your Raven password

# **How the booking system works**

- **Most modules – self-enrolment via UTBS**
- **Open access modules – contact the relevant department**
- **Summer courses – a separate booking system**
- **Basic statistics modules.... See next page....**

# **Bookings for basic stats modules**

- **If you are an MPhil student in a Tier 1 Department:**
  - your department will organise bookings for any basic stats modules that are compulsory for you
  - They will tell you that they are doing this
  - You should receive an automated email from UTBS with booking details
- **Everyone else:**
  - Fill in the request form on the website
  - The form will ask for your scores on the skill check – your booking will not be accepted without these scores
  - You will be asked which sessions you are available to attend
  - You will receive an automated email when the booking has been made for you

# About the basic stats modules

- **8 hours of instruction**
  - **4 hours over 2 weeks**
    - 2 hours lectures in the morning
    - 2 hours of lab sessions in the afternoon
  - **OR (intensive) 8 hours over one day**
- **You have to attend the lecture before the lab session**
- **There are fewer lectures than lab sessions**
- **If you can't attend a lecture, you can view it online**
- **Note: students attending FIAS-5 must sign up to DS-Remote and bring laptops to classes**



# **Oversubscribed modules**

- **Unlikely this year**
- **If you try to book a module which is oversubscribed, you will get a message saying you're on the waiting list.**
- **If you later get a place on the module, you will be notified by email.**
- **Tier 1 students get priority – so Tier 2 or 3 students may be “downgraded”**
- **If you book a place and decide not to go, please cancel the booking ASAP, so someone else can go.**
- **You will get a reminder a week or two before the module begins, asking you to confirm that you still want the place – please do confirm, or you may be removed from the list.**

# cancelling a booking

- Can only be done BEFORE the first session of a module
- Cancellations are done on UTBS, via the SSRMC website
- You will not be able to cancel a booking yourself once a module has begun, but you can send a cancellation request to [ssrmc@hermes.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ssrmc@hermes.cam.ac.uk), explaining why you need to cancel.

# **The presentation ended with an excellent joke....**

- **Sorry if you missed it.**