

# **Introduction to the SSRMC**

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# What we do

- **Provide training in research methods**
  - Focus on social sciences, but students from many departments attend
  - Staff are welcome!
  - External participants are welcome (at a reasonable cost)
  - Exceptional undergraduates may attend by special arrangement
  - Wide selection of modules
  - All information on our website
    - <http://www.ssrmc.group.cam.ac.uk/>



# What we don't do

- **Provide one-to-one teaching**
  - Our teachers may see you individually if you have questions relating to the module
  - But our resources are extremely limited
- **Advise on the implementation of methods for your own thesis**
  - New this year: workshop/clinics to help with transition to working with your own data
  - But your own department **MUST** provide a supervisor who can help you
- **Issue proof of attendance**



# Two types of module

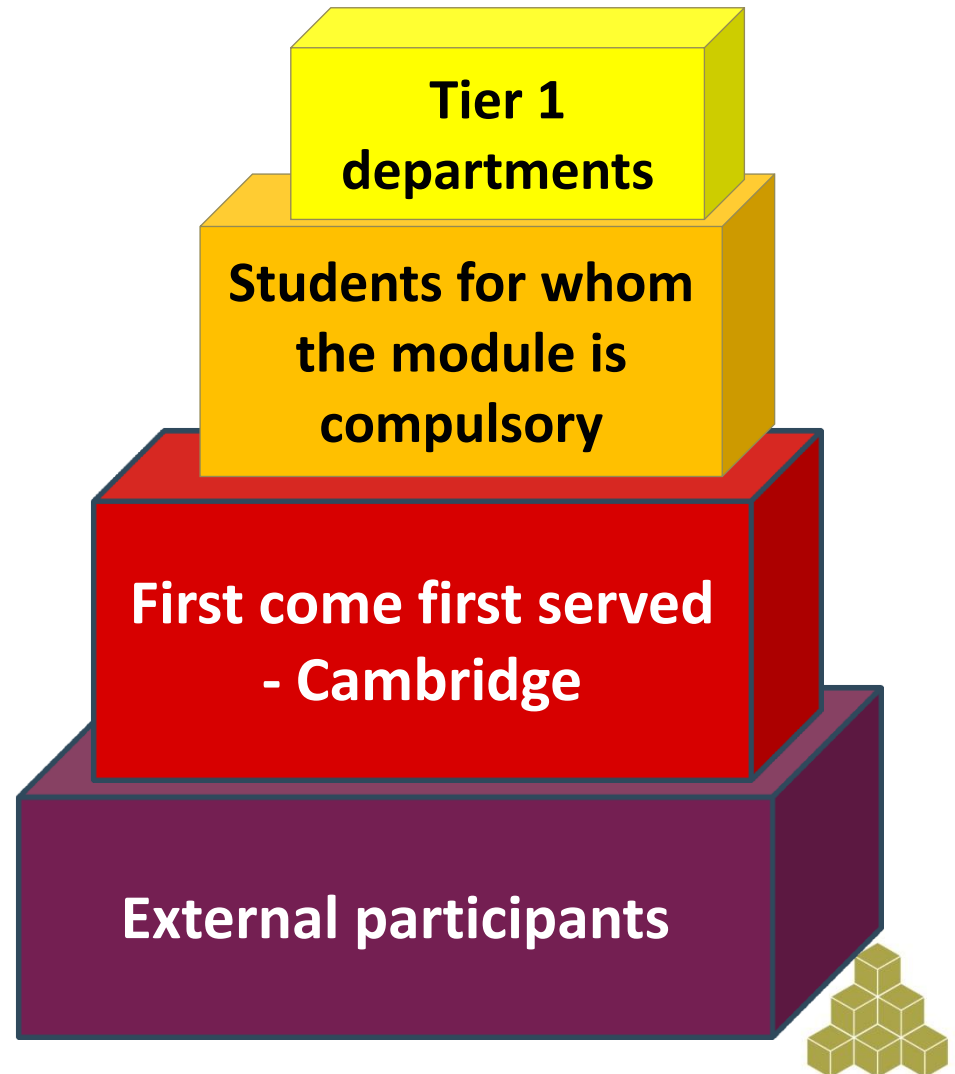
- **Core modules**
  - **Basic Statistics Stream**
    - Our most popular modules
    - Several repeats of the first 3 modules in the series
  - **Introduction to Software Packages**
    - Stata, R, Matlab, Microsoft Access
  - **Elements of Social Science Research**
  - **Specialist Statistics modules**
  - **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
- Judge Business School
- Land Economy
- Linguistics
- Music
- Politics and International Studies
- Social Anthropology
- Psychology
- Sociology

