

**Department of Physics
Warwick University**

**Meeting of the Student Staff Liaison Committee
on 27th November 2023**

First year matters

- Tutorial: The weekly problem sheets are marked out of 10, and students can lose quite a few marks for relatively trivial matters. The amount of for-credit work is thought by some to be too high. Can the solutions be posted earlier each week?
The mark schemes are designed to encourage the development of accuracy and care at an early stage of your undergraduate training. That said, we do in general allow errors to be carried forward in the marking of examination papers. Solutions to the weekly problem sheets are usually posted shortly after the examples classes have taken place. We are reluctant to post solutions much in advance of these classes, as we feel that that would discourage attendance at the classes for some students.

Second year matters

- QM: there can still be context lacking, few examples, and poor handwriting.
We have passed this back to the lecturer. The material presented in the first term of this module has been restructured this year, and so this feedback will be particularly useful in preparation for next year.
- Hamiltonian: a lack of subheadings can make it difficult to discern the structure.
We have passed this on to the lecturer. He will try to give a longer/better narrative statement next year as to how the various sections fit together. He adds that the typed notes provided are divided into (sub)sections.
- Environmental: there is no problem sheet associated with term 1.
The lecturer mentions that an example problem was solved in about half of the lectures. He adds that the past papers for the PX273 module (available on the Library database) are relevant to his half of the PX280 module.
- Comp Physics: workshops can get very overcrowded, with students sitting on the floor, and the lecturer having to stay late into the evening.
We apologise for this. The proportion of students attending the workshops this year increased markedly from last year, such that one week the workshop was overcrowded. We are grateful to the lecturer for making sure that all student queries were answered at that workshop.
- General: for modules without typed notes, can students at least have a summary of what is to be covered week-by-week?
Lecturers should describe the structure of the module on their homepages. This is generally the case. There was a new lecturer on PX262, which may explain why this was not clear this year.

Third year matters

- QPoA: when two slides are presented side-by-side they can be hard to see. Could the size of the font be increased, rather than one of the slides removed? Is there a better way to export slides as a pdf? The quizzes take too long, allow for cheating, and not much credit is given for working.
- Galaxies & Cosmology: the lecturer uses various shorthands (eg “dist” = distance or distribution?), and it takes time to make sense of them.
We have passed this back to the lecturer. Please do contact them if anything is still unclear.
- Electromagnetism: tildes and unit vector hats look quite similar, which can be confusing.
We have passed this back to the lecturer. Please do post on the module forum if anything is still unclear.
- Labs: some students have noted a change of style between the reports expected in year 2 and in year 3.
Writing lab reports in the third year should help you learn how to write in the format of a publication. In addition to accurate reporting on the measurements and analysis of data (which were the main emphases in the second year), the third-year lab emphasises the need to agree what to say with your collaborators, the need to motivate the experiment or simulation succinctly, and to reference according to norms set by outside bodies.
- MMIII: the link to physics can be unclear at times.
A major motivation of this module is to help you avoid thinking of mathematics as just a tool. It should show the importance of rigour and abstraction and, more generally, that mathematics is beautiful and can be fun. How complex variable theory is linked to physics may not be as obvious as variational principles are. However, this material is being implicitly assumed in many areas of physics. For example, response functions and propagators are wholly controlled by their singularities (which are covered in the module). The lecturer adds that in week 10 she put on an additional (non-examinable) lecture on complex functions in physics, which included examples of propagators and response functions. This lecture can be viewed on Lecture Capture (recorded on Monday 4/12/2023), and corresponds to Chapter 6 in the typed notes, and Part 6 in the handwritten notes.

Fourth year matters

None

Mathematics matters

- General: can we give formal feedback part-way through a module, as they do in the Maths Institute?
We are not keen on requesting more formal feedback. Formal feedback on modules (and courses) suffers from low participation rates. More avenues for formal feedback almost always mean lower participation rates (Mathematics has lower rates than we do). The lower the participation rate, the higher the risk of sample bias and the less the value of the feedback.