

Physics Department
Warwick University

Action points arising from the meeting of the
Student Staff Liaison Committee
on Monday 22nd January

Building matters

- The doors into the Department from the Concourse are often continuously beeping out of teaching hours, making it difficult to concentrate. This beeping can occur even when the doors are properly closed.
We have reported this to the departmental Technical Services Manager.
- PLT can sometimes become rather hot.
We have reported this to the departmental Technical Services Manager.

First year matters

- Many students thought that overall the **PX1491** exam was more difficult than past papers from recent years.
The examination returned an (unmoderated) average of over 59%, which is less than 1% below the target and well within the range for this module. The mark for this exam will be combined with that from the June examination. The performance on this module will be reviewed again in June.
- It was reported that the second examples class sheet for **PX120** covered material which was not lectured until the hand-in date.
It is sometimes necessary (and valuable) for students to study material in advance of the lectures particularly at the start of a module when the examples classes need to get going. The lecturer made the relevant notes on the material available in time before the hand-in date.
- Some students reported that in some **PX149** lectures the lighting is a little low.
We have reported this to the lecturer. Students are encouraged to report such issues directly to the lecturer, so that they can be resolved more speedily.
- Some students reported that some lab demonstrators on **PX110** are inconsistent in their guidance on how to write a lab book, and inconsistent in their marking.
All the demonstrators receive training from the lab head at the beginning of the year and are required to give feedback to each student in addition to a mark. This comment has been passed to the lecturer, who will meet with the demonstrators.

Second year matters

- Some students reported that the **PX275** lecturer (in Term 2) writes rather quickly. They also asked whether the Friday slots could sometimes be used for examples classes.
We have passed this comment to the lecturer concerned and asked him to consider using the examples class slots currently designated as reading hours.
- Some students reported that they found the first **PX271** lab report difficult as they had not had any recent writing practice.

Two guides to good scientific writing (one from *Nature* and one written by a former academic member of the Department) have been uploaded to the module page. A recording of the talk on report writing given to first years is made available to those transferring from Maths and Physics into the second year of Physics.

- Changes to **PX274** are being received favourably.
The Department is always pleased to hear positive feedback!

Third year matters

- Clarification was sought on whether Latex is compulsory for lab reports in **PX442** and **PX428**. Some students also asked whether any Latex resources could be posted or linked to from the module pages.
These comments have been passed to the lecturer who will be coordinating these modules (for the first time) in 18/19.
- Some students reported that the lab script for the optical pumping experiment in **PX442** and **PX428** is very long (around 50 pages) and incomprehensible in parts. They further reported that the demonstrator, although very knowledgeable and helpful, was also unsure about certain parts of the script. Is it possible for a clearer and shorter version to be prepared?
These comments have been passed to the lecturer who will be coordinating these modules (for the first time) in 18/19.
- Some students would have found it useful had the **PX442** Errors Workbook been advertised slightly earlier, to give them time to get books from the library before the Christmas vacation. Some students had missed that they needed to do the assignment at all, and asked whether the assignment could be more prominently displayed on the module page.
These comments have been passed to the lecturer who will be coordinating these modules (for the first time) in 18/19. We will endeavour to distribute the workbook before the end of Term 1 in 18/19.
- Some students thought that the handwriting of the lecturer on **PX396** was often illegible.
We have reviewed the module questionnaire responses from 16/17 and there was only one comment about handwriting. However we have passed on this SSLC comment to the lecturer. Students are encouraged to report such issues directly to the lecturer, so that they can be resolved more speedily.
- Some students reported that the seminars in **PX376** are non-uniform because of the different tutors used.
Seminar plans are distributed to all seminar leaders which detail the material which has to be covered each week. Although all of the seminar tutors come from similar academic backgrounds, there will inevitably be some differences in emphasis and style, as they are different people. The Department does moderate the assignment marks (as publicised on the module website).
- Some students reported finding assignment 5 for **PX390** was taking longer than the allotted 30 hours, and with parts of the brief ambiguous. It was asked whether in future years there could be more support classes, and with graduate demonstrators to help.
Computing is a skill which can only be learnt through practice. We are confident that

it is possible to do well on this 15 CATS module with less than 150 hours work (the average for this module is usually quite high). As a coursework assessed module, there is no additional work required to revise the material for exams. We will ask the lecturer to consider laying on more support classes in the second term.

Fourth year matters

- There are no lecture notes for **PX441** on Moodle.
If a student misses a lecture for a good reason, they can collect a hardcopy of the missed notes from Rashida in the undergraduate office. The notes will not be uploaded online.
- Some students asked for clarification on how the ‘work done’ marks are arrived at for **PX319** and **PX402**.
Supervisors were told to consider (and give feedback upon) each of the following (as per module web pages):
 - Understanding of the aims and objectives of the project;
 - Evidence of having read the background literature, supported by notes in the Work Done book;
 - Work towards achieving the aims of the project, also as recorded in the Work Done book.They graded on the 20 point scale, per an interpretation for Project work which is posted on the module pages.

Mathematics matters

- Some students queried when feedback on the final assignment for **MA3E5** will be received.
The mark for the essay (and hence the total module mark) will be released after the Exam Board. Where a student submitted a second hardcopy (marked ‘duplicate’), that will be returned earlier, with written feedback on it.
- Some students reported not finding the **MA250** lectures very useful, with much time devoted to the lecturer’s research rather than the course content itself.
The member(s) of the Maths SSLC are asked to contribute to the discussion on this module there. We have however passed this comment on to the Director of Studies in Maths.

Other matters

- Can undergraduates be added to the mailing list for the **Physics colloquia**?
Yes. We have asked the relevant administrator to include undergraduates from now on.