A “waiting list” system operates for oversubscribed modules



# 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
- Many students actively choose to diversify – ESRC guidelines
- 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 2017

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



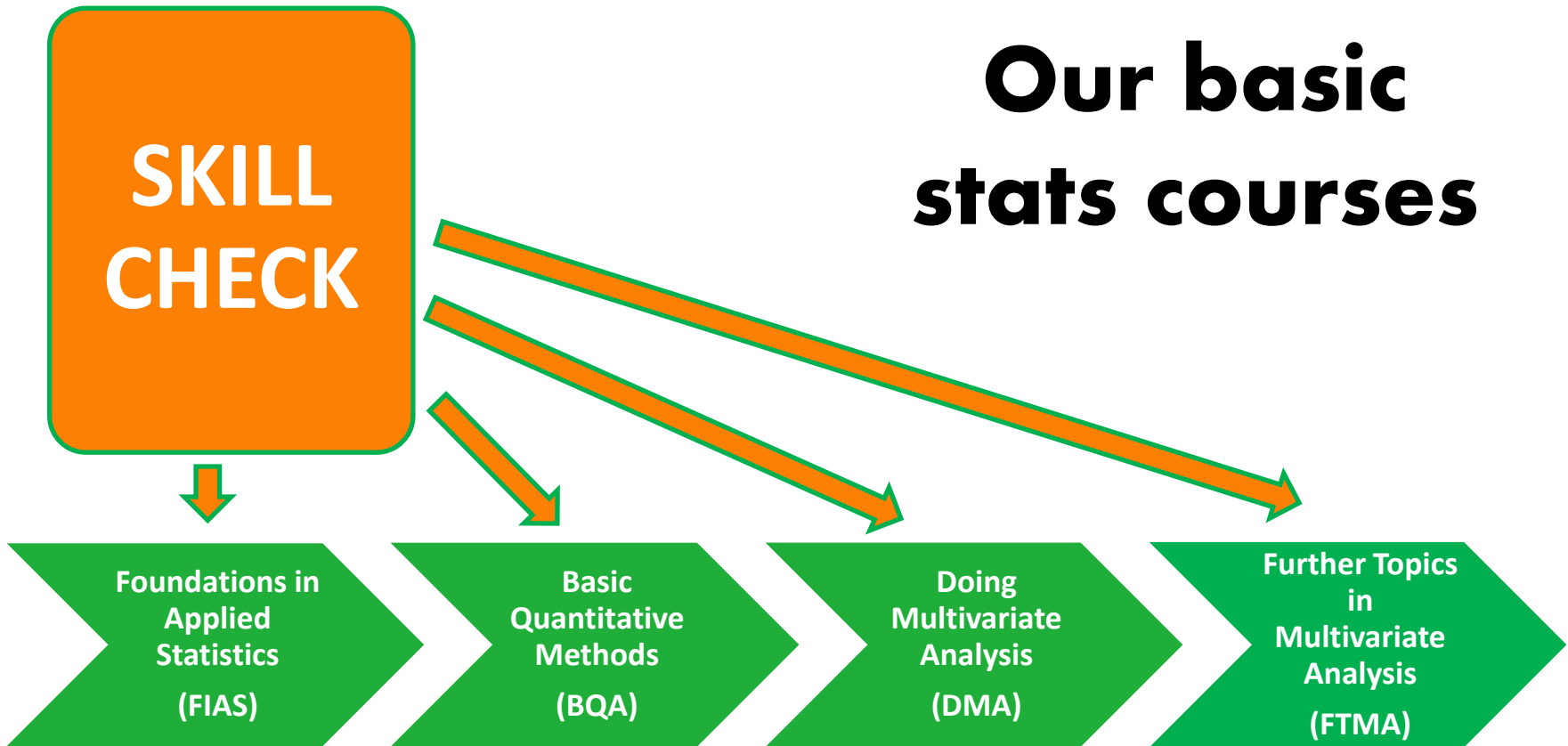


# Basic Statistics Stream – Skill Check

- Test to assess your existing competence and tell you which of our Basic Statistics Stream 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/skill-check>
- Open book test, but nothing to be gained from “cheating”
- *PLEASE EXIT PROPERLY – CLICK “SUBMIT”*
- To book for Basic Statistics Stream 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

# 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”

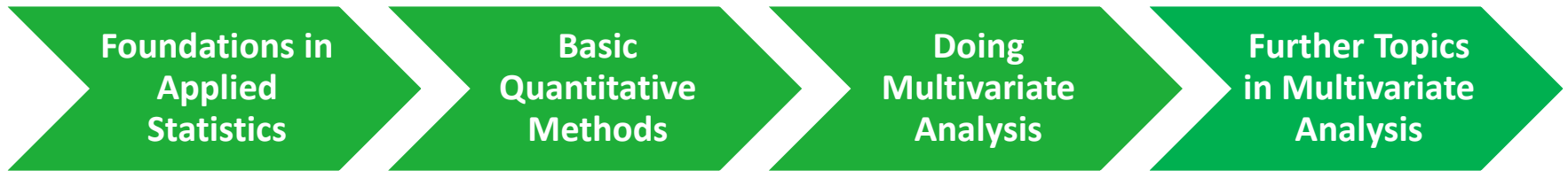


- **SPSS**

- 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>



# Our basic stats courses



Taught in Stata - introduction provided

Taught in Stata – some prior knowledge assumed

