



**Sefydliad Mathemateg a Ffiseg  
Institute of Mathematics & Physics**

# PHYSICS

## STUDENT/STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 2.00pm  
In Room 319, Physical Sciences Building**

### MINUTES

**Present:**

Chair:	Mr James Carter	JAC08	PG Rep
Secretary:	Miss Sarah Spring	RMS	Staff
	Dr Martin Wilding	MBW	Staff
	Mr Timothy Hudson	TYH8	Year 1 Rep
	Miss Claire McLoughlin	CPM8	Year 2 Rep
	Mr Keiron Pizzey	KPP7	Year 3 Rep
	Miss Hannah Wakeford	HTW7	Year 3 Rep
	Ms Jessica Cole	JSC6	Year 4 Rep
	Ms Erin Conner	ECC6	Year 4 Rep

<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr Gruffudd Williams	GTW07	PG Rep
	Mrs Raquel Gonzalez	RQG	Staff

#### 1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 1.1 JSC6 asked that the references to members of staff listed as NGP in point 3.2, AZB in point 3.5 and MJO in point 3.6 be amended to include their full names.
- 1.2 Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 were approved.

#### 2. Matters Arising

- 3.2 MBW stated that due to the introduction of the 50/50 assessment split, most people had passed module PH14310 The Quantum Universe; this issue had therefore resolved itself. MBW reported that in order to avoid this situation arising again, it was to be made policy for a copy of the Table of Physical Constants to be given out in all future Part 1 and Part 2 exams.
- 3.4 RMS stated that this was an ongoing issue and had been reported to Estates by RQG. MBW noted that this issue should be resolved as soon as possible as it was particularly unpleasant for students having back-to-back lectures in Physics B during the colder months.

- 3.8 As Acting Director of Learning and Teaching, MBW reported that this issue had been taken on board and would be acted upon next term in order to coordinate deadlines; possibly via a calendar which would also be accessible by students via Blackboard. MBW concurred that coordinating deadlines would be mutually beneficial for staff and students.

**Action: MBW to discuss the implementation of coordinating deadlines at the next Teaching Action Group Meeting and report on this at the next SSCC meeting.**

- 3.9 As Acting Director of Learning and Teaching, MBW reported that this issue had been taken on board by teaching staff, and would be addressed by next term. MBW stated that the most likely solution would be the introduction of centrally accessible lists of requirements/deadlines etc. for students on PHM3910 Advanced Topics in material Physics and PH34040 Advanced Techniques, which would clarify the issue of communication with students on these modules.

**Action: MBW to discuss this issue at the next Teaching Action Group Meeting and report on this at the next SSCC meeting.**

- 3.12 JAC08 reported that there had been no new complaints about this issue. MBW concurred that no new pay issues had been brought to his attention and assumed that people had been paid and the matter therefore resolved.

### 3. Student Matters

#### Yr 0:

- 3.1 No representatives present.

#### Yr 1:

- 3.2 TYH8 reported that Year 2 students were generally unhappy about the recent amount of lab report deadlines compared with the year before. CPM8 stated that she had also received complaints from Year 1 students about these in conjunction with a large volume of assignment deadlines coinciding. MBW stated that the reasons behind the allocation of a high volume of lab report deadlines were to encourage students to develop good report writing and experimental technique and also to discourage absenteeism in lab sessions. MBW agreed that this did place students under a lot of pressure at busy times of the year, but pointed out that there should be time within their timetabled 4 hour lab sessions, to write up reports on a weekly basis. MBW concurred that having set weekly or fortnightly deadlines for lab reports would improve the situation for students.

