

**Action point document arising from the meeting of the
Staff Student Liaison Committee on 19th January 2016**

First year issues

- Additional copies of *Young and Freedman* were requested for the fifth floor undergraduate workroom.
ACTION (resolved): MP delivered four copies to the workroom.
- Some errors were spotted in the solutions to some of the PX149 past paper solutions.
ACTION: Students are invited to notify MP of possible errors.
- LectureCapture was requested for PX120 and PX147.
ACTION: We will invite the lecturers for a response.
- It was asked whether it is possible to request to swap lab days.
RESPONSE: Although it might be possible to swop in very unusual cases, this is in general impractical due to the impact on the scheduling of examples classes and the availability of tutors.

Second year issues

- Lecture capture was requested for PX274 Experimental Particles, PX268 Stars, PX275 Maths Methods.
ACTION: We will invite the lecturers for a response.
- The lecturer on PX275 (term 2) writes too quickly.
ACTION: This comment will be passed to the lecturer.
- Why is the deadline for the 1st lab report set at 4pm when the first lab session of the second term starts on the same day at 2pm? This decreases for many the productivity of the first lab session.
ACTION (resolved): The head of the lab has agreed in 2016/17 to move the deadline to the day before (Monday) at 4pm.
- Will there be any further notes uploaded for PX262 from lectures which have already occurred so far this term?
RESPONSE: The notes for PX262 are now uploaded.
- It was asked whether a maths textbook (e.g. Riley and Hobson) could be purchased for all students.
ACTION: We will consider whether the modules are aligned well enough with the text and the costs involved.

Third year issues

- It was reported that some students felt that the workload on PX390 was excessive for 7.5 CATS.
RESPONSE: This has been raised with the lecturer. The module is considered to be of similar difficulty to last year. Comments will be taken on board in the redesign of this module for next year as a 15 CATS module.
- The possibility of social events to which both staff and students were invited was raised.
ACTION: MP to liaise with PhysSoc on the possibility of a social event later this year.

- It was reported that some students felt that the format of the PX396 Nuclear lectures was not productive: 20 minutes of lecturing, followed by 20 minutes of questions and answers, followed by 20 minutes of revision. There is generally not sufficient time to read distributed notes ahead of the lectures to make productive use of the questions and answers period, and the first 20 minutes often seem rushed.

RESPONSE: This format aims to encourage students to read through the lecture notes (printed copies of which are provided 3-4 days in advance and electronic copies of which are available for even longer) and ask questions on the material during the lecture. As the lecturer discusses with you your attempts to solve problems, places where the material is not properly understood can be more easily identified and explained in a better way. The lecturer appreciates feedback and is willing to reconsider this format, but would need to be sure that the feedback is representative.

Fourth year issues

- The lecturer for PX438 Fusion did not turn up to the first lecture, often starts lectures late, and often overruns.
RESPONSE: This has been raised with the lecturer, who apologises for missing the first slot. The module only requires 14 lectures so there should be no problem with covering the material.
- Some students reported that lectures which are primarily or exclusively given on Powerpoint are unpopular, as the slides often are primarily composed of images and graphs, and contain too few words to make them comprehensible at revision time.
RESPONSE: Staff will be reminded of the dangers of over-reliance on PowerPoint and of the care required to use it effectively in lectures.

Maths/Physics issues

- Regarding the first years' January Maths exam:
 - Apparently straight Maths students get a talk towards the end of the first term on exam regulations, etiquette etc. A similar talk for Maths & Physics students was requested.
RESPONSE: The Maths talk deals with how to approach examinations and revise for them. We believe that advice about preparing, and revising, for exams should be handled via personal tutorials (the Maths department does not offer weekly personal tutorials). We have introduced tutorials into the third term this year to cover exam revision. In relation to the January exam, we will remind tutors to cover this explicitly next year.
 - An optional question on the Sets and Numbers paper allegedly required knowledge of the axiom of choice, which had not been taught to the Maths & Physics students. Clarity on the distinction between the syllabi for MA138 and MA132 was therefore requested.
RESPONSE: The syllabuses for MA138 and MA132 are the same. We asked the Director of Studies in Mathematics to re-check the exam paper for MA132/MA138. He confirmed that there was nothing on the Axiom of Choice in either the exam or the solutions. These examination papers are written by the lecturers for the two

groups of students and not by one on their own. The first year examination secretary then works through the paper. Finally they are shown to representatives of CS, Physics and Statistics. So, while errors are possible, they should be very rare.