Physics Department
Warwick University

Meeting of the Student Staff Liaison Committee
on Tuesday 28th February 2023

First year matters

None

Second year matters

- Particularly in the case of modules with no typed notes, could students be directed to specific sections of one or two textbooks?
  We can encourage staff to do this.
- PX281: feedback on the final assignment has not been provided before the 20 working day deadline.
  Feedback was published 22 working days after submission. We apologise for missing the University deadline (20 working days), and will report ourselves to the Faculty Education Committee, as required. It turned out that the 361 submissions were simply too many to mark within the required timeframe!

Third year matters

- PX390: the final two assignments are significantly harder than the others.
  We are not sure whether this is a criticism! While the earlier assignments are designed to help students gain experience of particular aspects of the C language, the final assignments are meant to be more challenging. Remember that the module is worth 15 credits and should, by University norms, require 150 hours of work.
- PX3A8: the resolution of the writing on the blackboard is not good in the recordings.
  Yes, the writing on blackboards is typically not as well captured as that on the visualizer by lecture capture. However, blackboard lectures often offer a more accessible live lecture and we would not want to lose this or require every lecturer to teach in the same way.
- PX385: the lecturer for the second part of the module is not releasing his predecessor's typed notes.
  This is because some of the material has been re-jigged. He will be releasing his own typed notes.

Fourth year matters

- PX445: the lecturer sometimes forgets to turn on the microphone.
  This is easy to forget! We will pass this on to the lecturer. If you notice a recently posted recording without sound, we would encourage you to raise it in the following lecture with the member of staff directly. They will appreciate it.
- PX431 (Peng Wang) received favourable feedback. Questions are posed throughout each lecture, and answers can be handed in. These are then marked and handed back later on in the module.
  We will pass this back to the lecturer. Each lecturer is observed by another member of

staff each year, to spread good practice. Of course this particular approach would not scale easily to much larger modules.

- PX446 (Alex Robertson) gives engaging lectures, and the historical context provided is interesting.
  We will pass this back to the module team.

Mathematics matters

- MA261: there are numerous typographical errors in each problem sheet, which are often only identified shortly before the submission deadline.
  We will pass this on to the lecturer. For these sorts of queries, it is best to let the lecturer know directly. That way you can detail precisely the points of difficulty.

Matters raised online

- The workload in the first year is too high, particularly when the time spent preparing lab reports is factored in.
  We believe that the workload is about right. The lab reports are assessments of the laboratory as a whole. The number of credits is chosen to reflect the time taken preparing for the laboratory, taking and analysing data, as well as writing the actual report.
- PX153 (term 1): the treatment of SHM includes equations which are not properly introduced until later in the term. Could this material be re-ordered?
  Material, particularly mathematical material, is often presented more than once. This includes SHM, Fourier methods, integration, and (in the second year) vector calculus. The way to develop fluency is to work with it and through it many times. Usually, the first time students meet new material, it can seem harder. If the motivations (here applications to SHM) are presented before the formal material on auxiliary equations, complementary functions and particular integrals, it can help understand why we present the mathematics the way we do later. Of course, it would be possible to do it the other way round, but that would not necessarily make it easier to understand. Students need to meet it many times.
- There is some overlap between the material in PX153 and the integration worksheet that the Physics students complete. Some students delayed starting the worksheet until they had met the material in PX153.
  The same issue was raised at the meeting of 31/1/23. The worksheets are designed so that students learn new material by themselves. With the predominance of lectures and scripted laboratory experiments in the courses, it is important to encourage students to develop self-study skills.
- PX390: the program band_utility.c used in Assignments 4 and 5 uses column-based calculation rather than row-based calculation. The distinction between the two, although mentioned in the lecture notes, could have been re-iterated in the Assignment 4 feedback.
  We will pass this onto the lecturers concerned.