

Spring newsletter, 2016

STATS CENTRAL

*The UNSW Statistical Consulting and Collaboration Unit
Part of the Mark Wainwright Analytical Centre*

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Welcome!

Welcome to the first newsletter for Stats Central—the recently established UNSW Statistical Collaboration and Consulting Unit. Below you will find details on what mischief we've been getting up to since establishment earlier this year, and what's coming up next. In particular note our short course program (**Upcoming Events**, right) and details on **Current partners and projects** Stats Central is collaborating with. Partnering with Stats Central is a way to get maximum value out of this initiative, contact me directly if interested (David.Warton@unsw.edu.au)

Prof David Warton

Director, Stats Central



Upcoming events

Sept 26-28: Introduction to Regression in R

(Three-day short course)

November 2016:

Three-day short course:

Statistical Methods for Research Workers

Four-day short course:

Model-based multivariate analysis in ecology

Seminar:

Writing your NHMRC design/analysis plan

[Book a consultation](#)

Questions or comments?

Email us at

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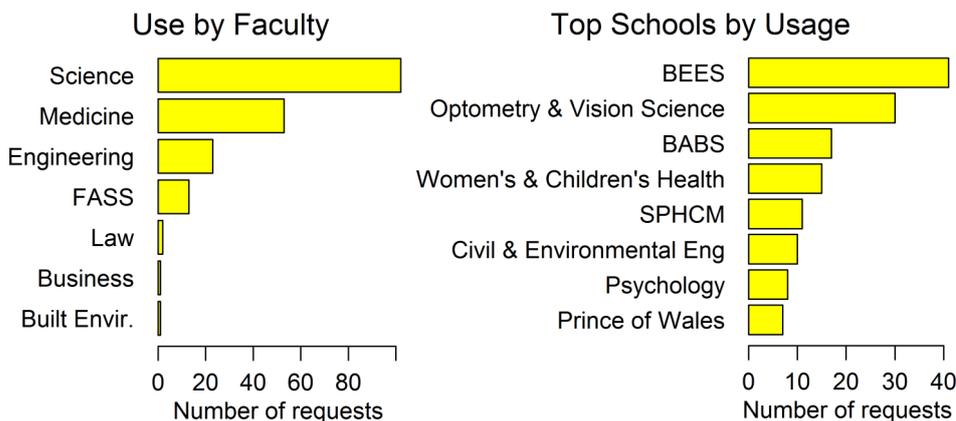


Recent activities

We have had four consulting staff on deck since April 1 of this year, with decades of collective experience collaborating with researchers across disciplines. Since April we have been busy...

Consulting: We offer free design and analysis advice to UNSW HDR students and free design advice to staff, and can be contracted to work on larger projects.

Since April of this year Stats Central has assisted 195 UNSW research projects across 35 schools/units and seven Faculties. Super busy.



We aim to assist researchers from all nine UNSW Faculties this year.

The highest-usage schools are our partner schools, who contract an in-house statistical consultant part-time to provide dedicated expertise. Our three partner schools in Science alone account for almost half of all Stats Central requests, emphasising that becoming a partner is a mechanism to maximise benefit from Stats Central.

Short courses and seminars: We offer short courses at heavily discounted rates for UNSW researchers, also the occasional free seminar (11 to date, mostly in partner schools). Two short courses were delivered earlier this year to 82 attendees from 20 Schools, we have three more coming up during Spring.

Grant review: we offered free statistical review of NHMRC grant applications early 2016, led by Prof Sue Wilson, who has extensive experience reviewing NHMRC design and analysis plans. In total, 47 grants were reviewed. Anecdotally it appears that design/analysis plans were quite well-received in the review process. To make the most of the support offered by Stats Central, contact us early in grant planning, *e.g.* now!

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Current partners and projects

Schools and units can partner with Stats Central, buying out a portion of a consultant's time to dedicate to the partner. The consultant can be physically based in the partner school or unit for that time to increase access, facilitate specialisation and deeper collaborations. Basically, to enable best-practice consultancy and to tailor what we offer based on the partner's needs. To date this has included activities like:

- One-on-one consulting in design and analysis (for Hons students and staff as well as HDR students)
- Workshops and seminars on special topics
- Developing web resources tailored to Partner School needs
- Teaching assistance in courses for research students...

Our most recent partner is The School of Women's and Children's Health, joining the following list of partners:

- Graduate Research School
- Mark Wainwright Analytical Centre
- School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences
- School of Optometry and Vision Sciences
- School of Public Health and Community Medicine
- School of Women's and Children's Health

We also collaborate with research groups on projects requiring specialised expertise, under similar funding arrangements, current projects:

- Maintain Your Brain (Dementia Collaborative Research Centre and Centre for Healthy Brain Aging)
- Flood modelling in the Yantabulla Swamp (Centre for Ecosystem Science)

[Introduction to regression short course](#)

Our next short course is titled "Introduction to Regression Modelling in R", based on materials from Prof Warton's upcoming text on the topic. It will run for three days, September 26-28, and the goal is to learn statistical methods in a systematic way, instead of as a "cookbook" of different approaches, which makes *everything* easier. It is aimed at applied researchers with little prior experience in R and some knowledge of introductory statistics. Further details at

<http://www.analytical.unsw.edu.au/facilities/stats-central-2>

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Stats Central Launch

Our official launch was held on June 15th in Colombo Theatre A. There were over 80 attendees, including the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deans, Associate Deans, and Heads of School.

The keynote speaker was Prof Ian Jacobs, our President and Vice-Chancellor, who spoke of his cancer research and the key role statistics and statisticians had in advancing it. His talk underlined the need not just for statistical support but *quality* statistical support. Our goal here at Stats Central is to build a unit following best practice world-wide, our **Partner Schools** initiative and **Staffing policies** are key to this.



Staffing Policies

We have **staffing policies** of appointing consultants to academic positions, and seeking applicants with a PhD in applied statistics and professional accreditation. Thus all our consultants are not just expert consultants but also researchers in their own right, ideally placed to assist UNSW researchers in consulting and collaborative roles. Currently we have four consulting staff (and just quietly, they were all excellent appointments):

- Nancy Briggs (Senior Consultant, clinical trials, quantitative psychology, stats for the social sciences)
- Brigid Betz-Stablein (biostatistics, bioinformatics)
- Gordana Popovic (statistical ecology, dependent data)
- Peter Geelan-Small (experimental design, physical sciences)

We also employ Prof Sue Wilson fractionally to lead the grant review program and are led by Prof David Warton. Both are leaders internationally in applied statistics and ideal mentors.

Farewell Andrew!

Recently we said farewell to Andrew Hayden (right), one of our founding Co-Directors and a key contact in the establishment of Stats Central. He has moved to a Professorial appointment at UTS, and will still be in regular contact. David has moved to a sole Director role, and our Steering Committee will be joined by Dr Robin Turner from Medicine, who has worked closely with Andrew for a few years now. Andrew will be missed, but we congratulate him on his new appointment and wish him well!



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