Physics Department
Warwick University

Meeting of the
Student Staff Liaison Committee
on 27th January 2021

First year matters

- PX120 Electricity & Magnetism – although the explanations in the videos are good, some students are requesting that there is more video material, covering more of the topics. The visual quality of the videos is also variable.
  The lecturer is happy that the explanations in the videos are good. His plan is to build upon the existence of a solid set of lecture notes, accompanied by the textbook, and the weekly live events. He decided not to produce pre-recorded videos covering every component of the module as that would not amount to actual blended learning. He invites students to flag up specific sections of past material they continue to have difficulties with, which he can tackle, either in a live event, or produce additional videos for. He hopes that the technical difficulties have been ironed out now.
- PX146 Key Skills for Physics Fourier worksheet and lab report are due in in the same week. Can the deadline of one of them be changed?
  The deadline for the Fourier worksheet has been put back by one week.
- PX144 Introduction to Astronomy material comes out on Wednesdays whereas the other modules have material released on Mondays. Is there a reason for this?
  We think that, provided the material on each module is released regularly, it should not matter that the release dates on modules is staggered throughout the week (indeed some students prefer this).
- PX144 Introduction to Astronomy, PX150 Physics Programming Workshop, PX149 Mathematics for Physicists material this term is generally well received.
  We are pleased to receive this feedback.

Second year matters

- PX265 Thermal Physics II (and PX280 Environmental Physics) material is explained well.
  We are pleased to receive this feedback.
- PX264 Physics of Fluids – some students report finding some of the explanations in the videos quite quick.
  We have also received feedback that the difficulty level of this module is commensurate with the other second year PX modules. We will pass this feedback to the lecturer and monitor the end-of-module questionnaires.
- PX271 Microprocessors lab – some students are finding it difficult to complete the script in the scheduled laboratory time.
  The lab book deadlines are no tighter than if students had been in the labs physically - indeed students should have more time to record their work now as they are not physically taking the measurements - they are being given the data, which saves time.

We do understand that it takes time to get used to this mode of working, and also to build up the skill of taking contemporaneous notes during the sessions.

- PX279 – The Solar System – the material in the last four weeks was released a little late.
  We apologise for this. This was not the planned schedule, but we understand that the lecturer ran into some difficulties at the time. The planned release dates from week 7 onwards had to all be delayed by about one week, with the final section being released on the day after the end of term.
- PX277 Computational Physics – Assignment 3 question 11 was extremely hard!
  Q11 is classified as an unseen question and hence one of two questions that are designed to stretch the best students on the module. The total weight of the question corresponds to 9%, allowing the best students to raise their total mark from 91% to 100%. It is therefore the hardest question by design. Nevertheless, 52% of submissions to assignment 3 achieved 90% on the assignment or better (>=27 marks out of 30).

Third year matters

- PX376 Communicating Science online seminars – some students did not participate much in the breakout rooms.
  Thank you for this feedback. We are hoping that every student next year can attend face to face seminars for this module. If this is not possible, we will at least have a lot of experience to draw on from this year, both from within Physics and without.
- PX382 Quantum Physics of Atoms – can we in some form get the solutions to assessed quizzes?
  These assessments are designed to encourage engagement during the module, and we think they are successful in this regard. The lecturer likes to re-use some of the questions, and therefore is wary of releasing solutions. The past papers and set problems on this module are much better preparation for the summer examination than these quizzes.
- PX442 – Analysis worksheet – some information is not relevant to solving the questions and some of the questions could be more explicit as to what is required?
  The text introduces a qualitative measure of uncertainty in experimental science and is intended to provide a context for the need to calculate these uncertainties. The questions are not intended to cover all that is included in the introduction but to provide examples of how an experimentalist calculates uncertainties and the validity of the measurements. In future the questions will provide a more detailed instruction of what is required.

Fourth year matters

- PX438 Physics of Fusion Power – the lecture notes from a previous presentation (lecturer) are good. However the notes released by the current lecturer are at present more sparse, sometimes late, and of variable visual quality. Can we have a fuller set of notes for the current presentation? Should we also follow the older notes?
  We apologise for the delays in getting material uploaded for this module, due to particular difficulties the lecturer is having. As a consequence this module will now run for most of Term 2. The lecturer is presenting videos based on PowerPoint slides

with voice-over; the slides represent the notes for the module and are also available separately. The content of this module has been modified from that delivered by the previous lecturer, so following the previous notes may lead to confusion over what is examinable.

- Could the safety net for this year's finalists be clarified?
  Full details are at https://warwick.ac.uk/students/teaching_learning_assessments_spring2021/ug_mitigation_package
- Some students are worried that examinations this year will be harder because there will be no bookwork.
  It is certainly not the case that all bookwork has been removed from examinations. Examiners will be asking for explanations and derivations as well as solutions to unseen problems, as usual. A statement about the examinations this year can be found at https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/physics/current/teach/teach21/examinations21/formats

Mathematics matters

- Will we still get a 24 hour window for the online exams this summer?
  Maths, Statistics, and Physics will not be using the 24 hour window and will instead be using fixed start times. More information is at https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/physics/current/teach/teach21/examinations21/formats
- Algebra II – can it be delivered a little more slowly?
  We will pass this back to Maths, but would encourage you to raise this directly with the Maths SSLC through your representative on that committee.