If you're entering at BQA, DMA or FTMA and have not used Stata:

Ask to attend the first FiAS lab session (if there are spaces)

Work through "90-minute Stata" Moodle course and worksheets for FiAS

Take *Introduction to Stata* module

# 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
  - In most Colleges
  - In some Libraries
- **To log in to the workstations you will need:**
  - Login: your university CRSid (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, ask the University Information Service helpdesk**  
**\*\* BEFORE START OF MODULE \*\***



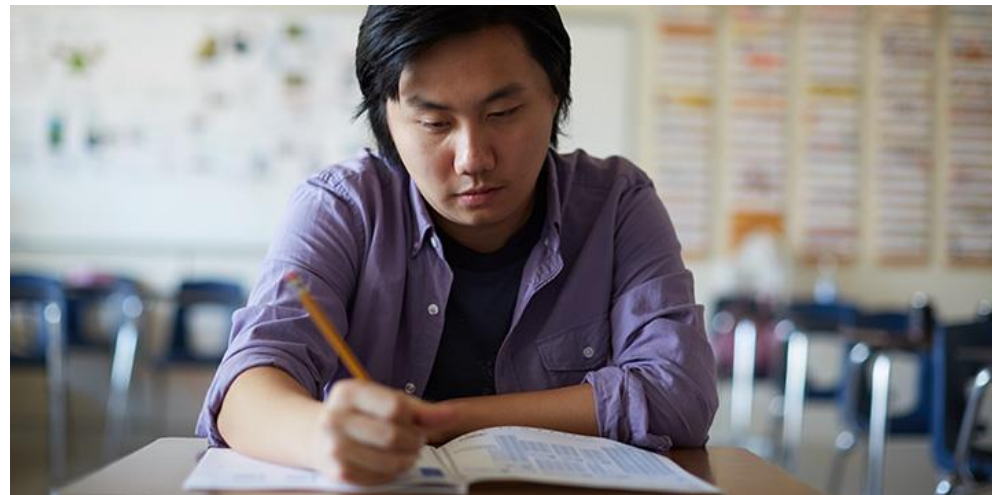
# DS-REMOTE

- **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

- **Your feedback is very important to us**
- **Helps us improve provision**
- **By booking an SSRMC module you agree to provide feedback**
  - **An email with a link will be circulated shortly after your last session**
  - **After that you will get regular 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