**Action: MBW to look into the idea of implementing set weekly/fortnightly deadlines for lab reports.**

**Yr 2:**

- 3.3 CPM8 reported that the main issues for Year 2 were related to the group projects (Scrapheap Challenge) in PH25520 Instrumental Physics. CPM8 explained that staffing issues had caused some confusion for students regarding who their allocated supervisors were, delays in beginning work on their projects and unevenly distributed individual workloads. CPM8 suggested that more supervisors to ensure that project work had been evenly distributed within groups, would be beneficial next year. MBW stated that he and Clive Willson had decided to change the system for project work next year whereby a set number of different experiments (some PSP based and some Physics based) would be set up with a member of staff assigned to each one; student groups would then rotate between this every 3-4 weeks. MBW explained that each member of staff would be required to spend at least one hour per week in the lab; this would replace the Year 2 tutorials on this module. MBW stated that this would be a good way of ensuring that the experiments are done without any problems and would also encourage interaction between staff and students. KPP7 and HTW7 pointed out that they had found the existing structure and content of their Year 2 PH25520 Project very beneficial last year. MBW stated that staffing issues and the anticipated high volume of new students would not support the current structure of this project for the new session; the new project structure would also allow Year 2 students to carry out more advanced experiments.
- 3.4 CPM8 reported that students were worried about the predicted influx of high numbers of new students in the 2010-11 sessions and the impact that this would have on the accessibility of laboratories and teaching staff to existing students. MBW agreed that this was an issue of concern and that the solution to this problem was currently being discussed; one idea had been to split the labs and run two lab sessions concurrently; however timetable constraints had not allowed this. MBW explained that the options of reducing the amount of lab time for students and capping the numbers of new students were also being discussed. MBW reported that as there were currently no 100% accurate numbers of new students, it was therefore difficult to address the issue properly at this stage. MBW stated that he believed the best course of action would be for the Institute to decide on a number it could cope with and cap numbers at that. JSC6 suggested that lab space and time could be gained by encouraging more Part 2 students to move experiments out of labs for example, to use Astronomy equipment or the Hot Desk Room. MBW reiterated that this issue was currently being addressed.

**Action: MBW to look into the issue of lab space in the next session and report on this at the next Physics SSCC meeting.**

**Yr 3:**

- 3.5 KPP7 reported that students were unhappy about the two hour lecture slots on PH33420 Condensed Matter Physics as there had been occasions when Dr Rudi Winter had been absent and students had therefore missed a week's lectures if no replacement lecturer was available. MBW agreed that two hour lectures were very long and tiring for staff as well as students and explained that staffing issues had resulted in the cancellation of some of these lectures this session. MBW stated that there was no reason why this module had to contain a weekly two hour lecture and also stated that the content and structure of PH33420 was currently being reviewed as it was unclear where it fitted into the curriculum.

**Action: MBW to look into the issue of whether the two hour lecture slots for PH33420 Condensed Matter Physics could be abolished in the next session.**

- 3.6 HTW7 reported that students were happy about the official splitting of PH39320 Ionised Atmospheres and Space Plasma, which was this year being treated as two separate modules of 10 credits each in any case. HTW7 pointed out that the issue of setting assignments for these modules therefore needed to be sorted out as students had this year only been set assignments for the Plasma and not from Atmospheres part.

**Action: MBW to look into the issue of assignments on PH39320 Ionised Atmospheres and Space Plasma.**

- 3.7 CPM7 reported that as there was currently a problem with online registration. Year 2 students were not able to register for the Year 2 PSP pre-requisite course were unable to register until September 2010 due to an Academic Office error relating to numbers of credits, which they were currently unable to rectify. MBW explained that he believed the problem to have arisen out of the fact that the Academic Office had not been aware that module PH39320 Ionised Atmospheres and Space plasma had been split. MBW confirmed that the Academic Office had now been sent a list of all new courses and the problem should now be rectified.

**Yr 4:**

- 3.7 JSC6 stated that four of this year's MPhys projects had been largely computer based with two students carrying out much of their work in the Hot Desk room. JSC6 explained that she had felt this had worked very well and reiterated her earlier suggestion that this type of study should be encouraged as the issue of getting enough lab time and space would not be a hindrance. JSC6 noted that obtaining more public access to computers for MPhys students would be very beneficial.

**PGs:** No issues to report.

#### 4. **Staff Matters**

No issues to report.

#### 5. **AOB**

5.1 JSC6 asked whether there would be a Year 0 representative next year.

**Action: RMS to speak to Barry Henley regarding the appointment of a suitable Year 0 representative for next year's SSCC Committee.**

5.2 RMS stated that the issue of negative feedback on module questionnaires for MA25610 Hydrodynamics 1 and MA11010 Further Algebra and Calculus, had been raised at the last Mathematics SSCC meeting. RMS reported that Mathematics students felt that MP26020 Mathematical Physics had not prepared them adequately for the above modules. RMS asked Physics students for their thoughts on this issue. Physics students collectively agreed that some of the course content for MP26020 was too basic and not taught in the most accessible way for both Mathematics and Physics students. MBW stated that there been previous complaints from students regarding this module and that he did not see why this module had to be taught as a joint Mathematics and Physics course.

**Action: MBW to raise the issue of the course content for MP26020 being too basic and not taught in the most accessible way for both Mathematics and Physics students, at the next Teaching Action Group Meeting.**

#### 6. **Date of the Next Meeting**

6.1 The next meeting to be held in the 2010-11 Session.