Physics Department
Warwick University

Meeting of the Student Staff Liaison Committee
on Monday 11th May 2026

First year matters

- Might the quantum mechanics module be scheduled later, once the material of other modules has been better digested? In the notes for Part I, it is not always clear what is a derivation and what is a worked example.
  The first-year quantum mechanics lectures used to take place exclusively in term three; however, students did not like mixing exams and lectures in the same term. PX156 is an introductory phenomena module, and you will be introduced to quantum mechanics more formally in the second year.
- There is broken equipment in the electronics lab, which staff also on occasion struggle with.
  Non-functioning equipment is typically caused by blown fuses which occur during the workshops. We appreciate this is a source of frustration and in rare cases is hard to diagnose even for experienced staff or demonstrators. This is why the "Trust Nothing!" approach is pushed strongly in the preparatory material (it accurately reflects work in most real physics labs). Note that demonstrators are instructed to allow for unusual problems causing delays when marking.

Second year matters

- The second half of the PX280 exam had questions harder than is typical and with less information provided.
  Numerical estimates were required in this paper, as in previous years. The author of the exam questions is of the view that the paper was of the same level of difficulty as those in previous years. The paper has now been marked, and the average mark for the module is on target.
- PX262 repeats material from PX156 (eg the 1D Schrödinger equation).
  Yes, the first item in the outline syllabus in the module catalogue is *Revision of wavefunctions, probability densities and the Schrödinger equation in 1 dimension.* We will pass this comment to the lecturer.
- The questions on the term 2 material in the PX275 exam were of a different style than in past papers, with perhaps fewer equations provided that was typical.
  Aside from question 3a, which examined new material included by the lecturer this year, the questions were variants of those set in previous years. The marks on Q3a) were good.
- We would like to know in advance what will be on the rubric for each paper, or at least expect a higher degree of consistency and transparency.
  The type of information in the rubric will not necessarily be the same across all modules. In modules which primarily describe phenomena, we might give the standard equations. In modules working through principles, being able to derive and explain the basis for these equations may well be the principal objective of the module. Our policy is to restrict the rubrics to what is needed in the examination. The rubrics cannot be published early as this may indicate what will be tested in the exam.

Third year matters

- There is a perception of inconsistency in the workload of different modules.
  Some modules can be more technical and some more qualitative. This does not mean that the workloads are intrinsically harder or easier. It may be that some students find different types of work easier than others.
- There is a lack of typed notes including, for example, for Electrodynamics (the old ones from 2016 provided do not follow the current presentation closely).
  We have passed this feedback to the lecturer who will take over this module from 26/27.
- Some students find the notes and problem solutions to the first half of the plasma physics module to be inadequate, and are leaning heavily on external resources.
  We have passed this feedback to the lecturer who will take over this material from 26/27.

Fourth year matters

- Positive feedback was received for the final year event on careers, the Project, and the NSS. It was especially nice to share food and talk to peers and academics.
  Good, we intend to continue running this event next year.
- A question on the GR paper on deriving a fluid equation stumped a lot of students.
  Question 2c)(iii) was quite well done. It asked only to take a standard result from thermodynamics, which was given, and substitute in simple expressions for the energy density and the result from the previous part.
- CMP II was taught well. Some knowledge which was presented only verbally was nevertheless required for the exam. There was little information in the rubric, with several equations requiring memorisation.
  We have passed this back to the lecturers.
- Feedback on the final year project report was released one hour before an exam sitting. Some felt that there was insufficient constructive feedback.
  It was the intention to have the feedback on the project report returned in as timely a manner as possible. We do take the point that there was an exam on the same day, however, and will take this into account next time. The goal of the marking process is to provide feedback that supports the mark given and balances positive comments with constructive feedback. Students have the option to discuss the feedback with their project supervisor.
- Positive feedback was received for the mock exams provided for modules including FPP and CMP II.
  Thank you for this positive feedback.
- Should the final year Project report have a word rather than a page limit?
  Research journals typically set page limits, and so we do the same here.

Mathematics matters

- Could there be a standardised approach to notifying MathsPhys students of non-examinable material in year 1 modules?
  The Maths department leaves the definition of what is examinable to the individual lecturers. The modules for MathsPhys students are also taught for varying combinations of students based in the CS and Statistics departments. As a general rule, please start from the assumption that everything that is taught is examinable unless explicitly excluded.
- There were corrections announced part-way through the MA147 paper. Could extra time be allocated in response to such announcements?
  It would not be feasible to add extra time, given the heavy use of exam rooms. Maths will be

aware of announcements of corrections and can take this into account when marking. Information on where students were sitting will also be available to them.

- MA424 - the Moodle page seemed to be largely out of date (with information about last year's presentation), and the forum questions were not monitored by the lecturer.
  We have passed this back to Maths.
- There were several typographical errors on the MA250 paper.
  We have passed this back to Maths.