- We don't record attendance, and we don't issue attendance certificates.
- We will tell your Department your test marks. For non-assessed modules, we will assume you attended if you provide feedback.
- If these conditions are met, your Department will normally be willing to issue an attendance certificate.
- If for any reason you know you will need formal proof of attendance, ask your Graduate Administrator for an attendance log, which you should give your lecturer to sign at each session.



# Moodle

- **Most 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 Skill Check if you want to take Basic Statistics**
- **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 Thursday 5 October
- Before you book... check your Department timetable and ensure you have your Raven password



# How the booking system works

- **Bookings open the day after this induction**
- **Book all modules via the SSRMC website**
- **Most modules – self-enrolment via UTBS**
  - “Core modules” list on the “modules” tab
  - Clicking a module name takes you through to the module description and the booking portal
- **Basic Statistics Stream modules – request a booking via the dedicated form**
  - Please request bookings for ALL Basic Stats modules you want to attend
  - Indicate ALL the times you are available to attend
  - Enter your Skill Check scores (or assessment results from last year)
  - We will contact you with details of module times
- **Open Access modules – contact the relevant department**





# Social Sciences Research Methods Centre | SSRMC

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## What is the SSRMC?

An interdisciplinary centre providing research methods training to University of Cambridge staff and postgraduate students at MPhil and PhD level. Our courses cover qualitative, and quantitative research methods, from basic training to advanced statistical analysis.

- Basic Statistics
- Specialist Statistics
- Introductions to Statistical Software Packages
- Elements of Social Science Research

A selection of our courses are also available to external participants.

Is it for me?

2 of 4



### Skill Check

What is the Skill Check and why do I have to take it? The SSRMC Skill Check is an online multiple-choice test, which assesses competence levels in basic statistics. The results are used for one purpose only: to make sure our students take the Basic Statistics Stream (BSS) modules suited to their



### PLEASE NOTE:

Bookings for the SSRMC 2017-18 Programme will open after our Induction on Wed 4 October. Those wishing to attend SSRMC modules this academic

### ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership



[Read more >](#)

# About the Basic Statistics modules

- 8 hours of instruction
  - 4 hours over 2 weeks
    - 2 hours lectures in the morning
    - 2 hours of lab sessions in the afternoon, split into two groups
    - Only attend one of the lab sessions
  - OR (intensive) 8 hours over one day
    - “catch-up” sessions in Lent term; attend in Michaelmas if possible
- If you can't attend a lecture, you can view it online

	19-Oct	20-Oct	23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct
09.00-10.00					
10.00-12.00			FIAS lec		FIAS lec
14.00-16.00			FIAS-1		FIAS-3
16.00-18.00			FIAS-2		FIAS-4
	26-Oct	27-Oct	30-Oct	31-Oct	01-Nov
09.00-10.00					
10.00-12.00			FIAS lec		FIAS lec
14.00-16.00			FIAS-1		FIAS-3
16.00-18.00			FIAS-2		FIAS-4



# Oversubscribed modules

- **Very rare.**
- **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 – other students may be “downgraded”.**
- **If you book and decide not to attend, please cancel the booking ASAP, so someone else can go.**
- **You may get a reminder a week or two before the module begins, asking you to confirm that you still want the place.**





# **Cancelling a booking**

- **Can only be done BEFORE the first session of a module**
- **Cancellations are done on UTBS, via the SSRMC website**
- **If possible, please cancel 2 full working days before the module starts**

