

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS IN  
IRR/IRP

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# WHAT

## ➤ What we want:

### ➤ IRR:

- Develop skills and competencies in reviewing literature and using evidence to draw a conclusion or answer a question.
- Construct a critical review, ideally in the field of their MSc summer project

### ➤ IPP:

- Develop skills and competencies in writing project proposals, and
- Construct a viable project proposal for their MSc summer project
- Understand how to use a plan to manage their time effectively

## ➤ What the students tend to do:

### ➤ IRR:

- Focus more on knowledge and end up worrying they don't know enough to write a review

### ➤ IPP:

- Focus more on the knowledge required for the specific project and neglect the need to develop a robust plan (and would not necessarily be able to recognise a robust plan)
- Discard the plan when they start the project.

# W H E N

- We want students:

- IRR: to start in week 1 of semester 1 and work steadily through to a deadline of week 2 in semester 2 having prepared a good draft by around week 8 of semester 1

- IPP: to start in week 3 of semester 2 (i.e. before they find out what project they have been allocated at the end of week 5) and work steadily through to a deadline of week 11 of semester 2

- What students do:

- IRR: make little progress because of the demands of other courses and delude themselves they will get lots done over Christmas and then cram everything into the beginning of semester 2.

- IPP: Don't really engage with the generic aspects of writing a plan, then have very variable experience of finding/interacting with supervisors, concentrating on the knowledge they need and putting little emphasis on planning.

# ISSUES

- We want students to engage more with the courses: Students have much more immediate coursework demands that result in the courses being low priority.
- We want students to develop the skills and competencies the courses aim to develop
- We want the live sessions to be more interactive and to focus more on developing skills and competencies.
- The courses are very tough on tutors:
  - Who feel they don't know enough.
  - Tutor groups can have very diverse interests that make it difficult to run group activities
- For IPP the supervisor/tutor division of labour is problematic. Also, there is no communication between the supervisor and the tutoe

# BREAK FOR DISCUSSION

- These Issues identify the large scale issues in the presentation of IRR/IPP – but there are many issues that arise from direct experience.
- Please take 10 minutes to discuss and identify the main difficulties/issues you have encountered in IRR or IPP (depending on what group you are in).

# POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

- Given what Bjoern has said about coursework, can we reduce the size of the courseworks?
- Change the timing of the courses so students have clear time to work:
  - IRR: From Week 12 of Semester 1 to Week 3 of Semester 2 – students have time then and they start with more knowledge of what they are interested in because they have done some courses.
  - IPP: From Week 6 of Semester 2 to Week 2 or 3 of the exam diet. Students then know their topic and they will have time in the exam diet.
- Knowledge/Competence:
  - IRR: have each group work on a set topic providing the tutor with better backup and prompting students strongly on the questions they are investigating. Students get to choose their group.
  - IPP: Tutor groups should be groups according to supervisor (i.e. each group comprises students from 2 or three supervisors – or one depending on number of students). Supervisors run the IPP tutorials with support.
- We have diagnostic help available with skills and competencies that operate like InfBase to help students with issues like writing, literature searching, planning, risk analysis, project management.

# BREAK FOR DISCUSSION

- These resolutions identify possible large scale revisions in the presentation of IRR/IPP – but there are many ideas for change that arise from direct experience.
- Please take 10 minutes to discuss and identify possible resolutions to the issues you have encountered in IRR or IPP (depending on what group you are in).