



Sefydliad Mathemateg a Ffiseg
Institute of Mathematics & Physics

PHYSICS

STUDENT/STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th February at 1.00pm
 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 |
| | Dr Tarlochán Virdi | TSV | Administrator |
| Visitor | Mrs Tegwen Meredith | MZM | IS /Library Rep |
| | Phoebe Murphy | PHM1 | Year 1 Rep |
| | John Gannaway | JOG2 | Year 1 Rep |
| | Natasha Barker | NAB11 | Year 1 Rep |
| | Joseph Hutton | JOH9 | Year 2 Rep |
| | Clare McLoughlin | CPM8 | Year 3 Rep |
| | Robert Palmer | RIP8 | Year 3 Rep |
| | Karl Stokes | KWS7 | Year 4 Rep |
| | Keiron Pizzey | KPP7 | Year 4 Rep |
| | Jennifer Herbert | JEH8 | Physoc Rep |
| Apologies: | Dr Balazs Pinter | BAP | Staff |

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 1.1 TSV requested that item 3.9 was amended to clarify that all IMAPS PC's already have IDL software access for students. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2010 were approved.

2. Matters Arising

- 3.2 MBW reported that he had now taken over as module co-ordinator on PH14310: The Quantum Universe and that he would ensure that the issue of assignment spacing was addressed.
- 3.3 MBW reported that this issue had been raised at the recent Management Board Meeting and that it was concluded that it was not possible to allocate additional lab time due to the currently high student numbers.
- 3.4 MBW confirmed that he had done this but that again, high student numbers made shared lab sessions a current necessity.

- 3.5 TSV reported that request for an undergraduate common room for IMAPS students had been discussed at the recent Management Board meeting. TSV explained that in the first instance, it had been decided that new furniture would be installed in the PSB Foyer and that the use of the Foyer would be monitored before any further decision on the creation of a separate UG common room was made. TSV reported that five sofas' had been ordered and installed in the Foyer for this purpose and that Wi-Fi would also be made available. TSV explained that the request for student lockers had been turned down as it was concluded that there would be potential health and safety as well as security implications.
- 3.6 MBW explained that plans were currently underway to significantly upgrade the labs. ZMZ reported that the complaints about the noise levels in the Library had been reported to her and reminded students to let her know if people were being loud in library at any point.
- 3.7 TSV reported that this would be done
- 3.8 MBW reported that this would be done.

3.11, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4

MBW reported that these issues were all being addressed; that Dr Rudi Winter (RUW) had recently been made the designated member of staff in charge of Employability and that he was now the point of contact for all career-related queries.

3. Student Matters

Yr 0: No representatives present.

Yr 1:

- 3.1 JOG2 reported that the programming involved in the PH15720: Introduction to Computational and Experimental Physics 'Sci Lab' assignment had been very difficult. JOG2 asked whether a drop in session on programming could be arranged to help. JOG2 also reported that students were provided with a list of questions but some had no experience in how to present their work.

Action: **MBW to put guidelines for assignment presentation on the IMAPS website and look into arranging drop in sessions on programming for PH15720: Introduction to Computational and Experimental Physics.**

- 3.2 NAB11 raised an issue with Lab Diaries on PH15720: Introduction to Computational and Experimental Physics; students felt that they had received adequate help in writing these and some reported that they had not understood the feedback they subsequently received from tutors.

Action: **MBW to look into ways of ascertaining the level of guidance required by students in producing Lab Diaries for PH15720: Introduction to Computational and Experimental Physics.**

- 3.3 NAB11 asked whether past exam solutions could be made available to students on PH14310: The Quantum Universe. MBW explained that past solutions were not published as some questions were re-used in subsequent years. MBW stated that work solutions were given during the course of tutorials lectures and that any additional revision was up to students.
- 3.4 JOG2 asked whether it was possible to have an additional hour-long lecture slot for PH12020: Classical Physics, timetabled. MBW explained that there the he was double booked which is the prob. 2 hr lectures are not liked.

Action: MBW – to look into timetabling an additional hour (3rd lecture session) for PH12020: Classical Physics or finding an out of timetable hour to meet up.

Yr 2:

- 3.5 JOH9 reported that the timetable change for module PH28510: The Planets meant that it was now a 5 hour slot, which had been causing problems for one student who was severely diabetic and needed regular breaks in order to eat. MBW explained that timetable constraints were to blame.

Action: MBW to talk to teaching staff on PH28510: The Planets to see whether it would be possible to give students a break during the five hour lecture slot break.

- 3.6 JOH9 reported a problem on the exam paper for MP21010: Relativity and Mechanics; invigilators were unable to clarify the meaning of a question. MBW explained that some members of staff had submitted exam material late, which had left no time for them to be proof read. MBW also pointed out that the new exam format this year had also led to a certain amount of confusion.

Yr 3:

- 3.7 CPM8 reported that students had not been forewarned of the change of structure of the exam for PH32510: Electromagnetism. MBW explained that Alan Jones had run an exam briefing session but the turnout had been very poor. CPM8 stated that Year 3 students had not been aware of the briefing session.
- 3.8 RIP8 reported that the email telling students that only two types of calculator could be used in exams, had been sent out too close to the start of the exams. MBW pointed out that this information was in the handbook and on the IMAPS website in any case.
- 3.9 CPM8 reported that students were not allocated enough time in exams to check through their answers due to new exam structure. CPM8 also stated that some students were not given adequate access to formula booklets during exams.

- 3.10 CPM8 reported that students on module PH36010: Numerical Methods struggled with producing the portfolio. CPM8 asked whether students could have a week longer to produce the portfolio and a week less for projects. MBW agreed that this could be done.

Action: MBW to alter deadlines for portfolio and project submission on PH36010: Numerical Methods.

Yr 4

- 3.11 KPP7 stated that students thought that this session's Gregynog trip was a success.
- 3.12 KWS7 reported that assignments in Semester 1 were unevenly spread out as some students had up to 10 to submit at once just before Christmas. MBW agreed that there shouldn't be too many marked assignments per semester.
- 3.13 KWS7 reported that the tutor on module PHM3910: Advanced Topics in Materials Physics did not clearly inform students that assignments were due; assignments were given verbally to separate groups. KWS7 stated that there should have been a formal email to avoid any confusion.
- 3.14 KWS7 reported that some of the work on module PHM8710: Computational Modelling and Visualisation is more Computer Science-based, and that some of the course material was not totally relevant to students' interests and the module context. KWS7 reported that assignments had also been given out two weeks late.
- 3.15 KWS7 asked whether it was possible to teach IDL formally to all PG students. MBW replied that there were plans to include this.

PG:

- 3.16 JAC08 stated that some Materials PhD students had reported issues with the Materials Labs being left in an untidy condition and also that UG students were frequently in the labs during unscheduled times. JAC08 suggested that better communication between students was needed.
- 3.17 JAC08 stated that all PhD students were keen to gain teaching/demonstrating experience even in an unpaid capacity.
- 3.18 JAC08 asked whether there would be funds available for PG students to attend this year's Gregynog Writing School.

Action: JAC08 to provide TSV with a list of students who wish to (and have their Supervisor's permission) to attend this year's Gregynog Writing School.

4. Staff Matters

4.1 No issues.

5. AOB

5.1 TSV stated that there was a concern that the unofficial student satisfaction survey circulated and devised by students may be confused with the official NSS one. TSV asked students to ensure that the difference was clarified.

Action: CPM8 to present the results of the unofficial student survey at the next meeting.

5.2 CPMP8 announced that the Physchic project had recently been awarded a grant.

6. Date of the Next Meeting

6.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in April, date to be confirmed.